

**A STUDY OF OTTOMAN MODERNISATION ON THE CITY: THE SIXTH
MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF ISTANBUL (1858-1877)**

A Master's Thesis

by

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**THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
BİLKENT UNIVERSITY
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MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF ISTANBUL (1858-1877)**

**The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
of
Bilkent University**

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF OTTOMAN MODERNISATION ON THE CITY: THE SIXTH MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF ISTANBUL (1856-1877)

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This thesis attempts to analyse the first European style municipal administration of the Ottoman Empire as a manifestation of its modernisation attempts and the influence of European powers in the 19th century. The Sixth Municipal District was established in 1858 in a wealthy area comprising Beyoğlu and Galata as a response to growing demand on the side of the inhabitants of the area, most of whom were non-Muslims and foreigners. Coinciding with the Ottoman reform movements of the era, the establishment of the Sixth District had marked a major turning point in the transformation of the Ottoman urban administration. Hence, this thesis tries to indicate that the reforms were directly influential in the reshaping of Istanbul and therefore the Sixth District's history is parallel to that of Tanzimat. It also tries to demonstrate the intensity of change by describing the municipal practices of the classical period and putting the District in historical perspective. The motivation in the selection of this area is also important hence; this thesis also tries to evaluate its

reasons within the context of foreign influence in the Empire. Also, it tries to assess the District's accomplishments and failures, and makes an effort to understand whether it had reached its goals.

Key Words: Ottoman Empire, Tanzimat, Islamic city, Istanbul, Municipality, Sixth Municipal District.

ÖZET

OSMANLI MODERNLEŞMESİNİN BİR ŞEHİR ÇALIŞMASI : İSTANBUL

ALTINCI DAİRE-İ BELEDİYESİ (1856-1877)

Demirakın, Işık N.

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Bu tez Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun modernleşme çabalarının ve 19. yüzyıldaki Avrupa etkisinin bir göstergesi olarak İmparatorluk'ta kurulan ilk Avrupa tarzı belediye yönetimini konu almaktadır. Altıncı Daire-i Belediye İstanbul'un Galata ve Beyoğlu'nu kapsayan zengin kesiminde, çoğu gayri Müslim ve yabancı olan bölge sakinlerinin isteklerine cevap vermek üzere kurulmuştu. Altıncı Daire-i Belediye'nin kuruluşunun dönemin Osmanlı reform hareketleriyle denk düşmesi, bu gelişmenin Osmanlı şehir yönetiminde bir dönüm noktası olmasını sağlamıştı. Dolayısıyla bu tezde reformların İstanbul'un yeniden şekillenmesinde doğrudan etkili olduğu ve Altıncı Daire-i Belediye tarihinin Tanzimat tarihi ile benzer özelliklere sahip olduğu gösterilmeye çalışılmıştır. Ayrıca klasik dönemin beledi uygulamaları anlatılarak Altıncı Daire tarihsel bir perspektife oturulmaya çalışılmış ve böylelikle de değişimin büyüklüğünün ortaya çıkması amaçlanmıştır. Böyle bir deney için söz konusu bölgenin seçilmesi de oldukça önemlidir, dolayısıyla bu seçimin nedenleri de Avrupa'nın İmparatorluktaki etkisi bağlamında incelenmektedir. Son olarak,

Daire'nin başarıları ve başarısızlıkları üzerinde durularak Daire'nin amaçlanan hedeflere ulaşp ulaşmadığı değerlendirilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Tanzimat, İslam Şehri, İstanbul, Belediye, Altıncı Daire-i Belediye

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*...the city says everything you must think, makes you repeat her discourse,
and while you believe you are visiting Tamara you are only recording
names with which she defines herself and all her parts.*

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*,

Cities are organic entities in that they are constantly influenced by their inhabitants and are transformed accordingly. Population movements and economic activities of their dwellers are definitive in determining their sustainability and growth. This influence is rather mutual: the dwellers are directly affected by geographical limitations of cities that hinder or facilitate their actions. However, cities are more than a mere mass of land; since their inception they have become a representation of their inhabitants' desires and aspirations, allowing them to develop networks of relations and communications and thence a sense of "collective identity." As both the reason d'être and adversary of the state, this identity at times needed to be convinced of the legitimacy of the state and or be adjusted to the changing political and economic circumstances. At this point, the city became a major ideological tool in the hands of the state, especially in the 19th century when accommodating the city in accordance with the needs of rising the bourgeoisie and an industrial society, as well as legitimizing the newly arising nation states became essential. Given these, it is fair to state the possibility of keeping track of political and social changes within

cities by following the physical and accompanying administrative developments that transform them.

It is not a coincidence that the meaning and scope of “the city” was altered in the 19th century. The development of capitalism throughout the earlier centuries had finally manifested its full impact and therefore this century was marked by profound changes taking place in political, economic and social spheres. The balances had shifted in favour of the European struggle while the Ottoman Empire strove to restore its authority both domestically and internationally by introducing reforms modelled on Western institutions.

As expected, the first examples of such reforms were initiated in the field of military with the *Nizâm-ı Cedîd* army of Selim III (1789-1807). Unfortunately for Selim III, the traditional structure of the Empire could not absorb the change in one of the bases on which it stood as it rightfully regarded this as a threat to its existence and therefore this attempt failed. However, it was still a valuable experience for it showed that the success of reforms depended on their expansion to include all aspects of the Empire rather than remaining limited to a single area.¹ As Mahmud II (1808-1839) realised the need for replacement of the traditional structure with modern conceptions of state and administration, his era might be regarded as the start of modern Ottoman reforms. Indeed, Mahmud II had abolished the janissaries in 1826 after the introduction of his new army *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* therefore eliminating a major centre of resistance against reforms and supported this innovation with changes in the administrative structure of the Empire.

¹ For a comprehensive evaluation of the changes of this period, see Stanford Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1971.

The major turning point in 19th century Ottoman modernisation was the announcement of Tanzimat reforms (3 November 1839) during the era of Sultan Abdülmecid (1839-1861) for it was a clear departure from the Ottoman perception of a traditional Ottoman society fragmented primarily along the lines of religion to one that was governed on the basis of equal rights. Such a shift in this understanding brought with it major transformations in the structure of state and administration and eventually their repercussions were revealed in the physical and administrative features of the Ottoman cities, especially in Istanbul.

This study, therefore, tries to shed some light on the modernisation process of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century by analysing the urban transformation of Istanbul with the first European style municipal institution of the Empire, the Sixth Municipal District, as its focus.

In order to understand the extent and the size of transformation that Istanbul went through, one should first look at the argument centred on concepts of “Islamic” and “European” cities. The 19th and 20th century European theorists presented these two concepts as two opposing ends of a spectrum, and claimed their characteristics were regarded to be mutually exclusive, that is, while the European city possessed all the positive qualities associated with development and progress, the Islamic city symbolised backwardness and stagnancy.

These opposing qualities were emphasised most strongly by sociologist Max Weber² who made his classification of European and Oriental cities on the basis of the above mentioned idea of a “collective identity”. According to Weber, acquiring this identity was an evolutionary process and this could only be achieved in Christian Europe, where the city was destined to become an “institutionalised urban

² Max Weber (foreword by Don Martindale), *Şehir*, İstanbul: Bakış Yay., 2000

community”³ for various reasons. First of all, the inhabitants of the city were bonded with ties of fraternity and solidarity and this allowed them to form a unity, which was political in essence, and this reflected their common will. This political unity had based its existence on the ability to hold and control property, and related rights were protected by secular laws. When coupled with the prevailing capitalist economy, this structure allowed the rise of bourgeoisie to power and as a result, the city became more than “a settlement place where services and goods other than agricultural, are produced and marketed for the nearest or not so far market places”⁴. As Weber puts it, the city in a European sense had fortifications, markets, a court administering a partly autonomous law, distinctively urban forms of association and at least partial autonomy⁵. Hence, it was partly, if not completely, an autonomous entity and this autonomy was reinforced by the existence of its own laws and institutions that were governed by administrators, who were elected with the active participation of the public.⁶ These autonomous municipal institutions were considered to be a major driving force in the transformation of the European city, where the existence of wide streets and squares pointed out to the encouragement of public life and ideals.⁷ Although these were common features of European cities, their individual laws gave these cities their distinctive qualities.

In contrast, the inhabitants of Muslim cities contained competing tribes, which erased the possibility of achieving any unity and the idea of autonomy was not compatible with the coercive and arbitrary “patrimonial rule” that Weber saw

³ Weber, 114. Don Martindale asserts that the term “institutionalised urban community” refers to the existence of “free will”.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid, 91

⁷ Steven Rosenthal, *The Politics of Dependency: Urban Reform in Istanbul*, Westport, Conn., 1980, xviii.

identical with the Eastern Empires. The pervasiveness of Islamic law in all areas of life, both private and public, as opposed to the secular structure of the West was an obstacle to the emergence of autonomous institutions, as well. Islamic society was basically a traditional society; hence, change was not a part of it. This structure contributed to the physical appearance of oriental cities: each tribe lived isolated from each other in different quarters, and the population increase in these closed spaces led to the creation of narrow streets that were perceived to be an indispensable feature of oriental cities. Thus, in Weber's mind, Islamic cities were identical and stagnant, that is, Islam and the structure of social relations hindered the existence of distinguishing features that would enable us to tell them apart and the city was not prone to change, as opposed to the dynamic European cities.

Following the footsteps of Max Weber, later Orientalist theorists of city emphasised the role of Islam as the determining force in the creation of eastern cities. For Jean Sauvaget, for instance, "the status of the cities is subject to no particular provision in Islamic law. There are no more municipal institutions... The city is no longer considered as an entity, as a being in itself, complex and alive: it is just a gathering of individuals with conflicting interests who, each in his own sphere acts on his own account".⁸

Making at least a crude distinction between European and Eastern cities is indeed possible since geographical and complementing cultural differences as well as the dominant mode of production and economic relations give them their diverse features. However, Weber's examination ignored the environments these cities evolved in and evaluated these separate entities through the lens of Western European urban development; hence his conclusion as to the stagnancy of Eastern

⁸ André Raymond, "Islamic City, Arab City: Orientalist Myths and Recent Views", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1994), 7.

cities was superficial. The possibility of a monolithic Islamic city is also undermined due to the fact that the conquests of Islam covered an area comprising different cultures with their own urban practices. Therefore, as Islam penetrated these cultures, each developed its own pattern of city building and administration.⁹ Moreover, the first conversions to Islam had started in the urban areas and hence Muslim “cities could not be expected to have their autonomous institutions. They were the institutions through which the systems worked.”¹⁰

Indeed, although the Islamic city did not have autonomous institutions, it had developed its own unique devices to maintain order in the city. According to Albert Hourani, the egalitarianism of Islam that had been underlined by the Orientalists as an obstacle to class stratification did not reflect the truth. On the contrary, a commercial elite existed in the “Islamic” cities and together with *ulama*, they formed an urban leadership.¹¹

Still, the qualities Weber attributed to Islamic cities such as the pervasiveness of Islamic law and tradition and separation of quarters were important factors in their evolution, nevertheless, Islam shaped this process rather than determining it¹² and their influence can only be understood when they are examined within their respective contexts. Abou-Lughod asserts that the influence of Islam revealed itself in the shaping of city in three ways: 1. Spatial segregation 2. Gender segregation and 3. Property laws. First of all, the Islamic law emphasised the differences between the subjects of the state and marked their position in the social stratification. This encouraged the creation of neighbourhoods that were

⁹ Janet L. Abou-Lughod, “What is Islamic About a City?: Some Comparative Reflections” in *The Proceedings of the International Conference on Islam (ICUIT)*, Tokyo, 1989, 202.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Albert H. Hourani, “The Islamic City in the Light of Recent Research” in A.H. and S. M. Stern, *The Islamic City: A Colloquium*, Oxford: Bruno Cassirer (Publishers) Ltd., 1970, 17-18.

¹² Janet Abou Lughod, “The Islamic City: Hystoric Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 19, No.2 (May 1987), 162.

identified by the religion of their inhabitants and therefore contributed to the spatial segregation of Islamic cities. This segregation was not without its merits. By enforcing a local identity, it provided protection for the inhabitants of the quarter from outside threats, especially in times of chaos when the central authority failed to maintain order, as well as providing internal security. Moreover, since the state was basically concerned with commercial matters, basic municipal services that it neglected such as the cleaning of streets was carried out by the inhabitants of these quarters. Hence, although autonomous municipal institutions did not exist, Islam was able to create other means to provide the services carried out by these institutions and quarters became another example of these means, along with guilds and local notables. Second, Islam promoted the separation of feminine and masculine domains. As a result, the architecture of the Islamic cities had to divide space on the basis of gender and create “a visual screen between them”. Hence, the issue of privacy came to the forefront and made it compulsory to build houses isolated from each other, with their windows facing the inner courtyard rather than the street.

Third, and by far the most important, was the influence of Islamic laws, which stressed the importance of individual rights over property. The existence of narrow and twisting streets and cul de sacs were a direct result of Islamic property rights and the importance attributed to privacy in these societies. In contrast to an abstract notion of “boundary” set forth by Roman law, Islamic cities had *finâ*, which denoted a common space open to use by the residents of a street. As this space became the property of the residents, the issues of privacy and protection came to forefront: if they reached an agreement, the residents could even close the

entrance to a dead end street with a door.¹³ The fact that such practices obstructed passage through streets did not matter; after all, they served the interests of the inhabitants and the city was never intended to facilitate interaction between different groups of people.

Such traditions may show the extent to which Islamic law favoured the community, but this also meant that at times it worked to the disadvantage of the state. Whenever the state tried to introduce new rules that jeopardised the interests of the community, it had to face resistance from the protective shield of Islamic law; hence, as Yerasimos puts it, Islamic cities were marked by a constant struggle between the community and state authority.

This clash between the Islamic and customary law was apparent in the Ottoman state as well. Although numerous edicts and regulations that intended to prevent fires had been issued prior to the 19th century, for example, these were never put into practice and Istanbul continued to be filled with wooden houses built tightly.¹⁴ This clash was eventually going to exhilarate in the 19th century when the Ottoman state decided to introduce a brand new order to cities, however, the change was a necessity rather than a choice due to the circumstances surrounding the Empire during the century.

The 19th century marked a departure for the Ottoman Empire from what was termed as “Islamic” to “European” not only in the sphere of urban administration but also in political, social and economic spheres, the rapid changes of the century, however, were not specific to the Ottoman Empire. As a matter of fact,

¹³ Stefan Yerasimos, “Tanzimat’ın Kent Reformları Üzerine” in *Modernleşme Sürecinde Osmanlı Kentleri*, Paul Dumont, François Georgeon (Eds.), İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999, 11. Yerasimos also tells that the social status of the private property and the extent to which *fina* is used are directly related. As one goes down a cul de sac, the part of the street that could be utilised by the property owner increases and hence the place of the owner in social hierarchy at the end of the dead end is higher.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

the entire Europe was going through transformation and this transformation, according to Göçek, was a result of two elements that made their presence felt during the 18th and 19th centuries: “political state making in France and England and the economic development of capitalism in England.”¹⁵ These two political and economic elements became the determining factors in the urban structure of Europe, and eventually in the Ottoman Empire, as well.

The prevailing idea of nation states necessitated concentration of power in a single centre and therefore the elimination of rival institutions. In effect, this meant that the city had to be reorganised to encompass a centre, i.e. the palace, and streets that allowed an uninterrupted connection with this core. This reorganisation was not only going to facilitate the control of state over people, it was also intended to serve as a basis on which the new political structure was going to justify its existence. Termed as the “invention of tradition” by Eric Hobsbawm, this practice was nothing more than replacement of idle traditions that no longer served the purposes state with the new ones and it occurred “when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which ‘old’ traditions were designed”.¹⁶ Invented traditions covered a vast array from major areas such as education and law to minor details such as the creation of a national flag, uniforms and mass production of monuments and found its manifestation in architecture and urban design as well.

The most successful example of such an urban transformation was witnessed in Paris in the 1850s, when Paris was rebuilt from scratch by Baron Georges Eugene Hausmann. Appointed by Napoleon III for this project, Hausmann replaced the interweaving streets of Paris with vast and straight

¹⁵ Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie Demise of the Empire*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, 5.

¹⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, “Inventing Traditions” in *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 5.

boulevards intersecting at squares. During the process, many buildings were expropriated and old Paris was almost completely erased, but that was a price worth paying. With this new urban design the chances of barricading the streets during a possible riot was eradicated and the troops were given space to move comfortably, that is, the city was redesigned to facilitate the maintenance of order by the state and the enforcement of its authoritarian rule. Aside from this underlying factor, this new plan of Paris was also intended to enhance the beauty of the city and provide a healthier environment. As a matter of fact, 19th century urban planning in general had concentrated on these three factors: order, health and beautification.¹⁷ Gardens and trees planted along the streets had integrated nature into Paris while open streets enabled the arrival of municipal services, such as cleaning and washing of streets, to each and every corner of the city thus making possible the prevention of diseases.

In the meantime, the Ottoman State was experiencing similar problems pertaining to the justification of the newly introduced system therefore “a new social base was needed if the Empire was to survive”.¹⁸ Throughout the century, the state introduced new traditions that revealed themselves in clothing, education, language and changing urban practices. Apart from the increasing French influence, the success of this experiment made Paris the best possible alternative to follow in search for modernisation. Therefore, new codes and regulations aimed at transforming the urban fabric, which we will deal with in detail below, were copied from Hausmann’s Paris, just as it was in the case of Sixth Municipal District in Ottoman capital, İstanbul.

¹⁷ Yerasimos, *Tanzimat’ın...*, 4.

¹⁸ Selim Deringil, “The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Jan. 1993, 4.

However, the institutionalisation of a municipal administration and the change of urban structure in the Ottoman Empire was not simply the result of a change in the political system. Since economy and politics are two inseparable realms, the influence of economic transformation that the Empire went through should be considered as well.

The capitalist economic system that emerged in the 16th century Europe continuously spread out its boundaries “eventually incorporating all areas on the earth outside of itself.”¹⁹ Although the exact period when the Ottoman Empire started this integration process remains debatable, it might be argued that small steps taken in the 18th century were at full stride by mid 19th century. In the period prior to the 17th century, the Empire’s economy was determined by agricultural produce and urban crafts, controlled by the *timar* system and a network of guilds respectively. The population increase and flow of Spanish silver to the Empire throughout the 16th century resulted in high inflation rates and debasement of Ottoman coins, therefore disrupting the balance of economic system. Hence, the Empire turned to tax-farming while gradually abandoning the *timar* system. Foreign merchants were also encouraged to conduct their businesses in the Empire thanks to the extended capitulatory rights. However, these contributed to the decentralisation of the Empire: the tax farmers were relatively autonomous when compared to *timar* holders. As the lands they held became larger and formed *çiftlik*s, the Ottoman power became decentralised.

State’s diminishing central power was further challenged by the increasing penetration of European commerce into Ottoman economy. Although early 18th century did not look very promising for foreign merchants, mid 18th century turned

¹⁹ Immanuel Wallerstein and Reşat Kasaba, “Incorporation into the World Economy: Change in the Structure of the Ottoman Empire, 1750-1839”. *METU Studies in Development (ODTÜ Gelisme Dergisi)*, VIII, 1/2, 1981, 537-70.

the tides in their favour and they began to dominate the market.²⁰ Meanwhile, capitulations turned from being unilateral grants dependent on Ottoman will into bilateral agreements. Being the capital city of the Empire and a port city at the same time, Istanbul was the first city to feel the consequences. As the Ottoman State was pushed further into the periphery, Western states started exerting their power through their consulates in Istanbul, which were now able to obtain commercial privileges from the Porte for non-Muslim Ottoman subjects.²¹ These privileges extended far beyond simple tax-exemptions; non-Muslim Ottoman merchants were now under the full protection of Western states and were practically invulnerable. The number of native Greeks, Armenians and Jews that took advantage of this privilege known as “extraterritoriality” had reached inconceivable numbers by 1882: out of 237 293 inhabitants of Galata, 111 545 were listed as foreign subjects and most of these were non-Muslim Ottomans.²² In the end, the peripheralisation of the Empire created a non-Muslim bourgeoisie. As mentioned above, the rise of bourgeoisie and emergence of autonomous municipal institutions were directly related, hence, the Ottoman incorporation into the capitalist world system arises as another determining factor in the 19th century change of urban structure of Istanbul.

In this context, the most comprehensive study of the Sixth Municipal District as a reflection of European domination over the Ottoman Empire is by Steven T. Rosenthal in his book *The Politics of Dependency: Urban Reform in Istanbul*. Rosenthal bases his examination on dependency theory according to which “advanced countries use their political or economic power to prevent the emergence of modern forms of enterprise and government inimical to their own

²⁰ Edhem Eldem, “İmparatorluk Payitahtından Periferilerşmiş Bir Başkente”, *Doğu ile Batı Arasında Osmanlı Kenti: Halep, İzmir ve İstanbul*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000, 206.

²¹ Wallerstein and Kasaba.

²² Steven Rosenthal, “Foreigners and Municipal Reform in Istanbul”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, II (1980), 228.

interests”²³ and he concentrates on the role of foreign embassies and the non-Muslim bourgeoisie in this process. Aside from Rosenthal’s work, there are not any studies that specifically concentrate on the Sixth District. Osman Nuri Ergin in his *Mecelle-i Umûr-ı Belediye*, however, presents an extensive collection of primary documents related to municipal practices of the Empire and therefore it is perhaps the most valuable source in this field. Although Ergin’s *Mecelle* offers transcribed primary sources relating to the Sixth District, they, still, only present a limited picture. Hence, in hope of achieving a more detailed account of the District, this thesis also utilises other primary sources from the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul and newspaper collections of National Library in Ankara. İlber Ortaylı’s *Tanzimat Devrinde Osmanlı Mahalli İdareleri (1840-1880)* also offers a comprehensive guide for the pursuit of changes in the practices of city administration. Zeynep Çelik, on the other hand, presents an account of transforming Istanbul in 19th century and illustrates the changes thoroughly in her “*The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century*”²⁴ while numerous articles by İlhan Tekeli and Stefanos Yerasimos picture Istanbul in detail.

The first chapter of the thesis concentrates on the traditional municipal practices in the Ottoman Empire and describes the physical evolution of Istanbul in an attempt to place the Sixth Municipal District in a historical perspective and also utilises the travel accounts of foreigners and Ottomans in order to understand how they perceived each other. The second chapter offers a short account of early 19th century efforts to improve municipal services, which paved the way to the establishment of the District, and then tries to portray the Sixth Municipal District by focusing on its organisational and financial structure as well as its failures and

²³ Rosenthal, *Politics...*, xxi.

²⁴ Zeynep Çelik. *The Remaking of İstanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

accomplishments in supply of services. The third chapter, on the other hand, seeks to understand how the Municipality was perceived by the people and to show its repercussions on the other parts of Ottoman urban administration. Lastly, the conclusion tries to analyse the place of the District in the context of Ottoman modernisation.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EVOLUTION OF OTTOMAN CITIES: AN OVERVIEW

2.1. The Pre-19th Century Administration of Ottoman Cities

The administration of Ottoman cities of the classical period was based on the same principles with the above mentioned “Islamic” city: the supply of municipal services was shared among trade guilds, waqfs and the inhabitants of quarters. In this setting, the state mostly played a supervisory role through its agents, *kadi* and *muhtesib*.

The economy played a determining role in shaping cities; hence, the influence of guilds in administration of Ottoman cities was of foremost importance. Guilds were complex commercial organisations, each of which concentrated on a specific profession. Since the majority of inhabitants in a city were involved in the conduct of these professions, and were therefore a guild member, they were essential tools in the organisation of this mass into a manageable entity: Each

craftsman was registered in the records of his guild and this facilitated the supervision of the city's population. Furthermore, the guilds played an important intermediary role, by providing an administrative link between the sultan and the population.²⁵ The extent of autonomy which these trade organisations enjoyed in the Ottoman Empire remains questionable for they never officially become a part of the central administration; however, it is evident that the Ottoman state used them as a means of political, social and economic control.

The primary contribution of guild organisations to the Ottoman city concerned the provision of goods, determination of prices and maintenance of order in the market. This was achieved through a highly hierarchical organisation, with *şeyh*, *kethüda* and *yiğitbaşı* at the top. The *Şeyh* was the official head of a guild chosen from among the artisans while *kethüda* played an intermediary role between *şeyh* and the artisans and heard cases concerning problems between artisans. *Yiğitbaşı*, on the other hand, was the assistant to *kethüda*, who also supervised the provision of raw materials and order within the guild.²⁶ *Kethüda* and *Yiğitbaşı* were important actors in the supply of municipal services, as well. They assisted the *imam* in the administration of *mahalles*, where extra help was demanded, and they were responsible for the maintenance of general security. Moreover, the guilds were actively involved in the supply of water, cleaning, illumination and repair of market places and streets surrounding them.

Referring to a unit of settlement around a place of worship, i.e. mosque, church or synagogue, *mahalles* constituted the basic unit of settlement in Ottoman cities. Each of these *mahalles* had its own unique community that shared a

²⁵ Gabriel Baer, "The Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1970.

²⁶ Ahmet Tabakoğlu, *Türk İktisat Tarihi*, Istanbul: Dergah Yay., 1986, 407.

collective responsibility for the maintenance of order and security²⁷ as well as repairs and cleaning within its borders. The task of undertaking these services necessitated an organised structure and the leadership needed was provided by the imam or the religious leader of the community. The expenses for such works were covered by money collected from the locals on the basis of equal division and number of buildings owned and deposited in the *avarız sandıkları* formed in each quarter. Hence, this structure allowed the Empire to exert social control and maintain municipal services without having to intervene directly.

It should be noted here that the composition of Ottoman *mahalles* was not based on a rigid separation of religious or professional affiliation. The court registers reveal that people of different faiths lived next to each other, constantly buying and selling property and *mahalles* comprised members of different guilds.²⁸ Therefore one may conclude that this division into *mahalles* served to facilitate the administration of Ottoman city rather than preventing clash between different groups of people, although it was at times apparent, as claimed by Weber.

Waqfs, on the other hand, constituted the third important element in the Ottoman city administration. The term *waqf* signified a religious endowment in Islam, mostly donation of a property for public use and this was, in principle, motivated by piety. However, the driving force behind the establishment of *waqfs* often went beyond a simple act of good will and it served as a channel for the achievement of status, protection of wealth as well as the extension of government's

²⁷ Collective responsibility was also enforced by the Islamic Law through its practice of *kasama* (or *kefalet* in Ottoman terms) which asserted that in cases where the culprit remained unknown, all inhabitants of the mahalle in question would be responsible for the crime committed.

²⁸ Özer Ergenç, "Osmanlı Şehirlerinde Esnaf Örgütlerinin Fizik Yapıya Etkileri", *İslam Geleneğinden Günümüze Şehir ve Yerel Yönetimler*, İstanbul: İlke Yay., 1996, 409.

power.²⁹ Whatever the motives behind these establishments were, they played a considerable part in the supply of municipal services and organisation of space in an Ottoman city by construction of public buildings. As a matter of fact, Halil İncalcık argues that the claims of Orientalists as to the lack of planning in the Islamic cities could be dismissed for “the founders of pious endowments followed a traditional plan in establishing the main complexes of the religious and commercial centres of the city.”³⁰ These complexes varied in size and sometimes contained mosques, hospitals, a bazaar, madrasa, soup kitchen, bathhouse, as well as large scale urban utilities such as the water system, store-houses for provisions and slaughter houses simultaneously.³¹ The construction of such a complex meant that the surrounding area would be improved as well since *waqfs* would undertake the repair and cleaning of pavements and streets and the construction of water conduits and sewage systems. The funding necessary for these services and the maintenance of complexes were provided for with the rent from shops and donations of the wealthy population, hence, the *waqf* system was self sufficient economically, at least in theory. However, their continuance depended on financial support of the state, as well.

These three features of the Ottoman cities, although they represented a rather autonomous picture, were subject to constant state supervision, a duty undertaken by the *kadı*. Aside from being the judicial authority, *kadı* was responsible for monitoring the financial affairs of *waqfs* and the conduct of municipal services in *mahalles*. However, the principal duty of *kadı* was ensuring the proper functioning of markets. Therefore, his main activity in the administration of the city included

²⁹ Timur Kuran, The Provision of Public Goods Under Islamic Law: Origins, Contributions, and Limitations of the Waqf System”, *Law and Society Review*, 35:4 (2001), 841-897.

³⁰ Halil İncalcık, “Istanbul: An Islamic City”, *Journal of Islamic Studies I* (1990), 8.

³¹ İncalcık, *ibid*, 11.

supply of goods, regulating market prices in addition to supervising guilds and markets. In his regular weekly visits to markets, he was accompanied by *muhtesib* and janissaries. *Muhtesib* functioned as an assistant to the *kadı*, to relieve him of his work load in municipal matters, and was mainly concerned with the inspection of markets but he was also in charge of controlling weights, measures and provisions. Janissaries, on the other hand, acted as the police force. The company of janissaries made law enforcement possible and facilitated *kadı*'s inspection of markets while *kadı*'s judicial power enabled the punishment of any misconduct without any delay. *Kadı* was also responsible for the maintenance of the city by issuing rules pertaining to the streets and buildings. Janissaries were active in the cleaning of the streets as well: *acemi ođlanları* cleaned the main streets while *çöplük subaşı* disposed of garbage by contracting with *arayıcı*.³²

The above description of various entities, institutions and government agents reveal that Ottoman cities had devised an urban administration which was conducted through local governing bodies. Evidently, this administration did not fit into the description of a modern city, which was shaped by the free will of its inhabitants, as put forward by Max Weber, however, one may speak about a partial, if not complete, inclusion of Ottoman people into the administration. The local notables played a significant intermediary role in the process, and they acted as advisors in matters concerning the nomination of municipal officers and determination of some rules. The common people, too, were able to participate in the appointment of members responsible for the administration of *mahalles* and heads of guilds since the nominations were made in accordance with the wishes of

³² Halil İnalçık, "İstanbul", *EP*.

locals and guild members respectively.³³ Although, in theory, the appointment process was confined to the jurisdiction of *kadı*, and therefore the Sultan, in practice, the public was able to participate in this process to some extent. Still, this participation was not enough to form autonomous municipal institutions; but after all, the existing system eliminated the need for such institutions.

The economic and political changes of the 17th and 18th centuries took their toll on the institutions of the classical period and left them incapacitated at many levels. The support *waqfs* received from the state, for instance, had diminished as the Empire's war expenses increased. According to Faroqhi, the *waqfs* tried to compensate their loss by increasing the rents of shops they owned, but this received criticisms of artisans. Hence, throughout the period, *waqfs* gradually lost their power and most of the time failed to provide the municipal services they had undertaken in previous years. However, this was not surprising since the use of *waqfs* for personal profiteering had become common as "cash waqfs" had become widespread and they had long been considered as a source of corruption in Ottoman sources.³⁴ The circumstances of the era had partially curbed the economic power of guilds while the transformation in the land system had resulted in the rise of a new powerful elite: the *ayans*. The ayans had become the new intermediary between the state and subjects, and hence they were influential in the administrative decisions concerning the cities outside Istanbul. Since the Empire had been going through a period of decentralisation, it was neither able to prevent the *ayans'* abuse of power nor eliminate them.

³³ Özer Ergenç, "Some Notes on the Administration Units of the Ottoman Cities", *Urbanism in Islam: The Proceedings of the International Conference on Urbanism in Islam*, Vol. I, Tokyo (1989), 435.

³⁴ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Kültürü ve Gündelik Yaşam: Ortaçağdan Yirminci Yüzyıla*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997, 250.

Despite such changes, the basic structure of the cities remained more or less the same until the 19th century. It is understandable considering that market regulations had been the primary focus of the Empire and the remaining municipal services were mostly left in the hands of the public: as long as the *kadı* could perform his duty as the inspector and provision of cities was taken care of, there was no need for the state to intervene. However, this failure to fill the void left by now mostly futile entities was the main reason behind the inefficiency of urban administration and the need for drastic measures taken so abruptly in the 19th century.

2.2. The Changing Face of the Ottoman Capital

*The city...does not tell its past,
but contains it like the lines of a hand*

As indicated above, it is possible to witness patterns of centralisation and decentralisation, changing political and social mindset as well as the economic transformation within the Ottoman Empire by examining cities, in this case Istanbul.

2.2.1. The 15th -18th Centuries

Right after its conquest in 1453, the City had started assuming an Islamic character in accordance with the Middle Eastern practice wherein “the city was created

around a place of worship and the urban functions were harmonized with the religious obligations.”³⁵ This transformation into the Ottoman city was further reinforced by the settlement of families from other parts of the Empire into the city, the formation of *mahalles*, and the construction of market places by the *wakfs*.³⁶ This emphasis of Islamic character and existence of market places was in line with the Ottoman conception of city which defined it as “a unit of settlement where Friday prayer can be performed and Bazaar can be held.”³⁷ The *mahalles*, as indicated above, were an essential part of such a system. However, the fact that each of these new *mahalles* constituted self-sufficient entities decreased the importance of main roads connecting them and allowed the inhabitants to incorporate the streets into residential areas hence contributing to the changing urban fabric of Istanbul.

While the city was assuming an “Islamic” character in general, one part of Istanbul remained outside: Galata. The Genoese inhabitants of the area had acted wisely and surrendered during the conquest of Istanbul. Therefore, in accordance with Islamic law, they both had the advantage of avoiding pillaging by the Ottomans and becoming entitled to some privileges. These privileges enabled them to keep their churches, hold their religious sermons and choose a representative for conducting their affairs. Although the *ahidname* which granted these privileges was nullified in 1682, it was one of the reasons why Galata was perceived as a separate and partially autonomous zone of Istanbul in later years.³⁸

Despite these initial Ottomanisation efforts, the end result was pretty much a regular city that could be found elsewhere in the Middle East and it was not until

³⁵ Halil İncalcık, “Istanbul”, *EI'*

³⁶ İncalcık, *ibid.*

³⁷ Ergenç, “Some Notes...”, 426.

³⁸ Edhem Eldem, “İmparatorluk Payitahtından...”, 167.

the reign of Suleyman the Lawgiver that Istanbul gained a more specific character which reflected the aspirations of the Empire.

The 16th century witnessed the peak of Ottoman power and a movement towards centralisation and these were manifested in a series of construction works undertaken in Istanbul that changed the layout of the city. Indeed, this period is considered by some scholars³⁹ as a time when Istanbul had become an imperial city thanks to an elaborate architectural programme implemented by Mimar Sinan, the chief architect of the Empire between 1540 and 1588. Reflecting the height of the Empire's political power and economic prosperity, Sinan mostly built vast monumental buildings such as the Süleymaniye complex, which included a mosque, hospital, schools as well as shops and fountains. Such complexes served both as religious and communal spaces and provided for the functions of a centralised religious institution.⁴⁰

This high level of architectural activity was also a result of the dramatic population increase in the 16th century throughout the Empire. The reflection of this on Istanbul was the creation of new *mahalles* outside the city walls and ever shrinking street widths, some even leading to formation of *cul de sacs* which contributed to the maze like structure of the city. As a matter of fact, broad streets that connected *mahalles* shown in a plan dated 1520 had completely disappeared in later plans.⁴¹ At this point it is important to realise that Mimar Sinan did not engage in a general plan that aimed at an overall change in the urban setting; his concentration was mainly on individual residential and communal areas as well as urban services such as water supply and fire prevention.⁴²

³⁹ Jale Erzen, *Imperialising a City*, <http://archnet.org/>.

⁴⁰ Erzen, 88.

⁴¹ İnalçık, "Istanbul", *EL*.

⁴² Gülrü Necipoğlu Kafadar quoted by Erzen, 88.

The changes in the urban fabric of the 17th and 18th centuries were mostly small scale as were the innovations introduced to the Empire. However, they were no less important since these minor changes were signals of the vast urban transformation that accompanied modernisation efforts in the 19th century. During this period, the economic capacity of the Empire was in decline and the construction works decreased considerably when compared to the 16th century. Yet, this was also a period of increasing Western influence that revealed itself in the newly constructed buildings and sites of the city. In 1720, Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi was sent to Paris for a diplomatic mission, and he returned with his impressions of the city's gardens, palaces, bridges, canals, operas and theatres as well as urban plans. These plans as well as the European style architecture inspired the construction works undertaken in Istanbul, especially in Kağıthane⁴³ and although the newly built kiosks were used as secondary residences they indicated a movement of the Palace away from the old centre. This movement towards the Golden Horn, Bosphorus and Üsküdar also stimulated members of the bureaucracy to move their residences towards these areas,⁴⁴ demonstrating the increasing power of this class. Most of these European style palaces built during the era were destroyed in the following uprisings and only a few examples such as *Çırağan Sarayı* remained.

The most important reforms of the late 18th century and early 19th century came with a military reform during the reign of Selim III. As a matter of fact, the newly instituted *Nizam-ı Cedid* army was a turning point in the Empire, for it represented a clear departure from the former Ottoman understanding of reform as restoration of the old institutions and brought with it “the creation of new institutions and practices modelled on those developed in the West, and their

⁴³ İbrahim Şirin, *Osmanlı İmgeleminde Avrupa*, Ankara: Lotus Yay., 2006, 167.

⁴⁴ Eldem, 176.

substitution for those inherited from the past”.⁴⁵ This innovation found its revelation in the urban structure in the form of military barracks, Selimiye, Levend and Beyoğlu to name only some. This, however, was not only an effort to regain power vis-à-vis Western states but also an attempt to re-establish order within the Empire and to centralise the state power once again. Hence, the barracks built during this area did not only serve the purpose of accommodating the new army. The state also sought to make the strength of this new institution and of itself visible by building these massive structures and tried to reclaim its legitimacy in the eyes of its subjects. Although these modernisation efforts mostly failed, they prepared the ground for reforms of the 19th century.

2.2.2. The 19th century

With initial steps taken in the 17th and 18th centuries, 19th century Istanbul underwent a major change in accordance with the profound economic and political transformation that excelled during the century. What started only in the field of military reforms was now expanding to include education, legislation and administration. The aim of these reforms was twofold since the Empire had to redefine its relationships at both the international and domestic levels. The increasing penetration of the West into the economic and political realms of the state made the adoption of western features necessary while domestically the Empire had to consolidate its centralised authority in order to prevent disintegration. Hence, the traditional institutions and practices, which obstructed the introduction

⁴⁵ Stanford Shaw, “The Origins of Ottoman Military Reform: The Nizam-ı Cedid Army of Sultan Selim III”, *Studies in Ottoman and Turkish History*, Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2000.

of such reforms during the rule of Selim III and the early years of Mahmud II's reign, had to be removed.⁴⁶

The *Tanzimat Ferman* of 1839 was one such attempt for it radically tried to alter the very foundations on which the Empire was built: a new system of administration and new institutions were in order and most important of all, all subjects of the Empire were going to be treated as equals. Since introduction of these improvements would inevitably bring with it a clash with former practices, the Empire had to seek ways to legitimize these new institutions and create a sense of citizenship necessary for this process. At this point, architecture and urban planning and changes in the urban administration patterns provided the essential tools for these causes just as they did for the European states that were “inventing their traditions”.

The Ottoman reformers had started introducing rules concerning street widths, elimination of dead ends and building materials months before the declaration of the *Tanzimat*.⁴⁷ In later years, further regulations that aimed at changing the urban fabric of cities, primarily Istanbul, were issued such as *Ebniye Nizamnamesi* (Regulation for Buildings) of 1848, *İstimlak Nizamnamesi* (Regulation for Expropriation) of 1856 and *Sokaklara Dair Nizamname* (Regulation for Streets) of 1859. Through these regulations, the state was going to be able to divide areas up into plots after fires, expropriate properties where necessary and implement new planning principles. Such innovations were going to serve several purposes. First of all, by introducing broad boulevards, squares and

⁴⁶ Stanford Shaw, “The Central Legislative Councils in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Reform Movement Before 1876”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 1, 53.

⁴⁷ May 1839. Ergin, Mecelle, 1240-1243. According to this document, those economically capable had to build their new houses of brick, the poor were allowed to build wooden houses but they had to be constructed in areas far from brick houses, dead ends were not going to be allowed while new streets were to be opened according to a geometric calculations and an urban plan was going to be prepared.

communal spaces to the City, the Ottoman State was seeking to accommodate the reforms directly into the lives of its subjects. Second, as seen in the example of Paris, replacement of narrow and complicated street structure riddled with dead ends with broad open roads and squares was going to help restore order by facilitating the movement of police and army forces as well as eliminating the chances of escape for rebels and criminals. Indeed, the number of uprisings that often came about before the 19th century had dwindled and Istanbul experienced almost no rebellions throughout the century.⁴⁸ Besides, these new urban installations were useful in providing the scene necessary for the army drills and ceremonies, which were essential for the demonstration of state power to the public. Also, according to the Regulation for Buildings, the height of buildings was not going to be determined in accordance with the *millet* of the property owner, instead the street widths had become definitive. Hence, equality the *Tanzimat* claimed to bring about was emphasised once more through urban planning.⁴⁹

Although they seem like rather preliminary steps, these regulations were intended to facilitate the application of a general urban plan for Istanbul. As a matter of fact, the first blueprints for a new Istanbul were prepared by Helmuth von Moltke, who was a General in the Ottoman army working for its modernisation, under direct orders from Mustafa Reşid Paşa in 1837, before regulations were issued. Although von Moltke had prepared a map of Istanbul and made plans to rearrange street widths, this plan was never implemented; nevertheless, his plan provided the basis for regulations to follow. The first plans to be implemented were Luigi Storari's. Prepared after the Aksaray fire of 1856, Storari's design was in fact

⁴⁸ Yerasimos, "Tanzimat'ın...", 6.

⁴⁹ İlhan Tekeli, "Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Kentsel Dönüşüm" in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: İletisim Yay., 1985, 885.

influenced by von Moltke's previous plans that classified streets according to their widths.⁵⁰ One similar planning project was undertaken after the HocaPaşa Fire of 1865. Much bigger in scope, the report for the plan had stressed the importance of fire prevention as well as facilitation of the police force's duties.

Although the Ottoman state seemed willing to change the urban structure through these regulations, it would not have allowed the establishment of an autonomous municipality if it was not for the pressure from consulates and the non-Muslim bourgeoisie⁵¹. After all, the work undertaken so far was directly controlled by the centre, and delegation of power would have contradicted its efforts at centralisation. However, being the centre of wealth and European influence, the Empire was forced to accept the 6th Municipal District as will be seen below.

The 19th century marked a break from what was termed the "Islamic city" in that laws introduced clearly put a distinction between "the sacred and the secular" and tried to erase the boundaries between the subjects of the Empire. However, the change was not equally pervasive in all areas of Istanbul and all segments of society, and the struggle between people, especially the Muslim community, and state survived.

2.3. Witnesses to Cities

2.3.1. European Travellers to Ottoman Lands

What Weber did in his work "The City" was actually an attempt at defining the newly emerging modern European city and identity, and he could only achieve it by creating an "other". Hence, attributing all contrary and negative qualities to Oriental cities was a way of proving the uniqueness and superiority of the West over the rest

⁵⁰ Zeynep Çelik, *19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Başkenti: Değişen İstanbul*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998, 46.

⁵¹ Yerasimos, "Tanzimat'ın...", 4.

of the world. A similar tendency was evident in the accounts of foreign travellers to the Ottoman Empire: differences were emphasised and a world of two opposite ends was constructed. The Orientals were inclined “to do exactly the opposite of what Occidentals do under the same circumstances and this was revealed even in smallest details:

“The Western man...takes off his hat on entering a house, but he carefully keeps his lower membranes covered. When he writes, he lays his paper upon the table, and moves his pen from left to right...The Eastern man wears his hat into the house, although a king be within, but he takes off his shoes leaving his feet perhaps bare and exposed to view. When he writes, he takes up the paper from the table and moves his pen from right to left.”⁵²

One may find many instances of similar patterns in descriptions of Istanbul that refer to the chaos of the city as opposed to the neat and clean Western cities. Still, recurring themes of street conditions, frequency of fires and epidemics, which are also frequently mentioned in Ottoman documents, inevitably leads us to think that stories told are most of the time true.

The diary of Miss Julia Pardoe⁵³, for instance, records the sloping streets of Istanbul, which were absolutely “inconvenient” for carriages. Besides, these streets were narrow, badly paved and impossible to walk through because of mud that covered them. But these were no surprises; after all, “everyone who had ever heard of Istanbul knows that this is a city of fires and plague.” Plague epidemics were indeed a problem for Istanbul, and the government was desperately seeking a solution. According to von Moltke, however, this was related partially to crowding

⁵² Henry Otis Dwight, *Constantinople and Its Problems: Its Peoples, Customs, Religions and Progress*, USA: The Revel Press, 1901, 159.

⁵³ Miss Julia Pardoe, *18. Yüzyılda İstanbul*, İstanbul: İnkılap Kitabevi, 1997, 46.

housing structures of the eastern cities but more importantly to the insensitivity of Turks.⁵⁴

Since von Moltke was involved in drawing the first city plans for Istanbul, it is possible to find such criticisms of conditions in the city. For fires, for instance, he again, and rightfully, blamed wooden houses and the narrow streets they crowded. The result of such a construction habit was devastating fires that destroy large areas and rising rents for “property owners have to take into consideration the possibility that their property might be burned down to the ground within 15 years.”⁵⁵

Still, despite his criticisms, von Moltke could not help complementing the scenery of Istanbul. As a matter of fact, the natural beauty of the City was quite often appreciated in travelogues, but the fault was always found with the Ottoman Empire: “The beauty of the city surpasses all descriptions I have read so far. One can only dream of a city as gorgeous as Istanbul. If it had belonged to a European country, it would have become the strongest city of the world, but in the hands of Turks, it is only the city with most spectacular scenery.”⁵⁶

Contrary to most travellers’ accounts that describe Istanbul superficially, Jean Henri Abdolonyme Ubcini’s travelogue scratched the surface and described Beyoğlu of 1855 in detail. He mainly concentrated on the social and economic aspects of the area instead of giving a physical description of Beyoğlu since “there was no need to describe a city which was built again and again from scratch after

⁵⁴ Feldmareşal H. Von Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları* (çev. Hayrullah Örs), İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1969, 88-89.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 78-79.

⁵⁶ Yuluğ Tekin Kurat, *Henri Layard’ın İstanbul Elçiliği: 1877-1880*, Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Yay., 1968, 22.

fires every 8-10 years.”⁵⁷ Ubicini, too, pointed out that these fires were the major culprit responsible for high rents of the area, but he also blamed the increasing number of foreigners, which made up almost half of Beyoğlu and Galata’s population, for the increase of prices. Ubicini was right: between 1838 and 1847, the price of land in Beyoğlu had risen by 75 %.⁵⁸ Moreover, this foreign population and the crowd it attracted had made “Pera as distant as Calcutta was to Istanbul”; neither people nor the daily life was the same as in other parts of the city. This distinction, however, had become an important factor during the next two years, when the experiment of Sixth Municipal District was initiated.

It seems that Beyoğlu was not to Ubicini’s taste, for he thought it did not offer much to a foreigner; he preferred Izmir instead. Whether it is due to this discontent or not, it is indeed surprising to see that Ubicini portrayed the increasing Western influence thoroughly and criticised it: “Privileges once granted only to France were in time extended to other countries. So today, Pera is no longer Turkey. Each consulate is the capital city of France, Britain and Austria... Capitulations now give French ambassadors the right to issue *berats* to their citizens and to non-Muslim Ottoman subjects in order for them to benefit from these privileges as well. Hence, Pera became a den of thieves and a place of exile for vagabonds of Europe.”⁵⁹

An interesting and rather different account of Istanbul belongs to Edmondo de Amicis. “Once a hub of beauty and light, Istanbul is now a dreadful city spread over hills and valleys”⁶⁰ says Amicis and admits that his first impressions of

⁵⁷ F. H. A. Ubucini, *1855'te Türkiye* (Çeviren: Ayda Düz), İstanbul: Tercüman Gazetesi, 1001 Temel Eser: 98, 1977, 139.

⁵⁸ Rosenthal, *Politics*, 10.

⁵⁹ F.H.A. Ubicini ,135-136.

⁶⁰ Edmondo de Amicis, *Istanbul* (Çev.: Prof.Dr. Beynun Akyavaş), Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1981, 21.

Istanbul were rather disappointing. He had arrived in Istanbul at a time when planning projects had started and therefore he could not see the beauty that all travellers talked about: “Everywhere there is a sign of a massive project. Demolished villages, new broad roads, fire debris...” It seems that Istanbul had become a place to quench the thirst for exoticism for adventure seekers, since they complained about the lack or demolition of what was once a major source of criticism. When Amicis envisions the future of Istanbul, he sees London of the East, where beauty was sacrificed in favour of civilisation. Just as the traditional clothes were fading away and leaving its place to new ones, each day an old Turk was vanishing to be replaced by a supporter of *Tanzimat*.⁶¹ Still, de Amicis talks about the differences between Beyoğlu and the rest of Istanbul pointing out that the city was filled with contradictions and the clash between the old and new was continuing.

2.3.2. Ottoman Travellers to Europe

Diyâr-ı küfrü gezdim beldeleer kâşâneler gördüm

Dolaştım mülk-ü İslâmı bütûn virâneler gördüm

Ziya Paşa

Ziya Paşa’s lines reflect how overwhelmingly dominating the idea of a European city as the ideal city had become in the 19th century, even for the Ottomans. Of course Ziya Paşa referred to the general situation of the Empire, encompassing political and social supremacy of the West, it, however, reveals much that he based his comparison on the cities. Such comparisons, however, were not specific to this

⁶¹ *ibid*, 140.

century. As a matter of fact, they can be traced back to the 17th century, when Evliya Çelebi wrote accounts of his journeys. In his description of Vienna, for instance, Evliya Çelebi had emphasised the cleanliness, order and security of the city:

All streets are paved and clean...and there are six-seven storey palaces. If a horse soils the streets, property owners immediately clean the mess. When it rains boys and women come out of their stores and houses and wipe the streets spotless. May God be witness; there is not a secure and just place like this city in entire Muslim territory.⁶²

In the 18th century, as the Ottoman Empire started to send officials to Europe on diplomatic and investigative missions, many more accounts that appreciated the European cities were produced. Among these, Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet's description of France where he visited in 1721 stands out. Overwhelmed by the beauty of palaces and gardens, the streets wide enough to accommodate 5-6 carriages at the same time and 4-5 storey buildings with windows overlooking the streets⁶³ as well as technical and industrial innovations he encountered for the first time, he constantly stressed that "words would not suffice to describe the things he had seen" and rather sarcastically he said: "I finally understood what is meant by the hadith 'This world is a jail for the believers and paradise for the infidels'".⁶⁴ This bitter remark was evidently a sign of a departure from how once Ottomans

⁶² Evliya Çelebi in Stefan Yerasimos, "Doğu ve Güney Akdeniz Kentlerinin Batılılaşma Sürecinde Osmanlı Etkisi." in *Akdeniz Dünyası: Düşünce, Tarih, Görünüm*, Eyüp Özeveren, Oktay Özel, Süha Ünsal and Kudret Emiroğlu (Eds), İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006, 168.

⁶³ Beynun Akyavaş (Haz.), *Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi'nin Fransa Sefaretnamesi*, Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1993, 18.

⁶⁴ *ibid*, 38.

perceived themselves. Now observing and judging themselves through the eyes of the West, the Ottomans were feeling the urge to cover up their deficiencies and change the look of the city. We cannot be sure whether it is influenced by Yirmisekiz Çelebi's account, but as early as 1722 constructing houses and planting trees on the walls of Istanbul were forbidden on the grounds that such acts would be mocked and criticised by the ambassadors of Christian states.⁶⁵

Another report from the same century, written by Ahmed Resmi Efendi also included impressions of a European city, this time Berlin. The main themes of his account were similar; straight streets of about 40-50 *arşın*, 3-4 storey buildings of stone, newly built canals with bridges, workshops and precautions against fire. However, unlike Çelebi Mehmet, what he took back to the Empire was related with military matters rather than the city⁶⁶.

Travelogues of the 19th century reveal an increasing interest in the European cities as descriptions become more detailed. One such account belonged to Hayrullah Efendi⁶⁷, who wrote his memoirs hoping that they would encourage the Ottoman people to improve Istanbul as well. His voyages covered Italy, Austria, Britain and France, but in accordance with the spirit of his days, it was Paris –and comparison of Istanbul with the city- that his memoirs were most occupied. Since Paris was perceived as the model for the modernisation of the Empire, it usually deserved a special place in these accounts. Abdülhak Hamid's first memories of this city lied in the answer to his question as to when they were going to see the paradise. The answer was simple: "When we arrive in Paris." The poem that

⁶⁵ Yerasimos, "Doğu ve Güney...", 169.

⁶⁶ Virginia H. Aksan, *Savaşta ve Barışta Bir Osmanlı Devlet Adamı: Ahmet Resmi Efendi*, Tarh Vakfı Yurt Yayınları (1997), 85-86.

⁶⁷ Hayrullah Efendi, *Avrupa Seyahatnamesi* (Haz. Belkıs Altuniş-Gürsoy), T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yay., Ankara (2002).

followed the answer was even more expressive: “Paris’e git bir gün evvel, akl ü firkin var ise/Aleme gelmiş sayılmaz gitmeyenler Paris’e”.⁶⁸

Hayrullah Efendi’s first impression of Paris was its order and cleanliness: names of streets and numbers of buildings were written down on plates, asphalted roads were lined with trees and they were free from so much as a dust on pavements let alone mud, all houses were built of stone hence they were protected from fires. He also described the municipal structure and services performed by it. According to Hayrullah Efendi, Paris was divided into 21 districts, each comprising 4 quarters. The employees of the municipality cleaned and washed the streets, collected garbage and repaired pavements after midnight. Gas, water and sewage pipes were laid underground and streets were illuminated by gas lamps. He was actually so impressed by the pavement works that he dreamt about taking the tool used for breaking stones to Istanbul in order to pave all the streets of the city. However, he also added that, due to taxes paid for these services by the public, it was much easier to live in villages. On the other hand, Şerefeddin Mağmumi, after his observations in Brussels, asserted that municipalities of Istanbul had to collect taxes too, since at present situation “Municipalities of European cities and Istanbul were in no way comparable”.⁶⁹

A few years after Hayrullah Efendi’s travel, in 1867, an Ottoman sultan, Abdülaziz, visited Europe for the first time and the accounts of this travel were put on paper by the *şehremini* of Istanbul Ömer Faiz Efendi, who accompanied him during this visit. Being the *şehremini* of the time, Ömer Faiz Efendi’s attention was especially grabbed by the order and cleanliness of Paris and London, which were the results of municipal services carried out in those cities. Throughout his memoir,

⁶⁸ İbid, 70.

⁶⁹ Baki Asiltürk, *Osmanlı Seyyahlarının Gözüyle Avrupa*, İstanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, 2000, 218.

Ömer Faiz Efendi constantly voiced his admiration for the results of these services and described his feelings of inferiority when he compared them with Istanbul. As their travel continued and Ömer Faiz Efendi arrived in London, he even felt ashamed of his title as *Şehremini* since “municipalities had utmost importance for the British”.⁷⁰ In Paris, the city he described as the city of lights, Ömer Faiz Efendi encountered Baron Hausmann, who made his desire to rebuild Istanbul up to the standards of the day clear. Apparently, Hausmann’s desire to change Istanbul had waned away when he heard the budget allocated for the municipal services of the city but what he had done in Paris had even convinced Şehzade Murad that “a civilised life could only be possible after the cities that allow such a life are built.”⁷¹

Evidently, his voyage, too, was a learning experience for Ömer Faiz Efendi as he often admitted his lack of knowledge sincerely: “I did not know that washing the streets periodically was one of the principal duties of the municipality until I saw Paris.”⁷² He had also drawn attention to the subject of election and public participation, which was considered to be an essential feature of a European city by Weber: “I had a hard time trying to explain what *şehremini* means. They believed that administrators of cities could only be elected by the public, not appointed. I learned that one of the most important assets of the West had started some 200 years ago with this election of city administrators... When I get back, I will warn my friend Mümtaz Efendi who prepared the first regulation and somehow did not take this into consideration.”⁷³ It is actually interesting to see that Ömer Faiz Efendi thought election was necessary to a post that he was appointed directly by the Porte.

⁷⁰ Cemal Kutay, *Sultan Abdülaziz’in Avrupa Seyahati*, İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1991, 53.

⁷¹ Kutay, 46-47.

⁷² *ibid*, 42.

⁷³ *ibid*, 44.

Washing of streets by the municipality was apparently a quite unusual practice for the Ottomans. Sadık Rıfat Paşa in his *Avrupa'nın Ahvaline Dair Risale* says that this practice was especially important in summer time in order to keep the dust away, while Ahmet Midhat Efendi tells the whole process without missing the smallest detail. After describing the process, he makes the following comment: "Using the word 'mud' is a mistake. In European cities like Paris, which have active and organised municipalities, mud only exists as a name, it has no real substance."⁷⁴ Somehow, this issue had a deep impact on Ottoman intellectuals, so much so that Mehmed Akif had even written a poem about it in his memoirs of Berlin in later years.⁷⁵

One recurring theme in these comparisons was the natural beauty of Istanbul as opposed to the European cities, just as foreign travellers to the Empire asserted. In Abdülhak Hamid's words: "One cannot find the gracious scenery and melancholic peace of Istanbul here [Paris]. The grace of Istanbul is God's gift, but this city was embellished by people themselves. If it was not for the laziness of our people, Paris would have fallen far behind Istanbul."⁷⁶ Similar expressions were used even in the regulation of the Sixth District. It seems that this discourse was used in order to encourage people to support the modernisation efforts, pointing out to the possibility of becoming better than the West if the existing potential was utilised.

⁷⁴ Asiltürk, 217.

⁷⁵ *ibid*, 219. "Çamur bu beldede adet değil ne kış ne yaz".

⁷⁶ *ibid*, 72.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SIXTH MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

3.1. Managing the City: Early Municipal Experiments in Istanbul

From its conquest in 1453 to the early 19th century, the supply of municipal services in Istanbul had been shared among *kadis*, trade guilds and janissaries, as was the practice all over the Empire, and this system continued with almost no change. Istanbul was divided into four major districts, *Dersaadet* and *Bilad-ı Selase* comprising Üsküdar, Galata and Eyüp, with 30-40 sub-districts each under the jurisdiction of a *kadı*.⁷⁷ The *kadı* of Istanbul was at the top of this hierarchy and received orders directly from the Grand Vizier. As good as it sounds, the system lacked a proper organisation of service providers enough in number to maintain the whole city as it was primarily oriented towards the market regulations.

Mahmud II's reign rendered the already inefficient municipal system useless. Abolition of the janissaries in 1826 left the *kadı* without adequate back up

⁷⁷ Osman Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i Umur-ı Belediyye*, İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür İşleri Daire Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1995, 1266.

he much needed to sustain order. It was not long after that the *kadis* were relieved from most of their capacities/authorities such as market inspection. New European style courts limited *kadi*'s judicial power to cases concerning marriage and inheritance. Meanwhile the guild system was losing power and this was stripping away most of their functions. These eventually necessitated a new style of administration to provide municipal services. In 1241 (1826), the newly established *İhtisab Nezareti* took over the supervising duty of *kadis* over the markets and guilds as well as undertaking issues concerning security however, by its nature, it fell short of managing municipal duties. According to Ortaylı, this was due to the fact that *İhtisab Nezareti* was a despotic measure intended to maintain order in the city rather than a comprehensive body of municipal services.⁷⁸ Hence, despite intentions and efforts to meet the demands of the modernisation process, the transformation in the city administration went no further than a change of names. Still, the regulation of *İhtisab Nezareti* was at least able to make a change in the structure of the *mahalle* by introducing the system of *muhtarlık* in 1829.⁷⁹ *Muhtar* replaced the religious leader as the head of *mahalles* and took over his responsibilities concerning security.

The frequently occurring and relentless fires, threat of contagious diseases, immigration, crime, polluted water and unclean streets had long been considered as problems in Istanbul, however, although intended, measures taken remained on paper most of the time. The increase in the diplomatic and commercial affairs of the empire triggered the accumulation of foreign population⁸⁰. The Anglo-Ottoman

⁷⁸ İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimat Devrinde Osmanlı Mahalli İdareleri (1840-1880)*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000, 129.

⁷⁹ Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentleri'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapıları*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991, 38.

⁸⁰ The population of Beyoğlu between 1848 and 1882-1886 had increased more than twofold: The Muslim population had risen from 66 700 to 125 000 while the non-Muslim population had gone up

commercial treaty, for instance, was an important motivation for the increase of population since this and the following similar treaties boosted the foreign trade of the Empire by fifteen fold.⁸¹

The Crimean War (1853-1856), on the other hand, created an influx of soldiers, immigrants and foreigners into the city; the latter, who had substantially increased their wealth thanks to the war, concentrated mainly in Galata and Beyoğlu. As mentioned earlier, the traditional administrative structure of the city was basically assuring an adequate supply of provisions and controlling their prices⁸² and this system failed to meet the needs of the ever increasing population. Demands of especially foreign population for order, cleaning, supply of food and security accelerated the search for a solution.

As a result, “*Şehremaneti*”, which was basically the Ottoman version of the French “*préfecture de la ville*”, was created in 1855 (1271) and hence the non-functional *İhtisab Nezareti* was abolished. The adoption of the Parisian system as the model is apparently a sign of the extent to which the French influence had reached in the Empire. The official communiqué published in *Takvim-i Vekayi* stated that *Şehremaneti* aimed at “facilitating the provision of goods and determining the prices as well as undertaking the cleaning of the city”⁸³. Directly under the supervision of *Meclis-i Ahkam-ı Adliye* (Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances), *Şehremaneti* was to be comprised of a director, two assistant directors and 12 other members who were chosen from among “the prominent and

from 70 700 to 190 000. Likewise, the total number of foreigners in Istanbul had risen from 66 000 to 122 202 just within 30 years (1848-78). See Mustafa Cezar, “19. Yüzyılda Beyoğlu Neden ve Nasıl Gelişti”, *XI. Türk Tarih Kongresi, Bildirileri*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara (1994), 2679.

⁸¹ Rosenthal, “Foreigners...”, 228.

⁸² Rosenthal, *ibid*, 230.

⁸³ Ergin, *Mecelle*, 1270.

trustworthy subjects and artisans that dwell in İstanbul”.⁸⁴ However, it soon became clear that with a council composed of guild members and ordinary city dwellers, *Şehremaneti* was far from answering the needs of people since it failed to produce tangible results/developments. Also, this new establishment too had not gone far beyond the boundaries of *kadi*'s classical duties since its main concern was still price control and provision of food and goods. Despite the insufficiency of the establishment itself, then *şehremini* Salih Paşa was held responsible for failure on the grounds that he lacked the intellectual capacity necessary to uphold his duty as director⁸⁵ and was replaced by Hacı Hüsam Efendi. In addition to the replacement of the director, a new step towards the establishment of a municipal organisation was taken and *İntizam-ı Şehir Komisyonu* (Commission for the Regulation of the City) was founded in 1855. As revealed by its name, the commission aimed to maintain the embellishment, cleaning and expansion of roads, illumination of streets, repair of pavements and the improvement/reformation of building styles of İstanbul since the city fell far behind its European counterparts that were built to perfection.⁸⁶ Seeing that the previous council failed, the composition of the municipal commission was altered to include “the members of Ottoman and foreign families who were acquainted with the European ways and had been living in the city for a long time⁸⁷” in order to make use of their experiences in 1856. The members of the council included Antoine Alléon and Avram Camondo, both from substantially wealthy and prominent families of İstanbul residing in Galata and Beyoğlu.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ *ibid*, 1273.

⁸⁵ *ibid*, 1275.

⁸⁶ Çelik, 44.

⁸⁷ Ergin, 1275.

⁸⁸ For full list of members see Ergin, *Mecelle* Vol. III., 1284.

Despite these new arrangements and two years that passed by, a proper municipal body was still far from reality. The reasons for the failure of *Şehremaneti* and *İntizâm-ı Şehir Komisyonu* might be sought in the lack of experience as well as the scarcity of financial resources necessary to maintain the promised municipal services since the main income source for the municipality was basically a tax on carriages and wagons. A second commission established in 1858 addressed this issue in its official report and stated that “the commission should have a municipal cash department which would be administered by the commission itself, the necessary funds for the building and repair of the streets and buildings should be supplied by the property owners, the commission should be granted a certain sum of money in advance by the Porte in order to start the construction works at once and the commission should have the authority to administer and supervise the regulations it has made”.⁸⁹ The Ottoman State had no other choice but to accept these terms in view of the fact that two previous attempts had failed and the members of the commission announced their resignation unless the conditions of the report were fulfilled.⁹⁰ The demands of the commission for wider autonomy and more diverse financial resources were in fact major steps towards the establishment of Sixth Municipal District. The Ottoman State quickly answered the demands and a month later, a council formed by the government issued an official report pointing to the deficiencies of previous establishments and offering solutions. According to the report, despite the large sums of money spent on their repair, pavements were still in poor condition and more efforts than simply changing the stones, such as fixing the problems in sewage system and water works, were necessary. Given that

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, “Komisyon Mazbatası”, 1298.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 1297.

putting the financial burden on the state would be unjust, it would only be fair if the people who benefited from these services covered the expenses. Hence, in order for this system to function properly, the administration of a city or a group of *mahalles* had to be carried out by a council of the inhabitants of the area in question. So, the council advised that Istanbul be divided into fourteen districts.⁹¹

3.2. The Sixth Municipal District

3.2.1. Foundation and Organisation

In 1857, an article published in *Takvim-i Vekâyi* read, “Since the natural beauty of Istanbul needs to be kept in an orderly state with a little touch of man-made embellishment and as it is necessary to pay special attention to the cleanliness of the City, Istanbul is going to be divided into 14 districts”. As a first step, since realising the intended municipal structure in all 14 districts simultaneously would be too difficult, the Sixth Municipal District comprising Galata, Beyoğlu and Tophane was to be established as a pilot area and “this experience would hopefully extend to the remaining 13 districts.”⁹² The main reason behind this choice was the region’s wealthy –and largely foreign- population who “had observed such regulations in foreign countries and would be able to appreciate the efforts” and that within the district “there [were] many valuable buildings and properties”.⁹³ Indeed, the construction of important and valuable buildings in Beyoğlu and Galata had accelerated in the 19th century as the Palace, and the bureaucracy started to move towards the region. As a matter of fact, Cezar suggests, if it had not been for this

⁹¹ *ibid*, 1414.

⁹² *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no: 159.

⁹³ Ergin, *Mecelle*, 1415.

movement, Beyoğlu would not have been the starting point of this experiment.⁹⁴ This statement may be debated since Galata and Beyoğlu had long been the centre of finance and capital accumulation however, its effect cannot be disregarded.

Actually, the composition of the two previous commissions had already signalled that Beyoğlu and Galata would be given priority since almost all of the members were either residents or owners of businesses in the area. The Ottoman government seemed to have ulterior motives for starting the experiment in this district as well: First of all, including the non-Muslims in the decision-making process, especially in such an issue as the city that was a part of their immediate lives, appeared to be a good opportunity in order to encourage the loyalty of non-Muslims to the state and create a sense of citizenship essential for the modernisation process.⁹⁵ Besides, the existence of only a small number of Muslim notables in the area would eliminate the possibility of resistance against a Western style reform.⁹⁶ In addition to this, the dominantly foreign composition of the Municipal Council was also aimed at providing finances for the projects. The population of the region had accumulated a considerable amount of wealth and the area had become an even more important financial centre after the 1838 Anglo-Ottoman commercial treaty, hence the possibility of borrowing money from the foreigners made it the perfect spot to engage in projects that went far beyond the capacity of the state budget. As a matter of fact, this intention was made clear in an official report mentioned above that stated “the money spent since the establishment of *Şehremâneti* and *İntizâm-ı Şehir Komisyonu* had brought no positive outcomes and the financial support of inhabitants is needed... It has been accepted as a general rule that the undertakings

⁹⁴ Cezar, “19. Yüzyılda...”, 2681.

⁹⁵ Rosenthal, *Politics...* xxiv.

⁹⁶ *ibid*, 51.

of certain districts have to be administered by locals.”⁹⁷ This also explains why a degree of autonomy was granted to the Sixth Municipal District. Indeed, regulation of the Sixth District had indicated that it would work under the supervision of Bâb-ı Âli but it would also have room to manoeuvre, that is, the council was going to make the decisions and there was no obligation to consult Bâb-ı Âli for each and every one of them unless they concerned full-size projects and financial assessments.⁹⁸ The former document also justified the inclusion of foreigners in the municipal council stating that:

The people of the Sixth District are competent in issues concerning municipal services, owners of property and mostly of foreign origin hence their involvement is indispensable. Besides, the 3000 *kese* of gold that is necessary for the works to commence cannot be collected from regular people. Since this is also going to be a major burden on government budget, it has to be borrowed from the members of the council as well as the wealthy population of the district.”⁹⁹

The region also needed immediate attention since it was the focal point of embassies, foreign banks and schools as well as restaurants, cafes, theatres and brothels, which made it a major point of attraction and the best candidate in order to initiate works to create a European style city¹⁰⁰. The European influence was so overwhelmingly felt during the whole process that even the name of the district was an imitation of the Sixth *arrondissement* of Paris, which was considered to be the most distinguished among others.¹⁰¹ In addition to this, along with Turkish, French was selected as the official language of the Sixth District’s administration¹⁰² and according to the regulation of the council, translators and interpreters fluent in

⁹⁷ Ergin, 1309.

⁹⁸ Ortaylı, 147.

⁹⁹ Ergin, *Mecelle*, 1309-1310.

¹⁰⁰ Ortaylı, 142.

¹⁰¹ Ergin, *Mecelle*, 1313.

¹⁰² *ibid*, 1312-1314. According to Ergin, the bilingual structure of the Sixth Municipal District continued until 1878, just after the 1877 Municipal Law was passed.

Turkish and French were to be employed in the Municipality.¹⁰³ It is quite possible that most internal correspondence of the district were conducted in French and later translated into Turkish since when, for instance, the council wanted to make announcements of municipality's activities and achievements to the public as well as giving information on foreign and internal affairs or industrial and scientific developments, it was decided that the weekly paper to be printed would be in French. Only those matters that were related to the Municipality would be translated into Turkish and printed together with their French versions in the hope that "the other districts would be encouraged and kept informed of developments."¹⁰⁴

According to the regulation, the Sixth Municipal District would be governed by a director and a council of seven members appointed by the grand vizier, three of whom would be replaced by newly elected members every six months. The stipulation that half of the members should be replaced every 6 months was objected in a later official report on the grounds that sending away the members who had just learned the details of the work undertaken would amount to a huge waste of time.¹⁰⁵ The conditions for the appointment as a council member were simple, that is if the person was among the lucky few: he had to own a minimum of 100,000 *guruş* worth of real estate within the boundaries of the district, had to be residing in Istanbul for at least 10 years and had to have considerable understanding of municipal works¹⁰⁶, though one could only imagine how important having this knowledge would be as long as he had sufficient wealth. In addition to aforementioned seven members, four foreign advisors, who had been living in Istanbul for at least ten years, would also be appointed by Bâb-ı Âli. The element of

¹⁰³ Ergin, *Mecelle*, 1067.

¹⁰⁴ BOA, İ.DH. 53/28300.

¹⁰⁵ Ergin, *Mecelle*, 1318.

¹⁰⁶ Ergin, *Mecelle*, 1601-1602.

financial status was also important in the case of advisors since them, their spouses or a next of kin had to own no less than 500,000 *guruş* worth of property in the district. The director, on the other hand, had to own at least 140,000 *guruş* worth of real estate in Galata and Beyoğlu. He was to be chosen from among government officials and would be appointed by the Sultan's decree¹⁰⁷. Evidently, this insistence on having wealthy members was a sign of Ottoman State's desire to avoid the unwelcome burden the Municipality would add on the treasury.

The structure of the Council presented a more hierarchical and complex picture when compared to the previous attempts in that the Sixth District was an ambitious plan that sought to eradicate all previous problems that were thought to be the result of poor organisational skills. However, contrary to European municipal systems that had inspired the Sixth District, election of Council members was carried out by the Ottoman State on the grounds that "such a sudden change would not be appropriate".¹⁰⁸ Hence, the possibility of public involvement had already been curbed at the fundamental stages of the Municipality.

The first council formed in accordance with the regulation had Kamil Bey as the director, who worked in the Foreign Office as Chief of Protocol. The first appointed members of the municipal council were Ferhat Paşa, the Muslim name of General Stein; Franco Efendi; Ohannes Mıgırđıç, along with former members of *İntizam-ı Şehir Komisyonu* Revelaki David Efendi, Avram Camondo and French Antoine Alléon.¹⁰⁹ This council had a short life and was dissolved in 1861 since the members were accused of corruption and the council as a whole failed to collect taxes properly since the Sixth municipal district had no police force of its own to

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Ergin, 1310.

¹⁰⁹ Ortaylı., 146; Rosenthal, *Politics*, 231-232.

facilitate the process¹¹⁰. It was not until 1863 that the administration was able to pull itself together under the management of a new director, Server Efendi. Contrary to the former line of directors, Server Efendi was chosen for his experience and administrative merits that he gained during his years in the Foreign Ministry instead of solely wealth and a good knowledge of French. Hence, the deterioration and the failure of the council prompted the Ottoman government to reduce the autonomy of the district, although its privileged position continued. Thanks to increasing government involvement, most of Server Efendi's plans were realised even after he departed from his office in 1866¹¹¹.

Before the Ottoman Government felt the need to engage more in the actions of the municipality, when compared to the previous attempts, the Sixth Municipal District had indeed enjoyed a considerably wider autonomy, especially in the case of finances. The Municipality was given the power to conduct its own financial affairs such as organising budgets and daily expenses and was not obliged to inform the Porte. In order to supply the necessary funding, it was able to issue regulations pertaining to the amount and collection of taxes within their district¹¹². The Sixth District was also given a privilege which the other districts could not enjoy: the establishment of a magistrate within the district. Although it was not indicated in the Municipal Council's regulation, the Council asked for the establishment of a court that would handle cases concerning rent and business contracts and would be able to collect fines and punish the parties where necessary. It should be noted that the demand for the establishment of this court did not come directly from the

¹¹⁰ Christoph K. Neumann, "Çatışan Moderniteler veya Beyoğlu'nda Türk Devlet Anlayışının Nasıl Kendi Kendini Yeniden İcat Ettiğinin Kısa Hikayesi", abstract of paper presented at Istanbul im Wandel der Jahrhunderte: Internationales Symposium (2005). www.fak12.uni-muenchen.de/noi/Abstract_Beyoglu_CKNeumann.pdf

¹¹¹ Rosenthal, *Politics...* 240-242.

¹¹² Ortaylı, 147.

Council itself. Upon receiving a request for the examination of the District's regulation, the British Consulate had proposed this idea of a municipal court composed of the Council members and officials of the consulates in the district¹¹³ and the municipality sympathised with the idea of more autonomy. Clearly, this was a sign of Western influence on the experiment and how the population of the area that comprised the District in question perceived itself to be different from the other parts of Istanbul. Although the blueprint for this court was ready by 1860, it was not until 1871 that its regulation was prepared and the Court began to function properly. According to the regulation, the court was only going to deal with cases of buildings and rents and was going to be composed of a president and two members. The court was not going to be able to issue *ilams* but was going to hand out a note that showed the agreement between parties.¹¹⁴ Before a case could be heard, the decision as to whether it should be heard in the municipal court or the regular courts was made. One such case, for instance, was between two merchants, Mehmet Efendi and Orgiroğlu Andrea, concerning a debt. Andrea was a European merchant and Mehmet Efendi earned his living by the same profession, dealing mainly with foreign clients hence it was decided that this case would be heard in the municipal court.¹¹⁵ This privileged status continued until regular courts were established, and between its establishment and abolition, the court did not really accomplish much since it was not a fully authorised judicial body.¹¹⁶

The era starting with the directorate of Server Efendi was a severe blow to this semi autonomous structure: for the first time a director received a salary of

¹¹³ BOA, A. DVN. DVE. 24-A/73

¹¹⁴ BOA, ŞD. 674/34.

¹¹⁵ BOA, A.MKT.NZD 395/84.

¹¹⁶ Ortaylı, 150.

10000 *guruş* plus 3000 for expenses¹¹⁷ and this meant that Server Efendi was going to be closely connected to the government in his actions and plans. In addition to this, the selection of members of the District council had been altered: twelve members were to be nominated from among those inhabitants of the District that paid a total of at least 2000 *guruş* for taxes. Although this new application still meant that only the well off would become part of the administration process, it still changed the composition of the Council and the number of Turkish Muslims involved in municipal administration increased considerably.¹¹⁸

As the independence of the District declined, the success of projects increased and this invited firmer control of the Ottoman government over the District. Observing the level of achievements, it seemed to be a good idea to carry the experiment to the next level, and in 1868, the government decided that municipal administration would be expanded to include the whole city. Once again 14 districts were designated by “*Dersaadet İdâre-i Belediye Nizamnâmesi*” (Regulation for the Municipal Administration of Istanbul). This regulation was never really executed due to the lack of financial resources, with the exceptions of Yeniköy, Beykoz and Kadıköy municipal districts. Adalar and Tarabya Districts had been established prior to this date (1864) in response to the demands of inhabitants; after all, these were summer residences of the European population.¹¹⁹ Since it was set by law that the privileged position of the District was going to remain intact unless all other districts were created, the council’s structure and organisation did not change on paper. However, in practice, the Council’s capacity

¹¹⁷ Rosenthal, *Politics*, 146.

¹¹⁸ Rosenthal, *Politics*, 148.

¹¹⁹ Çelik, 47.

was diminished to a minimum especially when the Ottoman State withdrew financial support and the fire of 1870 drained the last bits of its funds.

Finally in 1877, Regulation for the Municipal Administration of Istanbul was issued which ordered the establishment of all municipal districts and therefore making the Sixth Municipal District subject to the same rules with the others. Although the Sixth Municipal District continued its existence well after the Regulation of 1877 was issued; this regulation stroke the final blow to the District by taking away its semi-autonomous structure and diminished the importance of the Sixth District. The main reason was the deprivation of Sixth District from one of its major sources of income: the property tax. The collected taxes had comprised almost 50 %¹²⁰ of the district's income and as a result the administration of the Sixth district, which was already in a downward spiral because of its debts, was pushed to the brink of bankruptcy.

3.2.2. Activities (Routine Services and Major Projects)

Although its composition reflected European traits, the Sixth Municipal District still carried the remnants of the former establishments with its price control mechanisms and market inspections. However, it still managed to bring about new applications and at least institutionalise previous attempts that failed such as building of roads, illumination of streets as well as water and sewage systems.

i. Streets and buildings

Cleaning, widening, repair and illumination of streets were among the primary issues that the Council sought to tackle. They were too dirty to even allow people to

¹²⁰ Ergin, *Mecelle*, 1334.

walk and hence they were a major culprit in the spread of diseases. They were too narrow to allow proper flow of traffic, putting out the frequent fires had become almost impossible since thanks to wooden houses close to each other they spread quickly over vast areas, the lack of illumination had rendered it difficult for people to walk around after sunset safely. Aside from the practical handicaps that people encountered in their everyday lives, the improvement in the condition of streets was regarded as a must in the process of modernisation since the European counterparts of the Empire had undergone a major change in terms of urban development. Travellers from the Ottoman Empire to the West frequently told their recollection of the vast, beautifully lit boulevards, streets and squares surrounded by cafes, shops and gardens and while the Ottoman intellectuals fervently advocated the necessity and the benefits of such a transformation. Such accounts helped maintain the idea that cul-de-sacs, narrow and maze like streets, dark alleys were identical with backwardness and the order in the city revealed the rate of development: “One can easily figure out [in Berlin] how much application of scientific knowledge in urban life can contribute to the beauty, comfort and cleanliness of the city.”¹²¹ When coupled with numerous complaints about the streets, it was no coincidence that the Sixth Municipal district got involved with the street works immediately.

One of the first complaints made to the Council of the Sixth District was by the consulates in the area concerning the mud on Beyoğlu Street, which had “rendered it impossible to walk”. The initial payment was made by M. Antoine (to be paid back to him later) but since it was the early days of the Sixth Municipal District and it still had not raised enough financial resources, the Council had asked

¹²¹ Asiltürk, 196

the Porte for a monthly support of 30 000 *guruş* in order to eradicate the problem.¹²²

The need to put an end to such inconveniences was obvious hence the council quickly prepared “The Regulation on Streets” (1859). The regulation stipulated that streets of the Sixth District would be classified into three groups according to their importance and the most important ones would be cleaned twice in summers and once in winters. In order for this to be fulfilled, the Council decided to award contracts to those willing to provide this service at reasonable prices.¹²³ Moreover, disposing of waste water and leaving trash out on the street were severely forbidden and those that violated the rule had to pay fines. Quite ambitious in print, it appears that the problem was not completely solved and the fines were not intimidating enough. Ömer Faiz Efendi in his memoir of Paris voyage wrote that he fought hard to find a proper answer to then mayor of Paris Hausmann’s question as to how the streets of Istanbul were washed:

“We do not need to wash the streets of Istanbul ... since our streets are lined with coffee shops, barbers, markets and restaurants on both sides. Each of these shop owners deposes of waste water on the streets... Among these, water from the barber shops usually contains soap and this spares us deodorants and detergents as well!”¹²⁴

The regulation did not only address the issue of street cleaning. The lack of proper illumination on the streets jeopardised the lives of people; theft, burglary and murder rate was quite high and finding bodies in the city dumps was not out of the ordinary.¹²⁵ The inhabitants of the region were not permitted to walk around in the

¹²² A. AMD 81/92, 29 December 1857.

¹²³ İ. MVL. 416/18210.

¹²⁴ Kutay, 45.

¹²⁵ BOA, A. MKT. NZD. 310/90.

streets without a lantern at nights and were told that they would be imprisoned if they acted otherwise.¹²⁶ Newspapers of the time insistently printed articles on how European capitals had put an end to this problem and stated that Galata and Beyoğlu were in much poorer condition than rural French and English towns.¹²⁷ Hence the regulation of the council put forward that “each and every street in the district would have at least one gas lamp as soon as possible”. As a matter of fact, the administration of the Sixth District was able to illuminate at least a portion of Beyoğlu and pipe works around the Palace were completed and ready to be extended to Beyoğlu by 1857¹²⁸ but the work continued rather slowly. In 1864, it was ordered by an imperial decree that all civil servants had to light one or two street gas lamps in front of their houses both in summer and winter and anyone from the public willing to do the same were welcomed.¹²⁹ Shops were also required to keep their surroundings illuminated. The spread of gas lamps all over Galata and Beyoğlu was praised by the papers of the time however, there were still complaints and apparently the Sixth District was still behind Europe. According to Ömer Faiz Efendi, who was the *şehremini* of İstanbul at the time:

“Nights of Paris, even the nights of all Western cities are different from our nights. In our lands, the day starts at sun-rise and ends at sunset. Here, it is quite the contrary! Their streets and houses are lit up by gas and night becomes day.”¹³⁰ Abdülhak Hamid in his memoirs makes a similar remark: “Night falls on Paris but it never gets dark. Dark nights and dark days only exist in Muslim lands.”

The narrow streets of the district had become a disturbing inconvenience as well since they obstructed the ever increasing traffic within the district and

¹²⁶ Nur Akın, *19. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Galata ve Pera*, İstanbul: Literatür Yayınları, 1998, 102.

¹²⁷ *Journal de Constantinople*, in Akın, 129.

¹²⁸ BOA, İ.DH. 24593/Y.PRK.AZJ.13/69.

¹²⁹ *Journal de Constantinople*, 28 April 1864 in Akın, 59.

¹³⁰ Kutay, 37.

increased the risk of fire. The narrowness of the streets was a result of previous practices: the part of the street in front of a private property practically belonged to the owner of the property and the owner was allowed to use this space. The idea here was to make the most use of room available and as only a little portion of the population refused to take advantage of this right, the width of streets quickly decreased and some streets transformed into cul de sacs¹³¹. This was especially the case after big fires when people included a portion of the street as they rebuilt their houses.

As a first step, starting in 1858 and continuing until 1870, a planning project for Galata commenced and Karaköy, which by the time had become an important spot for international trade, was reorganised to include a square and a *han*. According to the Council these areas needed immediate attention since “most parts of Galata, especially since those close to the sea, are abounded with small streets that allow no sun light and fresh air to penetrate and they have become a haven for criminals and thieves...and at certain places the streets are so narrow that two mules, let alone two carriages, cannot pass at the same time.”¹³²

In order to facilitate this and future projects, the council was given the right to expropriate buildings when it was necessary. Expropriation was going to be embarked on in areas designated by the Council after experts from the municipality determined the price of property or plot of land in question and the property owner and the District came to an agreement on the price.¹³³ Once the roads were widened, the lands that were not utilised for the projects were to be divided up into plots and sold at auction¹³⁴. Therefore, holding the right of expropriation was of utmost

¹³¹ Yerasimos, 12.

¹³² *Mecelle*, 1326.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 1610.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1326.

importance in that it served two purposes: creating the much needed space for the projects and providing an alternative source of income for the municipality. Although this seems like a good plan, the issue of expropriation also became a continuous source of dispute between the inhabitants and the District since prices offered and demanded hardly matched. In the case of street expansion work around *Kalekapusu*, for instance, the property owners did not accept the price suggested and therefore the Sixth District asked the Ministry of Public Works to assign some officials and re-evaluate the price of land.¹³⁵ Most of the time such disagreements were settled in favour of the property owners and the Council was forced to pay higher charges¹³⁶ and hence the Council continuously complained about this situation saying that the owners asked for extreme prices.

Nevertheless, the municipality had managed to broaden a considerable number of streets and to illuminate them by awarding contracts to mostly foreign companies. Already in its early years, the District had managed to widen the street of Yeni Çarşı, the road between Tophane and Galata, Karaköy and Galata, as well as Tarlabası and Grands Champs. The work accomplished seems to have made a great difference since Ahmed Mithad in his “Avrupa’da Bir Cevelan” had compared the streets of Paris to those of Istanbul: “The boulevards of Paris and even the most famous of them Champs Elysees seemed much narrower than I had imagined them to be... the levelled parts of Beyoğlu Street is way wider and brighter than the first rate streets of Paris”¹³⁷

In order to gain space for one such project, the non-Muslim cemeteries near Taksim Barracks had to be moved to a new location. Of these, European cemetery

¹³⁵ BOA, A.MKT.MHM 325/29-1.

¹³⁶ BOA, A. MKT. MHM 465/70.

¹³⁷ Asiltürk, 194.

had been relocated without any problems¹³⁸ however doing the same with the Greek cemetery had caused a bit of stir. Much to the discontent of the Greek population, settlement was made possible by offering a space near Tatavla as the new Greek burial ground and promising that no building would be erected on their former cemetery. However, as the plans proceeded, it turned out that the Municipality had decided to use the space for building a European style garden. The continuing works for building a wall with banisters and planting trees arose many objections on the Greek side. The Greek Patriarch protested the wall in his complaint saying:

...a wall is being constructed on the former Greek cemetery, which had been abandoned for road works on certain conditions and this is against the laws [but] the construction works are still continuing at a great speed causing much grief on the side of Greek population. It is still not obvious what rights and authority the builders have to erect the wall in question and if the Muslim people have a motive or anything to say the case should be turned over to the court or a commission comprising members of the two parties.

In the end, the works continued on the grounds that plans had already been developed and changing them would be a waste of money and time.¹³⁹ After all, the problem never had anything to do with a conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims and the same happened to the Muslim cemetery at the opposite end of the district soon after. Besides, as Rosenthal points out, these cemeteries at both ends of the district were already being used for evening promenades and entertainment. The motive behind these actions was pushing graveyards out of the centre of the city and adding a new spectacle to the new modern European style planning that the District was so desperate to manage. These parks displayed a different profile from that of the classical setting of Ottoman cities that lacked communal gathering places in the European sense and were among the first examples of “formal” public spaces

¹³⁸ BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 286/66.

¹³⁹ BOA, İ. MVL. 21687.

although the Muslim women were still prohibited from wandering in the parks either on foot or in a carriage¹⁴⁰.

The most historically destructive activity of the Sixth District was the demolition of Genoese walls in order to make access easier between Beyoğlu and Galata. Starting in the early days of the District, the project was completed under Server Efendi's administration. The demolition was intended to create plenty of free space for expansion of streets as well as construction of new buildings. Besides, the sale of rubble and lands that were not utilised were going to be a good source of income.¹⁴¹ Indeed, the accounts of Arseven report that the demolition of the walls had added an extra 9000 m² of unoccupied space to the District¹⁴². Still, the reactions to this act were controversial: while *Journal de Constantinople* cheered the developments saying that "the work transforming the appearance of our suburb is actually being completed,"¹⁴³ while Vakanüvis Lütfi Paşa condemned it for being disrespectful to the historical heritage.

The 1863 Regulation of Streets and Buildings (*Turûk ve Ebniye Nizamnâmesi*) facilitated the works of the district by generalising the rules pertaining to the street widths, building heights and infrastructures for water, gas and sewage. Although the rules of this regulation were binding for entire Istanbul, the inhabitants of the District felt it their right to object to the clause on the building heights on the grounds that the owners had been paying high taxes for small portions of land. The problem was resolved with the following decision:

Since the majority of property owners in the District are non-Muslim, there is no harm in allowing them to build their houses as high as 24

¹⁴⁰ Çelik, 58.

¹⁴¹ BOA, İ.DH. 534/37054.

¹⁴² Celal Esad Arseven, *Eski Galata ve Binaları*, İstanbul: Çelik Gülersoy Vakfı İstanbul Kütüphanesi Yayınları, 1989, 56.

¹⁴³ *Journal de Constantinople*, in Rosenthal, *Politics.*, 174.

*arşins*¹⁴⁴ if it is a stone building and as high as 16 *arşins* if it is a wooden building (instead of proposed 20 and 14 *arşins* respectively). However, this permit is only applicable to buildings within the boundaries of Sixth District.¹⁴⁵

The fires that had long been a problem for Istanbul and the Empire as a whole also provided an opportunity for the District to introduce and facilitate European style planning. With each burned patch of land, the Municipality tried to widen the streets and remove cul de sacs. After the fire of Aksaray in 1856, the damaged area was mapped and re-planned to fit European standards for the first time in the Empire's history.¹⁴⁶ A similar procedure was followed subsequent to a fire that burned almost all houses along Sakızağacı Street in Beyoğlu. The Italian engineer that prepared the plans for Aksaray, Luigi Storari, was employed to prepare a new plan for the street, however; this brought two sides of the street face to face. Since such applications were new, some of the inhabitants insisted on retaining their right to rebuild their houses while the others agreed to sell their plots at suitable prices. In the end, dispute was resolved in favour of those who wanted to sell on the grounds that "if houses were to be rebuilt, the levelling of the street would become impossible" and the opposing side was given the right to rebuild their houses only on the condition that they left enough space for broadening the street.¹⁴⁷ This decision was quite contrary to previous practices that continued as late as the 1840s, that is, instead of building the streets and houses exactly as they were before; it was decided now that construction should be carried out according to a plan. Within a short span of 20 years, the Ottoman conception of city and urban planning had been altered and such decisions revealed their ambitions.

¹⁴⁴ 68 cm.

¹⁴⁵ BOA, İ.MVL 498/22533.

¹⁴⁶ Çelik, 45.

¹⁴⁷ BOA, İ. MVL 16617/A.MKT.MVL 91/10.

Another large fire, despite its cost of human lives and material losses, helped break an old habit. The general practice was building houses out of wood over and over again as they burned in fires since doing this was much faster, easier, and most importantly, cheaper. Although there were previous attempts at regulating the building materials and encouraging the construction of stone buildings, it was not until the 1870 fire of Beyoğlu, during which approximately 3000 houses were burned down and 80 people were killed,¹⁴⁸ that using brick/stone to build houses was made obligatory.

Since the scale of the 1870 Fire was so huge, it had also opened a gateway to re-planning of almost all the district. As the municipality was incapacitated by financial problems, the planning was carried out by a commission of architects and engineers that was set up by the central government. The resulting project included further widening of streets, addition of new squares as well as construction of theatres and hotels. However, the plan was never realised thanks to the objections of inhabitants of the area who feared that their land would become even smaller, and unwillingness of the municipality to allow a project under supervision of the government. It seems that at this point the District's ideals of modernising the city had fallen behind its fears of losing autonomy.

The period between the aftermath of 1870 Beyoğlu Fire and the Municipal Law of 1877, the Sixth District could not manage to perform any substantial developments regarding city planning. However, efforts up to that date helped at least shape the vision of a modern Ottoman city.

¹⁴⁸ Çelik, 53.

ii. The Tunnel

Increasing commercial activity also necessitated faster and more efficient means of transport hence plans to facilitate this heavy traffic that flowed mainly through *Yüksekkaldırım* were initiated thanks to the efforts of a French entrepreneur. Being an engineer, Eugene Henri Gavand observed the difficulties people experienced while walking this distance and decided to propose a plan that would facilitate transport between Karaköy and Beyoğlu. The solution was an underground railway project and the lease of contract to M. Gavand was officially declared in 1869 with an imperial edict.¹⁴⁹ According to the contract dated 6 November 1869, Gavand had agreed to construct the tunnel without any financial support from the Ottoman State, any losses or damages incurred during the construction works were his liability and the project would be completed within 30 months. He was free to determine the means for providing the finance as long as the resulting company was approved by the State. Any dispute between Gavand and the state was to be resolved by the Council of the State (Şûrâ-yı Devlet). The land needed for building of the tunnel and its stations would be purchased from the property owners by the lease holder according to the prices agreed upon by the two parties or, in case of disputes, to prices set by the state. In return, M. Gavand was going to hold the license of the tunnel for 42 years. If any disruption occurred during the construction, the lease holder had to pay 100 francs per day.¹⁵⁰ It was also one of the clauses of the contract that Gavand had to choose his residence within Galata and Beyoğlu that is, within the boundaries of the Sixth Municipal District.

In order to find the necessary funding for the construction, Henri Gavand established a company named “*Chemin de Fer Metropolitain de Galata à Péra*”

¹⁴⁹ Ergin, 2489.

¹⁵⁰ Ergin, 2490-2499.

with two French banks as partners. However, before the operation of this company was put into effect with the approval of the Ministry of Public Works, a war broke out between Germany and France. The resulting defeat of France forced Gavand to seek new partners for the company. This time joining with the British, Gavand set up a new firm: “The Metropolitan Railway of Constantinople from Galata to Pera”.

As a result of these problems, it was not until 1872 that the construction work began. However, from 1871 onwards, news about the tunnel had been frequently printed in the newspapers of the era. According to *La Turquie*, the Company had almost completed the purchase of necessary lands and by early 1873, people were going to be able to go from Galata to Beyoğlu within 2-3 minutes for 20 *para* without having to climb the steep *Yüksekkaldırım*¹⁵¹. As a matter of fact, Gavand was only able to buy a small portion of houses for a modest price by 1871, and since the rest of the property owners were not willing to sell their properties at those prices, he requested the expropriation of those plots by the Ministry of Public Works. The Ministry turned this request over to the Sixth Municipal District and consequently a commission within the District was established.¹⁵² The efforts of this commission to find a common ground for the two parties proved fruitless since the calculated sums to be paid for the expropriation were either too low for the property owners or too high for Gavand. The continuing disagreement could only be solved in 1873. In order to create the necessary space for the station on the Beyoğlu side of the tunnel, the cemetery near the Galata *Mevlevi* Lodge was expropriated as well, but this time without any problems since the council was much more decisive in its actions. According to the related document, a larger portion of the required 4700 *zira* for the station was already at hand and only 1600 *zira* of the cemetery was

¹⁵¹ Akın, 145.

¹⁵² Vahdettn Ergin, *Tünel*, İstanbul: Simurg, 2000, 47.

going to be used as the construction site so it was decided to be expropriated at a rate of 5 *liras per zira*, totalling 9000 *liras*.¹⁵³ Despite all these problems obstructing the construction process, the tunnel was finally completed in November 1874. After several tests for security with animals instead of people as passengers¹⁵⁴, the opening ceremony was held on 17 January 1875. Enthusiastically welcomed by the people the tunnel had carried 70 000 passengers only within two weeks of its opening and hence became one of the major projects undertaken within the district.¹⁵⁵

iii. Miscellaneous

The Sixth District was eager to reach European standards in every sense and between 1857 and 1877, it performed many other tasks. Health was among the primary issues: As well as appointing a municipal doctor for the poor in 1864, the Municipal Council took diseases seriously and vaccinated children in the District and specifically emphasised that children without vaccination should not be admitted to schools.¹⁵⁶ When an epidemic of smallpox spread in Beyoğlu and Galata, for instance, ten doctors and students of medicine who had familiarity with the vaccination procedure were immediately called to the District and the epidemic was put under control soon¹⁵⁷ and the members of the Council received *nişans* for their competence.¹⁵⁸ In 1865, the municipality went a step further in health care services and opened a hospital for the poor¹⁵⁹ and in the later years more hospitals

¹⁵³ BOA, A. MKT. MHM. 465/52.

¹⁵⁴ Engin, 58.

¹⁵⁵ Ergin, 60.

¹⁵⁶ BOA, DH. MMİ. 73-1/23.

¹⁵⁷ BOA, A. MKT MHM 290/71.

¹⁵⁸ BOA, A. MKT MHM 352/33.

¹⁵⁹ Rosenthal, 102.

were constructed: Mecruhin Hastanesi (Hospital for the Injured), Beyoğlu Belediye Hastanesi (B. Municipal Hospital) and Nisa hastanesi (Hospital for Women).¹⁶⁰ The construction of hospitals was a service previously undertaken by *vakfs*, hence, as Çelik indicates, these projects may be regarded as the replacement of traditional institutions with European ones.¹⁶¹

Being a commercial centre, on the other hand, the District needed much improvement in transport and accommodation. Theophile Gautier had written in 1864 that “a traveller could benefit from the beautiful scenery that nature abounded if there were pavements to walk on, hotels to stay and restaurants to eat at”.¹⁶² Around the same year, an entrepreneur, James Missiri requested a licence for building European style hotels in Beyoğlu, Büyükdere, Üsküdar and Büyükkada. The licence was granted to the Ottoman Hotel Company on the condition that all damages and expenses were to be the liability of the company.¹⁶³

For facilitating the transport and the use of carriers, on the other hand, the Galata Bridge was built in 1863¹⁶⁴. The permission to establish a tramcar company was granted in 1869, the same year as the tunnel however, the plans for the construction of the tram way were not realised until 1911.¹⁶⁵

Maintaining order and peace within the District was also an enormous concern. Gambling and prostitution was widespread in Beyoğlu and Galata although they were forbidden by law. In 1859, the municipality took measures to

¹⁶⁰ Ortaylı, 153.

¹⁶¹ Çelik, 39.

¹⁶² Ergin, 1269.

¹⁶³ BOA, İ.MVL 23721.

¹⁶⁴ İlhan Tekeli, “19.Yüzyılda İstanbul Metropol Alanının Dönüşümü” in *Modernleşme Sürecinde Osmanlı Kentleri*, Paul Dumont, François Georgeon (Eds.), İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999 26.

¹⁶⁵ Ergin, 2398.

prevent gambling and put public balls under licence, where gaming was a common activity.¹⁶⁶ Meanwhile, prostitution had penetrated into residential areas, much to the dissatisfaction of local people. The Municipality continuously received complaints about prostitutes and was called into action. In a petition that protested the increasing number of prostitutes around St. Benoit church, for example, the Sixth District asked the Ministry of Public Security to place at least one official in each street surrounding the area.¹⁶⁷ Such measures were mostly short term and only when the Municipality started a campaign against prostitution could the majority of them be removed and contained in Yenişehir.¹⁶⁸

3.2.3. Finance

The issue of providing necessary funds for the projects at hand had haunted all the previous experiments and their failure mostly resided in the lack of such necessary financial resources. Hence, this issue was of utter importance for the council of the District. Since the very fundamentals of the Sixth District's establishment laid in the idea that locals should administer their area, the necessary funding for the services were intended to be provided through (interest free) loans from private individuals living in the District, most of whom were wealthy Christians¹⁶⁹ and by inhabitants of the area who took advantage of these services. As early as 1857, it had been stated that the required sum for the cleaning and illumination of Beyoğlu would be collected by following methods: setting a tax on the existing properties in accordance with their value, and again according to their value, collecting a tax on rent. In addition to these, the fines to be collected after the issue of *kanunnâme-i*

¹⁶⁶ Rosenthal, 73.

¹⁶⁷ BOA, A. MKT. NZD. 401/63.

¹⁶⁸ Rosenthal, 95.

¹⁶⁹ Rosenthal. 236.

hümâyûn would be utilised in providing these services.¹⁷⁰ Since the date this document was issued coincided with the early days of the municipality of the Sixth district, the council did not have enough accumulation of revenues and some of the expenses were met by private individuals such as Ohannes Efendi. Ohannes Efendi had extended a loan of 10000 *guruş* for street cleaning and 15000-20000 *guruş* for illumination.¹⁷¹ These sums were to be paid him back in instalments at the beginning of each month by the Council of the district and the payment of this and similar debts would “in no way become a burden on the (Ottoman) treasury”.¹⁷² However, the District had already started borrowing from the government in 1858: 174 803,5 *guruş* needed for paving stones laid on the streets of Beyoğlu were paid from 3000 *kise* of *guruş* that was extended as a loan by the Ministry of Finance.¹⁷³ By 1859, the Council had once again needed help of the state: “the Sixth Municipal District decided to borrow 4000 *kise* of *guruş* from stockholders and bankers just like it did the previous year in order to meet the expenses that could not be covered due to its premature financial status and asked for the guarantee of the Ottoman State for this loan. Since this does not comply with the regulation of the Sixth District and the state treasury has already undertaken responsibility of previous loans, the municipal council will be given permission if and only if it finds loans with lower interest rates”.¹⁷⁴

In 1858, the regulation of the Sixth District was issued which laid out the taxes to be paid in more detail: The Sixth District had the authority to collect taxes on real property, which could be as high as 2 %, as well as taxes for cleaning/illumination of streets, repair of buildings and pavements, on scales and on

¹⁷⁰ BOA, A.MKT.MHM 82/51.

¹⁷¹ BOA, A.MKT.NZD 325/75; 327/74; 350/52.

¹⁷² *ibid.*

¹⁷³ BOA, A. MKT MVL 97/78.

¹⁷⁴ BOA, A.MKT NZD 282/30.

incomes, which could be maximum 3 %.¹⁷⁵ As maintained by the regulation of the council, revenues from taxes were to be used equally for all parts of the district, however, those who had not received services yet were to be exempt from taxes.¹⁷⁶ Another tax exemption was granted to schools and religious buildings. Meanwhile, if a property owner refused to pay his tax within five days of its announcement, he was to be responsible for paying twice the sum; and if the person in question insisted on not paying, he along with his family and servants would be prevented from entering his house or shop and this would be enforced by *zabits*.¹⁷⁷

In order to determine the amount of taxes to be collected, the Sixth Municipal District commenced a cadastral survey between the years 1857-1866, which was a first for the Ottoman capital¹⁷⁸. When compared with the surveys carried out in the other Districts, the cadastral survey of the Sixth District was much more thorough and systematic: 20 officials were assigned with the duty of commencing the survey of the District with an allowance of 19600 *guruş* in contrast to 6-8 officials and 4000-7000 *guruş* allowance designated for surveys elsewhere.¹⁷⁹

The financial prospects of the Sixth Municipal District appeared optimistic on paper since the revenue sources were plenty and amounted to sums that the previous attempts at establishing a municipal organisation could not even come close to. However, put into practice, the deficiencies of the system and the unrealistic predictions took their toll on the District. First of all, the presumption that the notables of the District would provide interest free loans turned out to be quite far from the truth: the creditors preferred to extend only a small part of their

¹⁷⁵ Ortaylı, 151./Ergin, 1612.

¹⁷⁶ Ergin, 1612.

¹⁷⁷ Ergin, 1614.

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Ortaylı, 151.

loans without interest and for the rest they demanded a gruesome 12 % interest rate annually. In 1863, for instance, the interest free loans from private individuals totalled 261 717 *lira* while credits with interest multiplied the previous sum by five at 1 560 642 *lira*.¹⁸⁰ It seems that giving a small loan without interest was a small favour in return for the guarantee that the District would borrow larger sums of money at high interest rates from the same people. For instance, according to the same document, A. Baltazzi had given 2702 *lira* credit without interest and 100000 *lira* at 12 % interest while A. Camondo, a member of the District's council, gave away 12000 *lira* interest free and extended 200000 *lira* with interest. Interestingly enough, then director of the Sixth District Kamil Bey had also preferred to loan a sum of 100000 *lira* at 12 % and did not bother to lend any money without interest. Only six people, three of whom were Turkish,¹⁸¹ were generous enough to extend credits without hoping to benefit from them. According to Rosenthal, this was a sign of "a growing commitment to European municipal principles on the part of at least a small number of Westernised Ottomans".¹⁸² As a matter of fact, at times, the local Muslim Turks' enthusiasm went so far as making it a part of their will that a portion of their inheritance be used for repairs of pavements and streets.¹⁸³

Among the financial failures of the District was the *Karaköy Han*, which had initially started out as an ambitious plan that would become a great source of revenue in the future. What actually happened was quite the contrary: the construction work and loans taken had become a great financial burden on the District. Already at the beginning of the construction, over 3 million *lira* had been

¹⁸⁰ BOA, İMVL 22231; Rosenthal, 69.

¹⁸¹ or at least bore Turkish names: Abdurrahman, Ali Suyolcu and Hadımoğlu (İMVL 22231); Rosenthal, 69.

¹⁸² Rosenthal, 69.

¹⁸³ BOA, A MKT UM 389/81 According to the document, one Hüseyin had left 1/3 of his inheritance for use in such works.

borrowed from Pera bankers.¹⁸⁴ In order to cope with this burden, the Council decided to sell the shops in the finished parts of the *han* in 1860. However, since the prices were set too high, only a few shops were purchased and the money gained from this transaction fell disappointingly far from even paying the interest on loans.¹⁸⁵ Still, the Council was not ready to give up on this project and for this reason, in 1861, the Council was still seeking credits to finish the ongoing works: “It has been decided that a loan of 3 million francs at 12 % interest rate would be taken from merchant Herman Bomeyer (?) in order to finish the Karaköy Han constructed by the Sixth Municipal District and pay the debts of the aforementioned District”.¹⁸⁶

It seems that the Council was optimistic about the prospects of the *han* and still believed that they would benefit from the project since if the *han* was finished, the rent gained from it would suffice to pay the debts and if the project was abandoned all expenditures made so far would be in vain.¹⁸⁷ Loans for the construction works followed one after another and in the end, the debt for this project only reached up to 3 million *guruş* in 1863 and when it was finally sold, the revenue was even less than one third of the balance due, at 900 000 *guruş*.¹⁸⁸ As little as it was, the money gained from selling of the *han* was more than a welcome sum for the District immersed in debt and it was immediately used to pay debts owed to the Ottoman Bank.¹⁸⁹ Along with *Karaköy Han*, the Sixth District proposed

¹⁸⁴ Rosenthal, 51.

¹⁸⁵ Rosenthal, 84.

¹⁸⁶ BOA, A.MKT.MHM 760/114.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Rosenthal, 148./BOA, A. MKT MHM 327/71.

¹⁸⁹ BOA, A. MKT. MHM. 327/181; İ. DH 37054.

the auction of demolished *Kule-i Zemin*'s and Genoese walls' land. Although the land was sold for 130 guruş per *zira*¹⁹⁰ and the District used some portion of the revenue to pay its debts, this sale had not been completely beneficial to the District since the government decided to use the rest of the money to construct the building for *Darü'l Fünun*.¹⁹¹

The small number of interest free loans indirectly affected the collection of taxes as well. The Council believed that such loans and people's willingness to pay their shares of the expenses after seeing what had been achieved would be sufficient to raise money for the projects to be undertaken. Hence the district preferred to deal with pavement of the streets and illumination at first instead of collecting the property tax.¹⁹² However, the spirit of the locals was not high enough to pay for the services they received. A new regulation issued in 1860 stated that repairs could be carried out by property owners and that the expenditures would be deducted from the property tax however, this option remained mostly futile, too.¹⁹³

With good intentions falling short of meeting expenses, a new extraordinary tax amounting to 10 % yearly rent was introduced in order to make up for the shortage of funds while the Council decided to raise the municipal tax to 5 %. The initial reactions in the papers were positive: "At Pera, Galata, and soon in Constantinople there will be assessed a municipal tax. If this tax is logical in that it is used to develop prosperity and commerce, so is the *kaime* tax (the extraordinary tax), which is even more direct in bringing about prosperity."¹⁹⁴ However, the newspaper reflected the idea of the Council rather than the people and besides, while people avoided the 2 % tax in effect, expecting them to pay much more was

¹⁹⁰ 78,5 cm.

¹⁹¹ A.MKT.MHM 351/67.

¹⁹² Rosenthal, 83.

¹⁹³ *ibid*, 84.

¹⁹⁴ *Journal de Constantinople*, quoted in Rosenthal, 85.

most certainly an illusion. The result of the tax collection was a sum of less than one fourth of the expected tax revenues¹⁹⁵ and the administrators of the District had to abandon many of their plans causing public support to decline even further.

Along with all the financial failures, the fact that the Council's actions were riddled with claims of corruption did not help its finances and credibility either. In 1859, two surveillance officers, one of whom was an acquaintance of Antoine Alléon, were charged with dishonesty and discharged from their posts. Saying that the charges were unsubstantiated, Alléon resigned from the Council and refused to answer any questions related to the subject.¹⁹⁶ The director of the Council Kamil Bey, on the other hand, was accused of obtaining the rights of Terkos water from the Porte and selling them to an entrepreneur at a handsome price.¹⁹⁷ Similar rumours had obscured the construction process of Karaköy Han as well.

With no money to undertake new projects, the Council sought new ways to raise funds and turned to markets. Seeing that work licences could be a good source of income, the *gediks* within the District were abolished and were sold by the municipality under a different name at excessive prices.¹⁹⁸ Although it seems rather unfair for the artisans in the district, for Rosenthal, this resulted in a minor transformation of economy by destroying what was left of the old guild system.

The Council also sold the rights to issue licenses for public balls and to levy a tax on mask wearers during the season of carnival.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, the Municipality

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 86.

¹⁹⁶ Rosenthal, 87.

¹⁹⁷ Ortaylı, 146./MUB. 1342.

¹⁹⁸ Rosenthal, 88. According to Rosenthal, watchmen of Pera had to pay 80 *kuruş* a month while the rate for the same job in rest of Istanbul was less than 10 times this amount at 70 *para*.

¹⁹⁹ Rosenthal, 145.

asked the right of collecting tax for salvaging (*çerçöp*) and *değnekçilik* within the boundaries Sixth District to be granted to it. The amount of tax to be collected was going to be within the range of 40 *paras* to 3 *guruş* and was going to be determined according to the financial status of the property owners.¹⁹⁸ This right was farmed out to private individuals and had become a major source of income along with controlling and taxing of the weights (*çeki, kile, kantar*). For instance, the Council had insisted that the District should receive the stamp tax for *dirhems* cast within its boundaries and calculated this sum to be 24 000 *guruş* per annum.²⁰⁰ During Server Efendi's administration, these two applications had brought an income of 475 000 *guruş* to the Sixth District.²⁰¹ Another solution for increasing income was organising a lottery. Although games of chance were considered as gambling, it was decided that the sale of lottery tickets was going to be limited to Galata and Beyoğlu and the resulting revenue was going to be used for repair of pavements.²⁰² The Sixth District was in such despair during this period that it had also wanted permission to collect the tax on *Cisr-i Cedit* (the New Bridge on Golden Horn) saying that "the continuation and permanency of the municipality depended on the collection of this tax".²⁰³

The designated term of the Council was over and the newly elected members had inherited an economic shipwreck that wiped away all the initial public support. In an effort to rebuild trust between the inhabitants of the District and the Council, the new members continuously emphasised the progress made within the past three years. Meanwhile, a financial commission had been set up and started investigating Council's debts.

¹⁹⁸ BOA, A.MKT.MHM 219/90.

²⁰⁰ BOA, A. MKT. MVL. 128/87.

²⁰¹ Rosenthal, 145.

²⁰² BOA, A. MKT. NZD 243/33.

²⁰³ BOA, A.MKT.NZD. 351/62.

The financial crisis of the District continued with constantly changing directors and members of the Council and meanwhile regular municipal services were neglected. As a matter of fact, instead of setting an example for the rest of Istanbul, the District was now far behind the progress made in those areas. In order to put a halt to the ongoing decline, the Porte teamed up a commission and, as the result of this commission's findings presented a rather gruesome picture, the Ottoman Government started to get involved in the administration of the municipality. Consequently, then director Saadetlu Hayrullah Efendi was replaced by Server Efendi in 1863.

As indicated earlier, the period starting with Server Efendi as the director marked a considerable decline in the independence of the District and with municipal debt reaching up to roughly 6 778 000 *guruş*²⁰⁴, it was inevitable to ask for help from the Government in return for agreeing to more participation from the Ottoman State. Indeed, the government had extended the District loans totalling 4 139 000 *guruş* between the years 1863 and 1866.²⁰⁵

In 1863, the Ottoman Bank had been abolished²⁰⁶ and the District's debts to the Bank were transferred to the Imperial Ottoman Bank. According to the related document,²⁰⁷ total debt was a sum of 180 000 gold liras without interest and "remaining in debt was devaluating the developments achieved by the Sixth District and removal of this liability was going to help lift the ambiguity surrounding the Municipality." Hence, it was decided by the government that this debt was going to be settled gradually within 14 years by assigning a certain part of the District's

²⁰⁴ BOA, İMVL 22231.

²⁰⁵ BOA, A. MKT. MHM 341/63.

²⁰⁶ The Ottoman Bank mentioned here was established on 13 June 1856, by Henry Layard and it functioned as the state bank until the establishment of the Imperial Ottoman Bank. For a detailed account, see Edhem Eldem, *Osmanlı Bankası Tarihi*, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul (1999).

²⁰⁷ BOA, A.MKT.MHM 284/23.

revenues and by selling some property and land. Meanwhile, Server Efendi was given orders to form a commission under his chairmanship in order to scrutinize and settle the debts of the District by selling some properties such as the Karaköy Han mentioned above or a land of 33600 *zira* near Asmalımescid that remained unused after the widening of streets.²⁰⁸

Securing the financial support and guarantee of the state, the council also implemented new rules such as taking a 15 % tax from the wine shops in the District and increasing the property tax to 7 %. The property tax was not going to be implemented on the poor but the foreigners in the District were going to be obliged to pay it.²⁰⁹ The new measures proved successful and this achievement brought with it more economic support from the government, therefore by 1867, the financial situation of the District showed substantial improvement (See below).

The Budget of the Sixth Municipal District for 1284 (1867)²¹⁰			
Revenues	<i>Guruş</i>	Expenditures	<i>Guruş</i>
Property Tax	1 500 000	Salaries	960 000
Licences for Artisans and Shops	400 000	Illumination	540 000
Buildings	130 000	Pavements and sewage	280 000
Contracts	170 000	Stationary and extraordinary expenses	40 000
Fee for the Transfer of Inheritance and Property	30 000	Dress for officials	10 000
Fines	15 000	Rent for the	50 000

²⁰⁸ A. MKT.MHM. 315/95; İ.MVL 37226

²⁰⁹ Rosenthal, 154.

²¹⁰ Ergin, 1334.

		Municipality Building	
Sergiler (shops)	90 000	Construction of the Municipal Building	20 000
Stamp Tax	25 000	Excess Revenues to be Transferred to Next Years Budget	800 000
Balls, entertainment, weddings...	235 000		
Immigration Permits	6 000		
Ilam Harcı	12 000		
Çeki	10 000		
Kile	12 000		
Kantar	25 000		
Etc	10 000		

In the years following Server Efendi's term, the District managed to maintain financial stability to some extent, however, the insistence of the Ottoman State to gain more control over the administration of the District and the Council's resistance to this was endangering the financial bond between the two parties. The unwillingness of the Council to obey the 1868 Regulation and the government's proposals for the aftermath of the 1870 fire caused this bond to be damaged severely. In the end, the Municipality was receiving only little assistance from the centre, enabling it to perform basic municipal services.²¹¹ In this period, the Sixth Municipal District was not even able to pay its debts to the owners of expropriated properties. The owners of demolished houses and shops on Topçular Street, for instance, had not been able to collect their money from the District for two years and had finally decided to file a complaint addressed to the Council of State. The

²¹¹ Rosenthal, 190.

Council of State ruled that in order not to victimize the owners any longer, the debt was going to be paid by the state treasury and this was going to be deducted from yearly financial support given to Sixth Municipal District in instalments.²¹²

The first few years of success based primarily on the flow of loans and grants was soon overwhelmed by the increasing financial crisis described above and the problem of finance was solved only when the 1877 Regulation was issued at the cost of what made the District special: its autonomy.

²¹² BOA, ŞD 677/4.

CHAPTER FOUR

SIXTH MUNICIPAL DISTRICT AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS

From its inception, the activities of the Sixth District had been under close scrutiny of the public. The reactions of people varied as their perceptions of modernisation differed. Although the dominant view was that the establishment of a municipal administration would be beneficial for the whole Empire, its formulation as the Sixth District caused mixed feelings as revealed in the newspapers of the era. Moreover, even when the Municipality was duplicated, motivations of the people were mostly different from those that the District was based on.

4.1. Sixth Municipal District in the Press

Since the District was the first example of a modern municipal administration, its value as a news item had been considerable. The Ottoman press at the time was a newly flourishing phenomenon and the scene at first was dominated by newspapers printed by foreign entrepreneurs living within the District such as the *Journal de Constantinople* and *La Turquie*. Mostly printed in French, these papers closely scrutinised the activities of the municipality and gave news concerning the progress

of works as well as the proceedings of the municipal council on a daily basis, hence, they were directly influential in the formation of public opinion. As a matter of fact, even the establishment of the municipal district owed much to constantly recurring news of the newly designed European cities and the complaints and demands of the population of Galata and Beyoğlu concerning the lack of even the basic municipal services that would enable a decent living that matched the modernising Empire.

The copies of *Journal de Constantinople* issued in early the 1850s abounded with similar accounts and recommendations for the solution of problems. In an article dated May 9, 1851, the paper had underlined the importance of naming the streets and numbering the houses, and stated that such work would facilitate the life in Galata and Pera, where people of different religions and races lived together.²¹³ In 1855, the paper had announced that European capitals that Pera wanted so desperately to resemble had solved the problem of illumination with the help of gas lamps and that even electricity was going to be used. As a result, *Journal de Constantinople* suggested that the same could be achieved in Galata and Pera, by making use of hydrogen.²¹⁴ The paper also tried to promote this idea by highlighting early experiments: an illuminated Naum Theater had not only offered an economic and effective solution, but also presented a magnificent spectacle.²¹⁵ Street repairs and widening, on the other hand, were considered to be an essential step in the creation of a healthy and inhabitable Pera, and as works on this aspect had so far been ineffective, the paper, in line with the findings of the council that proposed the establishment of the Sixth District, had put forward the idea that the locals had to

²¹³ *Journal de Constantinople* (9 May 1851), in Akin, 130.

²¹⁴ *Journal de Constantinople* (19 February 1855), *ibid*, 127

²¹⁵ *Journal de Constantinople* (1 May 1856, 27 July 1856), *ibid*, 127.

contribute to the expenses.²¹⁶ As revealed in the examples above, newspaper articles had voiced the opinions of mostly the foreign and wealthy population of the district concerning urban changes and more or less outlined the issues that Municipality was going to undertake in the years to come.

As the newspapers were so insistent on expressing the need for a municipal transformation, the establishment of the Sixth Municipal District was regarded as a fulfilment and celebrated with supportive messages and articles published. On 5 July 1858, *Journal de Constantinople* had written that the initial reactions of Galata and Pera's population to the District Municipality had been positive, and the later issues of the paper had described the establishment as the start of a new era in Ottoman history.²¹⁷

In such an air of enthusiasm, the early works of the District were often highly praised. Although it was the first year of the Municipality and the Council was only at the stage of planning the works, *Journal de Constantinople* had told its readers that the Municipality had reached "wonderful" decisions concerning the pavement, widening and illumination of streets and that everyone supported these efforts wholeheartedly.²¹⁸ As the work progressed, the paper also kept proudly announcing that activities concerning streets and saying that they would match the European standards, and that the new system would be extended to the rest of Istanbul, soon.²¹⁹

Meanwhile, the paper was also making suggestions to the Council such as the construction of a French style garden²²⁰ and encouraging the people of the district to do the same while indicating their concerns by announcing that a

²¹⁶ *Journal de Constantinople* (19 February 1855), *ibid*, 132.

²¹⁷ *Journal de Constantinople* (5 July 1858), in Rosenthal, *Politics*, 60.

²¹⁸ *Journal de Constantinople* (17 November 1858), in Akın, 104.

²¹⁹ *Journal de Constantinople* (4 October 1858), in Rosenthal, *Politics*, 77.

²²⁰ *Journal de Constantinople* (5 April 1858), in Rosenthal, 69.

complaint box had been placed outside the temporary residence of the Municipal Council.²²¹ From these news articles it can be concluded that the foreign papers and the District worked together to form a favourable public opinion for the newly established municipality and therefore performed a valuable task. Keeping the population content and convincing them that the Municipality was an integral part of life was significant since it had to legitimize its existence in the eyes of the public and therefore assure the payment of taxes much needed to maintain the operation of the system.

The optimistic mood reflected in these papers, however, had started to dissolve as early as 1860. Despite the close relationship at the beginning, as the Municipality started to fall into a financial crisis and therefore failed to fulfil its duties, the papers started to criticise the Municipality harshly. The writers of *Journal de Constantinople* complained about how the cleaning and repair of small streets were ignored in 1860,²²² and in the following year it stated that the Municipality was not committed to its duties as no improvement had been achieved for the past months despite the fact that the inhabitants of Galata and Pera paid their taxes.²²³ Between 1861 and 1863, the news abounded with so many instances of municipal failures that disappointment had set in and the criticisms had become bitter: “The council must either reform or admit its incompetence and go back to the traditional system, which once again would see the inhabitants carrying paper lanterns through darkened streets.”²²⁴

As told in Chapter II, this gloomy picture of the municipality changed in 1863 and the reform that the newspaper deemed necessary came with Server

²²¹ *Journal de Constantinople* (4 October 1859), in Akin, 105.

²²² *Journal de Constantinople* (18 January 1860), in Rosenthal, *Politics*, 83.

²²³ *Journal de Constantinople* (6 September 1860), in Akin, 107.

²²⁴ *Journal de Constantinople* (1 September 1861), in Rosenthal, 95.

Efendi. As a result, the articles on the Municipality were optimistic again. As a matter of fact, although his appointment to the office showed the diminishing autonomy of the Municipality and caused some objection on the side of former council members, Server Efendi's importance was highlighted in the paper as "under wise and enlightened leadership."²²⁵ The news during the period praised the new streets and gas lamps but still, grievances concerning the Municipality were constantly voiced until the 1877 Municipal Regulation. After all, even Server Efendi was not able to pull the District out of its troubles and the chances of District to reach goals once predicted were close to nil.

Meanwhile, news concerning the works and advancements of the municipality was becoming a part of the developing Ottoman press as well, although such news were relatively less in number when compared to the foreign press within the Empire. However, while newspapers like *Journal de Constantinople* only reflected the opinions of the District's population, and drew attention to municipal services, the articles in the Ottoman press, either intentionally or by the nature of their position, reflected the problems of modernisation, inequality and how this process was conceived by the larger public. *Takvim-i Vekayi* of Şinasi dated 14 September 1863, for instance, had reported improvement of streets within the District. Although these were regarded as positive developments by the paper, instead of accepting and celebrating them without any hesitation, Şinasi had made new suggestions, probably because he wanted this urban transformation to assume more of an Ottoman character:

During its early years, the Sixth District gave foreign names to some streets, some of which are even vulgar words. If the District wants to make European style changes, these improper names should be changed with names of those known persons from among people of the

²²⁵ *Journal de Constantinople* (1 September 1861), *ibid*, 151.

Ottoman Empire, who are the rulers and owners of this land. Only by this way the European style changes would have been fully applied.²²⁶

Şinasi's emphasis of the Ottoman people as the sole sovereign of the Empire might be regarded as a reaction to increasing European domination, while his suggestion is indicative of an awareness of how the reforms, be it in case of municipal transformations or any *Tanzimat* reforms, should be put into action.

Similar discontentment with increasing European domination was evident in the newspaper articles of other contemporary Ottoman intellectuals as well: Ziya Paşa bitterly told how the economy and commerce was now controlled by the foreigners and that the European style municipal reform was going to force the Ottomans to leave Istanbul into their hands: "Istanbul's filthy streets are torn down and replaced by stone buildings and boulevards like those of Paris. The streets are lit with gas until morning and various theatres amuse us in the evening (...) These things were not accomplished by Ahmet Efendi and Hasan Ağa but by the wealth of Europeans."²²⁷ Hence, they were the ones to enjoy the developments. As indicated earlier, the municipal works had increased prices within the District and therefore, it had become impossible for the poor to live within its boundaries. With rules concerning expropriation, it was now much easier to draw this population out of Galata and Beyoğlu and Ziya Paşa, fearing that one day entire Istanbul will be subject to the same developments, had painted a rather gruesome picture of a future Istanbul dominated solely by Europeans. Apparently, Ziya Paşa chose to exaggerate the situation in order to emphasise the foreign influence evident within the Empire, substantially demonstrated through municipality of Galata and Beyoğlu. This issue

²²⁶ *Takvim-i Vekayi* (2 Eylül 1279), Nr. 23.

²²⁷ *Hürriyet* (16 November 1868), in Rosenthal, *Politics*, 173-174.

was also handled in Teodor Kasap's *Diyojen*, where he predicted rather sarcastically that "shop signs reading French Barber, Paris Shoestore, German Café, English Restaurant will be replaced by Muslim Barber, Turkish Shoes, Ottoman tailor, Eastern Commerce Center-we sell Ottoman products"²²⁸ in the future.

The fact that French was used as one of the official languages of the District was not helping either; it was drawing even more criticisms from intellectuals. Although the regulation of the District had indicated that this was a necessity because of the dominantly foreign population of Beyoğlu and that Turkish and French were going to be used simultaneously, according to Basiretçi Ali Efendi, Turkish was almost abandoned in Galata and Beyoğlu as the Ottoman people admired French and belittled Turkish on the grounds that it was not efficient as a scientific language.²²⁹ This tendency to have a high regard for France was also condemned by *Diyojen* for "those who imitated the Paris fashion in Istanbul like monkeys"²³⁰ were held superior to others. As Teodor Kasap asked "Where is the 5th District?"²³¹ he was actually referring to the most tangible evidence of this admiration: the name of the District.

Aside from the weight of foreign influence in the administration, the District's incapacity and failures were a constant target of the Ottoman press, as well. Every time Galata and Beyoğlu were described, the ruined and dirty streets and pavements crowded by myriads of people, dark alleys and unfinished projects were mentioned so many times that words such as "mud", "steep", "dark", "debris" had become almost identical with the Sixth District. In one such instance, Beyoğlu

²²⁸ *Diyojen* (18 Kanun-ı Sani 1287), Nr. 6.

²²⁹ *Basiret* (20 Rebiülevvel 1288), Nr. 15 in Nuri Sağlam, *Basiretçi Ali Efendi: İstanbul Mektupları*, İstanbul: Kitabevi Yay., 2001, 28.

²³⁰ *Diyojen* (13 Temmuz 1287), Nr. 35.

²³¹ *ibid.*

Street was described as a rocky hill (*girîve*) with zigzagging and steep streets, lined with things resembling pavements on the sides. The Sixth District, on the other hand, was the well wisher (*hayır-hah*) of the Street, which the high and the low and foreigners knew by three different names: “Those who know the language call it *Daire-i Sâdise* or *Altıncı Daire-i Belediyye*. The common people mostly call it simply *Altıncı Daire* and the foreigners prefer the Commission.”²³²

These features had often become subject of mockery for the satirical press. In his column where he predicted unlikely future events, Teodor Kasap had told that “there will come a day when the streets of Istanbul will be illuminated by gas lamps and the pavements will be repaired and cleaned, so that people will be delivered from walking in darkness like thieves and swimming in an ocean of mud in winter.”²³³ These issues had long been the subject of *Journal de Constantinople* but apparently, the Municipality had kept investing in the main streets rather than alleys as *Diyojen* underlined the same problem years later by placing a fake announcement of Sixth District in the paper: “The Sixth District does not have to illuminate any streets other than Grand Rue de Pera. Although the regulation postulates that an oil lamp should be placed near holes and debris, the municipality considers itself to be an exception. (...) If you should fall into a hole and hurt yourself or sink in mud up to your throat on these streets, you should not hold the Sixth District responsible. We inform you of the situation in advance so that you will not get angry with the municipality”.²³⁴

The recurring fires, on the other hand, were still a big problem hence Basiretçi Ali felt it his duty to warn the Municipality of potential fire starters: “There are three ruined windmills in Galata owned by Armenians. We do not have

²³² *Diyojen* (18 Mart 1287), Nr. 13.

²³³ *İbid.*

²³⁴ *Diyojen*, Nr. 164.

to take their carelessness into consideration since the buildings themselves have turned into matches. They catch fire occasionally and every time the fire is extinguished with much difficulty by the inhabitants. If they ever fail to do it, the whole area will be burned to the ground. (...) Therefore, the Sixth District should take care of it.”²³⁵ Basiretçi Ali was also reporting buildings likely to collapse in almost every issue of the paper. However, fires could not be prevented and Teodor Kasap kept wishing that God granted some other solution than fires to light up the nights of Istanbul”²³⁶

As we know, the financial drawbacks had prevented Sixth District from solving all these problems for once and all, however, according to *Diyojen*, this was nothing to be angry about:

Indeed, all papers criticising the Sixth District owe an apology to the municipality: It appears that there is a valid reason why the Sixth District does not clean the mud on the streets. There is no shame in it. This is called commerce. All states and peoples make sacrifices for the development of commerce, so why should the Sixth District fall behind?

(...) Some French man has invented a “mud scale” and made a contract with the Sixth District. (...) This cane like scale will be used to measure the depth of mud and everyone will have to use one to protect themselves from rain. They have spent long hours calculating and predicted that 50000 mud scales would be sold within the District, leaving 12 500 *lira* profit! (...) So now we understand that the absence of street cleaning had to do with this contract with the “monsieur” rather than the incapability of the municipality. Therefore, we apologise for any previous misunderstandings and criticisms. ²³⁷

Despite the humorous language *Diyojen* used to describe the circumstances, the consequences of filth on the streets were grim. The Sixth District had managed to succeed in its fight against epidemics to a certain extent but cholera kept coming back. Still, the situation in the District was better than other parts of Istanbul, where

²³⁵ *Basiret* (29 Mart 1290), Nr. 1201, Sağlam, 276.

²³⁶ *Diyojen* (18 Mart 1287), Nr. 13.

²³⁷ *Diyojen* (19 Kanun-ı Evvel 1288), Nr. 178.

dozens of people were falling victim to the disease. The papers insisted that the practice of quarantine had to be applied everywhere in Istanbul, although it was more or less exclusive to Galata and Pera at the time.²³⁸ These expressions denoted more than a suggestion for the improvement of public health, in essence, they were pointing out to the inequality between the people of the District and the rest of Istanbul. The wealthy parts of the city were receiving all the benefits while the poor ones were ignored. As a matter of fact, this preventive measure came to be employed so frequently within the District that the locals regarded it as imprisonment and tried to evade it whenever they could.²³⁹

Water supply had been another problem that the Municipality failed to offer a solution. The District had given its best from its inception, and the discovery of new springs in 1864 had presented a rather promising picture, but due to poor infrastructure, its distribution was not accomplished. Newspapers announced water shortages in the coming summer almost every year and hence, the dream interpretation column in *Diyojen* told its readers: “If you see an officer of the Sixth District in your dream, it means that there will be no rain for the next six months.”²⁴⁰

Turning cemeteries into gardens had been among major projects of the Sixth District and *Journal de Constantinople* had encouraged the municipality by constantly telling this “western environment” needed a green space.²⁴¹ However, this was a delicate issue, and had to be dealt with carefully. In 1865, for instance, *Ceride-i Havâdis* was criticising the Municipality for using tombstones in

²³⁸ *Diyojen* (15 Teşrin-i Evvel 1287), Nr. 62.

²³⁹ *Basiret* (15 Teşrin-i Evvel 1287), Nr. 506 in Sağlam, .

²⁴⁰ *Diyojen* (21 Kanun-ı Evvel 1288), Nr. 181.

²⁴¹ *Journal de Constantinople* (18 January 1860), in Akın, 151.

construction of a wall and cutting up trees in the Muslim graveyard.²⁴² The Sixth District had immediately responded by saying that it was not privy to such a development, but it would not be repeated again.

Diyojen, on the other hand, found these efforts meaningless. This was not a priority at a time when basic services could not even be provided. Nevertheless, the construction works had started and Teodor Kasap was left with no choice but to criticise it: “Everything was in working order during the last rain, so it was now time for the embellishment of Beyoğlu. In this age of civilisation and in such a place as Beyoğlu that is the centre of development; people who got used to see beautiful scenes stemming from civilisation cannot tolerate the sight of the Armenian Graveyard. Hence, they will be glad to see it replaced by a garden decorated with various flowers.” However, the Council’s decision was obstructed by the Armenians, just as in the case of the Greek cemetery, for “the graveyard was worth 300,000 *lira*”. In order to prevent the construction works, Armenian priests had set up a tent and did not allow the workers to pass. Observing the situation and seeing that the Sixth District had “stayed with shovels and pickaxes on its shoulder”, he thought that the Municipality should take the opportunity and “remove whatever was left of pavements in the District while they are still carrying their shovels.”²⁴³

As indicated in the previous chapter, prostitution was a major problem for the District. Along with the inhabitants of Galata and Beyoğlu, newspapers too were complaining about the establishment of brothels in Beyoğlu near schools, gentleman’s clubs and residences. However, *Diyojen* observed the situation from a different angle:

²⁴² Akın, 111.

²⁴³ *Diyojen* (21 Kanun-ı Evvel 1288), Nr. 181.

We should first discuss this: what is the duty of the Sixth District? Isn't it charged with bringing the civilization to our country? So how can a civilised life be attained? With the help of gas, pavements and the cleanliness as well as the beauty of streets, right? And how can these be realised? Undoubtedly, with money. So, how much these schools and clubs pay monthly to the District? Without a doubt, they refuse to pay anything saying that "we spread knowledge", and they might even be asking for donations from the district for themselves. Nevertheless, the *madams* that these papers deemed morally corrupt pay their taxes every year. So don't you think the Sixth District would be right to put them first?²⁴⁴

We understand that major steps had been taken in eliminating prostitution within the district as Basiretçi Ali says that he gladly hears news of Sixth District's officers driving the prostitutes away from Galata²⁴⁵ but Kasap's account rather gives us information about how hard it was for the District to collect taxes while the inhabitants tried to evade it. As a matter of fact, the unwillingness on the part of the inhabitants to pay their taxes was a concern for the foreign press as well. For that reason, they often tried to encourage them to pay, but such announcements rarely found any response. As the Council of the District strove to find its way out of this economic downfall, it was forced to find new sources of income, like collecting a tax on balls organised within the District, but these became subject of criticism as well: "This year the Sixth municipal district has profited 300 000 *guruş* from tax on balls in Beyoğlu... May God increase their profits! At last the first fruit of civilisation is being ripened."²⁴⁶ The desperate situation that the Sixth District had fallen contrary to the aspirations that led to its establishment must have awaken feelings of pity since Teodor Kasap prayed God to grant more balls to the Sixth District in the coming year.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ *Diyojen* (Kanun-ı Evvel 1288), nr. 177.

²⁴⁵ *Basiret*, (5 Teşrin-i Evvel 1289), Nr. 1058, Sağlam, 193.

²⁴⁶ *Diyojen* (11 Mart 1287), Nr. 12.

²⁴⁷ *Diyojen* (23 Kanun-ı Evvel 1287), Nr. 81.

The practice of collecting tax from shops in return for allowing them to put tables and chairs on the streets was also condemned for it hindered passage. *Diyojen* stated that such use of common space by private individuals at the expense of common people would have never been allowed in Europe. As a matter of fact, this practice reminds of the gradual encroachment of streets into residential areas that had been an integral part of Islamic as well as Ottoman cities, however, this time it was carried out by the Sixth District, which had claimed that it was going to bring the area to European standards.

At this point, it seems that the District had entered into a vicious cycle: it could not perform its duties because people did not pay their taxes and therefore caused a big gap in the budget of the municipality while people refused to pay their taxes because they did not receive any municipal services. In the end, the District had to resort to stricter measures to coerce people into paying their share of the burden:

We have just found out about a rule in the regulation of the District. If a property owner had failed to pay his municipal taxes, his rent contracts will not be authorized by the District, and therefore leasing will not be permitted.

We did not know about that. As a matter of fact, we had forgotten the old Greek and Roman habit of removing the roof tiles, doors and windows of houses, the owners of which refused to pay taxes as it was an ancient practice.

The supporters of the District oppose criticisms saying that “If the Municipality does not collect money from the public, how is it going to be able to pay its director, assistants, and officials?” That’s right! I agree with that. People should pay and feed them so that their contracts will be approved. Nothing is for free!

The Sixth District will reorganize burned down areas, hang oil lamps over holes it dug for now and fill them in the future. It will finish the works for gas lamps, remove the mud and build pavements soon. In short, it *will, in a little while, soon* do a lot of things however, the people do not pay and the District cannot even afford to feed its officers.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ *Diyojen* (16 Teşrin-i Sani 1288), Nr. 166.

Apparently Teodor Kasap was infuriated for the Municipality chose such a strategy to persuade people although it was the District's natural duty to approve these contracts without putting forward any conditions. After all, the District had itself made it a rule that approval was needed and it was already getting a certain fee for the transaction. Now it was asking for more and making people pay for services that they had never received!

The papers of the period present many similar comments on the Sixth Municipal District. The important point here is that the foreign press in the Ottoman Empire mostly worked in close collaboration with the Sixth District and tried to turn the public opinion in favour of the Municipality since they both shared the same benefits. Critical comments usually came about when the interests of these two parties clashed. The Ottoman press, on the other hand, was obviously appreciating the experiment. However, the fact that this reform remained limited to a certain part of Istanbul and at some points it was perceived as a threat to the existence of the Empire widened the gap between the municipality and Ottoman press, causing much dissatisfaction. When coupled with the gradual breakdown of the District, the attitude of the Ottoman press towards the Sixth District became even more negative.

4.2. The Influence of the Sixth Municipal District on Urban Administration

Despite much criticism and its financial failure, the success of the Sixth District's initial years had motivated the Ottoman government to engage in similar projects elsewhere in Istanbul. The ministries of Commerce and Public Works undertook the

paving of major streets and decided that gas lighting should be extended to other parts of the city, while naming of streets and numbering of houses was applied to the rest of Istanbul in 1864.²⁴⁹ However, these innovations did not match the reason behind the establishment of the Sixth District since it had started out as a step towards the establishment of other municipal districts.

A move towards the expansion of the municipal experiment was witnessed when *Adalar* and *Tarabya* Municipalities (1864) were established as mentioned in Chapter Two. However, this expansion remained limited and even documentation concerning these two municipalities is scarce. According to Ergin, *Adalar* was named as the 7th District, but there is no information as to which district *Tarabya* belonged to. All we know is that their population too was overwhelmingly non-Muslim, although less in number when compared to the population of Galata and Beyoğlu. Moreover, there were not any new regulations concerning their establishment, and both municipalities were governed by the regulation of the Sixth District.²⁵⁰ Rosenthal claims that the Ottoman government had planned to gradually introduce municipal administration by starting with areas that contained a mixed population of Muslims and non-Muslims and then carrying on with Muslim districts.²⁵¹ However, considering that inhabitants of Galata and Beyoğlu owned properties in the area, and municipality of *Tarabya* was established in response to the petitions of area's inhabitants, it appears that the government was somehow forced to start with these districts.

The establishment of these two municipalities, therefore, was an obligation rather than a planned and organised expansion of the experiment. Indeed, it was not until the 1868 *Dersaadet İdare-i Belediye Nizamnamesi* that the central government

²⁴⁹ Rosenthal, *Politics*, 164.

²⁵⁰ Ergin, *Mecelle*, 1346.

²⁵¹ Rosenthal, *Politics*, 167.

introduced any real innovation concerning municipal administration. The decision to institute structures similar to the Sixth District was partly due to its success, but other factors affected the decision as well. The foreigners' right to hold property was formally acknowledged in 1868, and this was probably going to boost foreign investment in the Empire. In effect, this was going to mean more demands for municipal services. Also, the success of planning after the Hocapaşa fire had convinced the government that applying such a plan throughout Istanbul was feasible.²⁵²

According to this regulation, municipalities in 14 districts were to be established and these were going to be supervised by a central structure, *Şehremaneti* (Prefecture). *Şehremaneti* was established previous to the Sixth District, in 1855, and until the promulgation of the 1868 Regulation, it was a duplication of *İhtisab Nezareti*. The duties of the new municipalities comprised similar tasks to that of the Sixth District, such as the construction and widening of streets, their cleaning and illumination, formation of squares to enable distribution of necessary goods like coal and wood as well as *kadi*'s former duties concerning inspection of markets, setting prices and controlling measurement units.²⁵³ The supervisory body of Prefecture, on the other hand, was responsible for the proper functioning of these municipalities, determining the rate of tax to be collected and supply of water. The head of the Prefecture, *Şehremini* was going to be appointed centrally and as the institution had failed at the time it was established, the Ottoman government chose to put the former successful director of the Sixth Municipal District Server Efendi in charge.²⁵⁴ Although Server Efendi managed to provide

²⁵² *Ibid*, 168.

²⁵³ Ergin, *Mecelle*, 1616.

²⁵⁴ Ergin, *Mecelle*, 1349.

some municipal developments, the efforts did not suffice to realize the plan, mainly due to financial problems and opposition on the part of the Muslim population.²⁵⁵

Overall, the Sixth District had failed to fulfil its promise as an example that would be extended all over Istanbul in due time, however, it managed to inspire other cities. In 1861, a commission comprising local and European artisans and merchants as well as officials from consulates had gathered in Alexandria. This commission was going to work towards replacing the existing municipal administration, the *Ornato*, which only included the Levantines and consuls, with a new one modelled on the Sixth Municipal District. However, the works of the council were never realised and the *Ornato* continued its function under the Ministry of Public Works (*Nafia Nezareti*). A proper municipal administration could only be established between 1882 and 1890; however, it was under British supervision.²⁵⁶

Meanwhile, the cities of northern Greece were undergoing a transformation in accordance with the wishes of their inhabitants who claimed that such a makeover was needed “in order to be in harmony with the magnificent order arising from Tanzimat”.²⁵⁷ Indeed, Volos, Kavala and Thessaloniki were almost built from scratch with their new urban plans implemented immediately after great fires that devastated the former urban fabric of each city. Among these, Thessaloniki was the first to be introduced with a municipal administration established in 1869 and by that date the city had become a replica of Galata and Beyoğlu with banks, insurance companies, hotels, public buildings and building sites inhabited by the prosperous

²⁵⁵ Rosenthal, *Politics*, 172.

²⁵⁶ Yerasimos, “Doğu ve Güney...”, 175.

²⁵⁷ Aleksandra Yeralimos, “Tanzimat Döneminde Kuzey Yunanistan’da Şehircilik ve Modernleşme (1839’dan 19. Yüzyıl Sonuna)” in Paul Dumont and François Georgeon (Eds.), *Modernleşme Sürecinde Osmanlı Kentleri*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999, 31.

inhabitants of the city.²⁵⁸ Therefore, it was a good candidate to be presented with wide streets and infrastructure for sewage, gas and water systems; that is, all the services that would be supplied in a modern city.

Another example of the District's influence was the municipality of İzmir (Smyrna). The Sixth District's success in its early years had such an enormous impact on the inhabitants of the city that in 1860 they requested the establishment of a similar structure with a petition from their governor.²⁵⁹ However, the Empire was still not convinced of the practicability of the municipal experiment and it was not until 1867 that İzmir acquired a "modern" municipal administration. Considering that İzmir's population included a large number of wealthy foreigners and non-Muslims, the government proposed that the regulation of the Sixth District be used as the blueprint for the new regulation.²⁶⁰ Therefore, just as it was in the Sixth Municipal District, the members of the municipal council were going to be elected from among the wealthy portion of the population, and both French and Turkish was going to be the official language of the municipality.

Even at its initiation, the municipality of İzmir was riddled with problems and disagreements and this was due to clashing interests of various groups in the city. According to the governor of the time, Hekim İsmail Paşa, there were three parties competing for the chairs: the Greeks who always tried to hinder the activities of the government; those that wanted the construction of the new İzmir Port to be completed at once; and the representatives of the foreign trade companies, who worried that they would lose their privilege of tax exemption if the new Port was

²⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 49.

²⁵⁹ Rosenthal, *Politics...*, 161.

²⁶⁰ Erkan Serçe, *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyete İzmir'de Belediye (1867-1945)*, İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Yayınları, 1998, 55.

built.²⁶¹ As a result, the formation of the municipal council took over one year. Even then, the council could not function properly: Most of its members were absent from the meetings, because they wanted to prevent the construction of the Port. Hence, the council was annulled and it was not until 1874 that a new council was formed. This new council, too, was ineffective since its members were constantly replaced due to claims of corruption. This first experiment in Izmir came to an end with the municipal law of 1877 but such a fate was inevitable, anyway: the municipality had not accomplished any of its goals concerning improvement of infrastructure and the streets throughout this period.²⁶²

Looking at the examples above, it can easily be figured out that the selection of cities for the establishment of new style municipalities was not a coincidence. As a matter of fact, they shared many features with Galata and Beyoğlu. First of all, all of them were thriving commercial centres. Their already advantageous positions as port cities were further enhanced by the construction of larger ports and railroads that connected them to the hinterland, just as in the case of railroads connecting Thessaloniki to Istanbul and Izmir to Aydın. As a result, foreign companies as well as banks were drawn to the region. Actually, the foreign companies had also helped establish new cities in the form of “company towns”. For instance, Dedeağaç (Alexandroupolis) was created in order to facilitate the activities of the Rumelian Railway Company”, which at the time was engaged in the construction of the aforementioned railroad between Istanbul and Thessaloniki. Second, the population of these cities included a large number of non-Muslims and, in relation to their commercial potential, foreign merchants. As was the case in the Sixth District, demand for establishment of municipal institutions was driven by this wealthy

²⁶¹ *ibid*, 56.

²⁶² *ibid*, 57.

population. The existence of foreign nationals also increased the influence of consulates, allowing them to get involved more in the process. Still, the fact remains that the population of these cities were motivated by material gain rather than a genuine desire to bring the city to modern standards. The doubling property values and increasing commercial activity in Galata and Beyoğlu²⁶³ had been strong incentives, and the benefits that such innovations would bring to the state finances were constantly underlined in the petitions to the central government. Moreover, as revealed in the case of İzmir, the municipality was regarded as a tool to manipulate the economic activity of the city, hence, the provision of municipal services were of secondary importance.

Therefore, we can conclude that although the municipality was adopted as a model outside Istanbul, this cannot be regarded as a success since urban change was not perceived within the context of a modernisation process.

²⁶³ Rosenthal, 162.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The story of the Sixth Municipal District sets an excellent example for proving what we have maintained earlier: changes in the city reflect the social and political transformations taking place within society and state. Indeed, the first twenty years of the Sixth Municipal District that is discussed here might be interpreted as a history of *Tanzimat* reforms, revealing its aspirations, accomplishments and failures. The transformation that the 19th century Ottoman Empire was going through marked a concrete break from traditional concepts of administration and society, for Istanbul was now struggling to adapt to an environment dominated by Western economic and political power and therefore seeking new ways to prevent the disintegration of the Empire.

Such an effort necessitated the reinvention of the state apparatus as well as the relation between the state and its subjects. The creation of a new identity that would help provide the loyalty of the subjects to the disintegrating Empire was, therefore, unavoidable. The *Tanzimat* reforms tried to construct this new identity by emphasising the equality of all its subjects regardless of their affiliations with

religion or ethnicity and pointed out to a notion of “citizenship”. For Ariel Salzmann, this idea of citizenship was “a by-product of government practice and the transformation of the subject’s expectations and demands of the state” rather than a major goal that the reforms wanted to attain.²⁶⁴ This argument might be true in the sense that it was used primarily as a means rather than an end to establish a sense of unity, nevertheless, this does not rule out the fact that the Empire was devoted to the realisation of this ideal.

In this context, the Sixth District provided a good opportunity for reinforcing this idea. The Empire believed that agreeing to the establishment of an autonomous institution in a dominantly foreign and non-Muslim populated area and allowing them to become a part of the administration would facilitate the establishment of a bond that would ensure the loyalty of these groups to the state. Moreover, as indicated before, the fact that the population of Galata and Beyoğlu was the closest to Western practices and ideas was a strong incentive, since the chances of encountering a resistance to the process was much less than any other parts of Istanbul.

The outcomes, however, turned out to be quite the opposite of what was expected. As a matter of fact, leaving aside Ottoman citizenship, the experiment was far from raising “even rudimentary feelings of loyalty toward the central government” primarily because European consulates in the area induced rivalry by offering protection to non-Muslim Ottomans and therefore diverted the feelings of loyalty away from the Ottoman government to themselves.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ Ariel Salzmann, “Citizens in Search of A State: The Limits of Political Participation in the Late Ottoman Empire” in *Extending Citizenship, Reconfiguring States*, ed. Michael Hanagan and Charles Tilly (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 56.

²⁶⁵ Rosenthal, *Politics...*, 196.

The fact that the Council of the Municipality comprised the wealthy members of the District's population further hindered the situation: the primary concerns of the Sixth District remained limited only to attaining a European façade in the District, especially in those parts where it would return as a profit for the members of the council, who were engaged in trade. A democratic distribution of municipal services, which should have been a feature of such an institution, was a luxury within the District as the main activity took place in the centre and never got through to the poorer parts of the District, mostly inhabited by Turks.

Eventually, in such a setting, one can hardly think of inclusion of the general public into the administration. Although the placement of a complaint and suggestion box was among the first activities of the District, it is doubtful whether these had any effect on the policies of the Council. After all, even the election process of the Council had excluded a majority of the area's inhabitants and communal participation was obviously not among the priorities of the institution.

Since inequality existed even within the District, one can easily figure out that other parts of Istanbul had suffered even more from such an imbalance in the distribution of services. When coupled with the ever increasing European intervention to Ottoman Empire, the Sixth District, in a way, had become the epitome of their influence within the state, and had therefore made it the target of harsh criticisms of the Ottoman intellectuals. As a matter of fact, the Sixth District was even seen as a place of decadence and moral corruption as *Vakaniivis* Ahmet Lütfi Efendi's account reveals. Reporting the establishment of the Sixth District and how it was going to set an example to the rest of the districts in Istanbul, he adds: "Fortunately, the others lack the knowledge that the Sixth District has. It is thanks to this that they did not copy the habit of forbidden things such as prostitution and

gambling.”²⁶⁶ As a result, feelings of hostility towards foreigners and those under their protection heightened “mistrust between communities”²⁶⁷, adding to the distance between them, and created another obstacle in front of citizenship.

The establishment of a municipality reveals another side of reforms, as well. Just as *Tanzimat* reforms signalled the secularisation of state politics, as revealed by a new system of education and courts, the existence of a municipal institution was an obvious symbol of secularisation of the city. As mentioned earlier, although it should not lead us to a generalisation, Islamic law had a direct contribution in the evolution of Middle Eastern cities. The reforms were eliminating the bases of the traditional system one by one and eventually diminishing the role of Islam within the city, therefore, placing the individual before the community. The change in the *mahalle* system, with *muhtar* replacing the religious leader, for instance, was a step towards the secularisation of the local authorities.²⁶⁸ The establishment of a municipal system further underlined the transformation from sacred to secular.

Among the first actions of the municipality was erasing the clearest signs associated with the Islamic city, which by the time had become identical to backwardness. The change in the fabric of streets, their expansion and formation into straight lines as well as the removal of cul de sacs trespassed the boundaries of privacy, which had been previously protected by Islam. Creation of public spaces in the shape of squares and parks also imposed the disappearance of private realm in favour of public, and it allowed state control to penetrate further into areas that were once confined to behind the walls. Still, although this would mean a breaking of boundaries and the convergence of feminine and masculine domains, the separation

²⁶⁶ *Vakanüvis Ahmet Lütfi Efendi Tarihi*, ed. Münir Aktepe, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988, c. IX, 141.

²⁶⁷ Salzmann, 57.

²⁶⁸ İnalçık, “İstanbul”, *EP*.

remained mostly intact for Muslim women as they were occasionally banned from public places such as parks. The instruments utilised for the facilitation of this process such as expropriation for the benefit of public and the cadastral survey, on the other hand, were directly opposite to the Islamic laws of property. In this sense, we can say that the municipality served directly in accordance with the modernisation objectives of the Empire despite its overall failure.

The Empire also managed to turn the unfavourable circumstances associated with the Municipality to its advantage during the directorship of Server Efendi to some extent. While the early years had passed with extensive autonomy of the Municipal Council, the financial crisis had forced the District to forgo most of its privileges and allow more Ottoman involvement. Server Efendi tried to extend municipal services to all Galata and Beyoğlu as much as he could and therefore municipal reform became more consistent with the ideals of Tanzimat reforms.²⁶⁹ His determination to make benefits of the Sixth District available to all segments of society rather than just the upper class is evident in provision of health services first within the municipality building and then through the hospital constructed during his administration. Contrary to the *waqf* institutions, the fact that this hospital was constructed with revenue from the taxes and by the state is also important for showing that an understanding of “public” had started to flourish.²⁷⁰ Hence, as Ottoman involvement increased, the municipality became more suitable to the development of the idea of citizenship. Moreover, the change in the election process that loosened the financial requirements for becoming a candidate and allowed the election of more Turkish members to the Council was a sign that the municipality was losing its predominantly European character and becoming “Ottomanised” in a

²⁶⁹ Rosenthal, *Politics...*, 196.

²⁷⁰ Christoph K. Neumann, “Çatışan Moderniteler”.

sense. The embracement of the municipality by the Muslim inhabitants of the area, demonstrated by high amount of interest free loans, when compared to the foreign and non-Muslim population, who tried to evade even the taxes under protection from the consulates, is a clear sign that the state had managed to create at least a degree of solidarity among its subjects. This can also be interpreted as a proof that the spirit of *waqf* tradition survived to a certain extent, and was adapted to the circumstances of the day. After all, we can see that some old patterns of traditional administration survived in this century too, as the municipality was still carrying out the primary duties of *kadı* concerning the markets and provision.

The privileged status of the Sixth District might have come to an end in 1877, however, that did not mean the abandonment of the experiment altogether. Rather, it changed form and expanded throughout Istanbul by becoming a centrally controlled apparatus. As a matter of fact, the whole history of the Sixth District was a process whereby different modes and interpretations of Ottoman modernisation manifested itself. The period between 1858 and 1863, for instance, was dominated by a modernism through the interpretation of the commercial bourgeoisie and European powers, who identified it with autonomy while the years that followed it up until 1877 were marked by the modernity of *Tanzimat* bureaucrats. During the reign of Abdulhamid II, the Council of the Municipality was stripped off most of its authorities; however, it was still regarded as the modern face of the Empire. The Second Constitutional Monarchy period (1908-1922) was the time when the District was completely erased as prevailing “etatist” inclinations brought with it a different conception of modernism, with a more centralised structure. According to Christoph K. Neumann who made this classification, these different perceptions of modernism surfaced as different groups of people were forced to fit the idea of modernism into

their respective ideologies, therefore the whole history of the Sixth Municipal District had been one of “clashing modernities”.²⁷¹

All in all, we can say that although the Sixth Municipal District could not reach the goals that had been set for it at the beginning, it was an important sign of the Empire’s commitment to the reforms. Moreover, as the ever changing circumstances altered the priorities of the Ottoman Empire, these goals too transformed from creating an Ottoman citizenship to the creation of a nation. The change that the Sixth District went through in relation to these developments therefore, makes it worthwhile to study this institution.

²⁷¹ *ibid.*

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DIRECTORS OF THE SIXTH MUNICIPAL DISTRICT BETWEEN 1858-1877		
Names of Directors	Date of Appointment to the Post	Date of Separation from the Post
Kâmil Bey	1274 (1858)	1277 (1860)
Emin Muhlis Bey	15 Safer 1277 (1 September 1860)	21 Cemâziyelevvel 1277 (4 December 1860)
Salih Efendi	22 Cemâziyelevvel 1277 (5 December 1860)	Rebiülevvel 1278 (October 1861)
Hayrullah Efendi	Receb 1278 (January 1862)	3 Ramazan 1279 (21 February 1863)
Server Efendi	4 Ramazan 1279 (21 February 1863)	(?)
Mehmed Efendi	(?)	(?)
Salahaddin Bey	10 Receb 1280 (21 December 1863)	21 Muharrem 1286 (3 May 1863)
Kadri Bey	22 Şevval 1287 (14 January 1871)	
Ohannes Efendi	18 Zi'lkade 1288 (28 January 1872)	
Muhtar Bey	24 Ramazan 1288 (6 December 1871)	Cemâziyelevvel 1290 (July 1873) (appointed for a second time until 1877)

APPENDIX B: SOME OF THE DISTRICTS DESIGNATED IN 1857



Source: Zeynep Çelik, *19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Başkenti: Değişen İstanbul*, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul (1998).

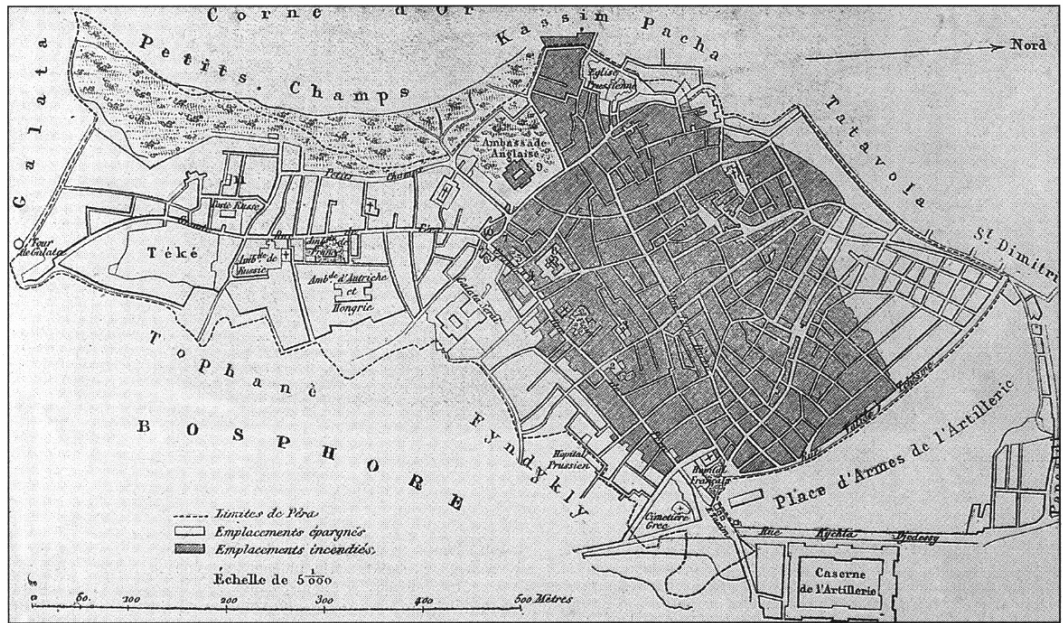
APPENDIX C: LIST OF CREDITORS (1863)

*Etat des Dettes de la Municipalité en Cairé
au 31 Juillet 1863 T.P.*

Créanciers avec intérêts	Capital	Intérêts	Total	Prix du Consolidé au 31 ^{er} juillet 1863 - 57,35% mais qu'on a 52	Conversion des totaux en Métallique	
P. Khamil Bey	100,000	34,466	134,466	52	95,739	80
Chamir Singuir	100,000	35,366	135,366	"	96,380	60
F. Baltazzi	100,000	13,304	113,304	"	80,672	144
A. Baltazzi	100,000	46,466	146,466	"	104,283	80
Mme Charnaud	100,000	16,413	116,413	"	82,886	05
A. Camondo	200,000	86,130	286,130	"	203,724	56
Tubini	100,000	46,466	146,466	"	104,283	80
Larifi	100,000	39,933	139,933	"	99,632	27
Horicozzo	50,000	26,512 25	76,512 25	"	56,204	72
P. Salgan	50,000	16,946	66,946	"	47,664	55
Thimitrac	63,550	10,207 25	73,757 25	"	54,081	56
Guerin	49,073 46	4,416	53,489 46	"	35,254	76
Lourdan	1. 12,602 10	2,592 73	15,194 83	"	11,313	97
Larsky	2. 63,859 43	2,113 42	65,972 85	"	49,533	45
	<u>1,143,085 04</u>	<u>367,557 31</u>	<u>1,510,642 35</u>		<u>1,111,176 35</u>	
<u>Créanciers sans intérêts.</u>						
P. Franchini			7,526 25	"	5,758	69
A. Baltazzi			2,702 50	"	1,924	18
Camondo			12,000	"	8,544	
L'Administration des Gaz			1,890,000	"	1,344,568	
Eschreffian			116,376 25	"	82,859	89
Larsky			98,815	"	70,356	28
Abdoul Rahman			4,856	"	3,457	47
Ali Souyoldji			5091	"	3,634	79
Hadoum Oglou			6,550	"	4,663	60
La Commission de l'Anée			37,964	"	27,050	36
Malayage Gira			7800	"	5,533	60
			<u>2,189,681</u>		<u>1,539,052</u>	<u>86</u>

APPENDIX D

AREAS AFFECTED BY FIRE OF 1870



APPENDIX E

PLANS FOR BEYOĞLU AFTER THE FIRE OF 1870

