

## THE OTTOMAN AND THE JAPANESE EMPIRE IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMPARISON OF 19th CENTURY MILITARY MODERNIZATION PROCESSES<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Japan, differing from the Ottoman Empire, could not establish a unified state until the end of the 16th century and remained in a more vulnerable structure compared to its neighboring states in particular and external threats in general. In this context, the European states' reaching the borders of Japan and Japan's becoming a unified state within this framework covers the same period. As in the Ottoman Empire, military and political developments in Japan as well as the reforms and modernizations in the military fields as a result of these show a connection with the external factors that constitute the main threat. In the 18th century, due to different reasons, both the Ottoman Empire and Japan needed military reforms and the innovation processes in which Europe was based gained speed. When the military modernization attempts in the 19th century are examined, it can be mentioned that both states remained in the sphere of influence. In this context, relations with European states have been the most decisive issue for both states. Therefore, this situation made it possible to compare the renewal efforts of the two great states in their military fields over the following years. Thus, the modernization attempts of the Ottoman Empire and Japan in the military fields and the military modernization processes were examined in the Ottoman and Japanese context. It has been possible to create an integrative picture through the military measures taken and the reforms carried out by both states, which differ geographically, historically and culturally.

**Keywords:** Japan, Ottoman Empire, 19th Century, European, Modernization.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The military reform movements and modernization initiatives that emerged in the Ottoman Empire in the last period coincide with the first periods of the Japanese Empire. Although both states have historical similarities, Japan has generally played a role of introversion. However, the Ottoman Empire united Anatolia first and then expanded to the Balkans and managed to become the most powerful state of that period in a fast process. On the other hand, with the Ottoman Empire, which entered a period of stagnation with the 17th century, Japan also began to be increasingly exposed to external influences. In this context, the Ottoman Empire, which entered a period of stagnation, gave up the idea of being the most powerful state in Europe as a result of long wars and had to accept that it was equal to the Austrian Emperor (Szalontay, 2005: 57). Japan, on the other hand, realized that it could no longer struggle with the increasing number of Christians and its own religious influences, and took the front against the Westerners and isolated itself from the whole World (Tashiro, 1988: 121). However, at the beginning of the 19th century, Russia became the border neighbor of both these states and by following an increasing expansionist policy, it became a threat to the Ottoman Empire and Japan. On the other hand, the Americans, who, together with the British and French, are in a form similar to Japan and are active in the Pacific Ocean, have begun to

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have both states sign capitulations that do not have equal conditions in order to apply a colony in the economic field (Edstrom, 2013: 17).

## **2. SIMILARITY AND CONVERSIONS IN THE MILITARY MODERNIZATION PROCESS**

When the differences between the Ottoman Empire and Japan in the historical process are compared over the concepts of military modernization, it is seen that both armies are reflected in the modernization movements. The Ottoman Empire followed closely the army systems of the neighboring states from the very beginning within its own army system and tried to adapt it to itself. The biggest reason for this is the strategic position of the Ottoman Empire and the importance of this position. In this context, the Ottoman Empire was always in active warfare, so it always needed to innovate in its army. This situation reached its highest level during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent. However, it changed when Süleyman the Magnificent began to see himself, namely the Ottoman Empire, as the greatest and most powerful state in all respects. From Süleyman the Magnificent II. Changes and developments in the army system and military modernization movements until the reign of Mahmut were only applied at the theme level. On the other hand, all the changes in Europe continued rapidly, and the Ottoman Empire followed these changes in Europe only with a forced follow-up mechanism. The integrity of the past experience and the sense of superiority created by the military successes of the Ottoman Empire were also accepted as one of the most absolute reasons for this situation.

In the process he witnessed, the Ottoman Empire was able to establish the strongest army of the period. Thus, along with discipline and courage, they were able to develop a belief mechanism that they would never fail on the battlefield. In this context, observers in Europe, similarly to the subject, envied the Ottoman army and stated the necessity of reform movements by taking the Ottoman army and its system as an example (Soykut, 2011: 58). In this framework, the Ottoman army model was developed by the Europeans, based on this idea. With the new model and new order that emerged, the Ottoman Empire and its army began to be defeated both in the bureaucracy and on the battlefields (Akçura, 1985: 42). Europeans not only the Ottoman army, IV. Starting from the Ivan period, they studied the Russian armies, combined their acquisitions with the Ottoman army system and started their renewal activities (Agoston, 2011: 273). Similar to the attitude of the Ottoman Empire, the Japanese adopted that they were a strong empire, but they continued to use China, which had been close to them since their establishment, as a model in the military, cultural, political and social fields. However, the Far Eastern leaders lost their current potential with the Kamakura Period, and the overlords who came to power by transferring their authority to the feudal lords became open and optimistic to all innovations coming from outside (Kobayashi, 1982: 68). The reason for this is that Japan, which had a fragmented structure for a long time, unlike the Ottoman Empire, ruled their own regions and was constantly at war with other regions, did not feel safe, and therefore they were more eager and willing to take everything that would give them an edge over other Overlords (Ito, 1948: 52). Therefore, the Samurai class belonging to Japan, who went through the aforementioned process, were able to establish a more open and more favorable environment for all innovations and modernization movements from their surroundings compared to the Janissaries and Sipahi class from the Ottoman Empire, which were relatively stronger and quite assertive on the battlefield. has succeeded.

The greatest similarity in the army system of the Ottoman Empire and the Empire of Japan was the training of young boys in the military system and the teaching of military service

and ensuring that these behaviors, which were taught until the end of their lives, were carried out as a profession. In this context, it is forbidden for the soldiers who are trained and included in the army to engage in other occupations or professions other than military service. The Ottoman Empire and Japan had the same ideas and showed many similarities within the framework of their worldviews and attitudes. However, they also showed some political differences within their own military classes. The reason for these similarities can be shown as the Asian origin of both states. The similarities between the Ottoman Empire and Japan, which are members of the common language family, were considered normal in this context, but differences emerged with their developments in the historical process. The most important reason for this situation can be said to be geographical difference.

%	1841 - 1861	1862 - 1876	1877 - 1900
<i>Guardhouse</i>	82, 5	69, 3	67, 8
<i>Shipyards</i>	13, 3	18, 9	13, 7
<i>Armory</i>	4, 2	11, 8	18, 5

**Table 1.:** Average Military Expenditure of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century

The distribution of the military expenditures of the Ottoman Empire from 1840 to 1900, within the framework of the data in Hobson (1993: 464), is shown in **Table 1**. Thus, it is seen that the concentration in military expenditures is at the entrance gates called “*Guardhouse*”. Similarly, it is seen that the general and high distribution within the army is concentrated in Armory and Shipyards. On the other hand, over the years, it is seen that the ratio in the distribution of military expenditures has also decreased. It can be said that the main reason for this is the weakening of the army and trade, and it can be felt in other areas as well.

GREAT STATES	AMOUNTS OF MILITARY EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT TYPE
<i>Ottoman Empire</i>	7. 68	<i>Million £</i>
<i>Austria</i>	8. 2	<i>Million £</i>
<i>France</i>	32. 58	<i>Million £</i>
<i>Germany</i>	27. 83	<i>Million £</i>
<i>Italy</i>	12. 51	<i>Million £</i>
<i>England</i>	32. 42	<i>Million £</i>
<i>Japan</i>	5. 16	<i>Million £</i>
<i>Russia</i>	63. 31	<i>Million £</i>

**Table 2.:** Average Military Expenditure Between 1870 and 1900

As can be seen in **Table 2**, the Ottoman Empire, Austria and Japan formed a grouping by showing similarities among themselves. On the other hand, other states were included in a similar grouping with the aforementioned rates. The Ottoman Empire and Japan also show

similarities in the amounts they allocated to military expenditures and their attitudes. During the period average, Russia keeps its defense-based military expenditure ratio high.

<b>GREAT STATES</b>	<b>AMOUNTS OF MILITARY EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>AMOUNT TYPE</b>
<i>Ottoman Empire</i>	37, 27	%
<i>Austria</i>	12, 33	%
<i>France</i>	26, 91	%
<i>Germany</i>	57, 12	%
<i>Italy</i>	21, 79	%
<i>England</i>	37, 52	%
<i>Japan</i>	31, 24	%
<i>Russia</i>	27, 88	%

**Table 3.:** *Military Expenditures of Great Powers in the 19th Century, Comparison Ratio*

According to the data obtained from Eloranta (2002: 50), it can be seen that the great powers have increased their military spending rates since the 1870s. This situation shows the necessity of modernization and renewal efforts within the general army systems. Especially with the 19th century, great states attach importance to their army and military structures and allocate high budgets. This also means that defense mechanisms are framed.

In Japan, which was not an empire governed in a centralized structure like the Ottoman Empire, feudal lords ruled everything from military structuring to administration at a local level (Sagara, 2004: 37). This allowed the narrow-scale units, which represent small structures in the military field, to be managed more easily and to establish dominance over them. Apart from the aforementioned units, there was no great differentiation between the other principalities.

On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire was stationed on trade routes from its very first years. Thus, the Ottoman Empire, which provided a wide spread, was able to obtain a large part of its income from commercial activities. Thus, international commercial activities could be shown as the basic element of the wealth of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire, especially in the 17th century, became one of the most powerful states in the world and could easily express that they could equip all their existing navies with the highest quality products and saw it as a measure of wealth (Batmaz, 2014: 48). However, as the trade routes shifted towards the newly found sea routes instead of the land route and the abundant gold and silver brought from the Americas caused inflation, the Ottoman economy started to be one of the incomes in the field of trade (Pamuk, 2017: 178).

Similar situations were similar in different parts of the world. The old power and splendor of the old Italian city-states such as Venice, Genoa and Florence remained, and soon Austria came under their rule (Soykut, 2011: 374). In addition, the signed capitulations put the Ottoman manufacturer in an increasingly difficult situation and created the biggest obstacle to a capital accumulation and industrialization move (Acartürk & Kılıç, 2011: 41).

The developments in maritime resulted in the Silk Road being no longer used, and Ottoman trade revenues began to decline. Then, as a result of the industrial revolution that took place, the Ottoman manufacturer was in a difficult situation against cheap and abundant European goods (Timur, 2010: 87). On the contrary, the Japanese could easily eliminate the need for imports or imports. In this context, in the face of the demand for imports, the Japanese could easily produce all the goods they needed. In addition, the Japanese, who had a highly developed technique in silk, tea, metal products and ceramics, were selling many goods abroad (Howell, 1994: 57).

Besides; While the production and development efforts of weapons were completely private companies in Germany, England and France, the foreign officers who came to the Ottoman Empire were trying to persuade the Ottoman Empire to buy weapons from the weapon companies of their own countries (Smith, 1976: 127). As a result of this, the Ottoman Empire's weapon industry gradually stagnated and eventually the Ottoman army became completely dependent on foreigners for the modernization of its weapons and new weapons (Atwell, 1990: 87).

The political climate that would support the reforms, as mentioned before, could be created more easily in Japan, which was culturally and ethnically unified, while creating difficulties in the Ottoman Empire, and it was made in a way to protect the economic reforms and the merchant class while political reforms were being made (He, 2002: 108). However, the minorities affected by the idea of nationalism that spread after the French Revolution gradually moved away from the Ottoman Empire and put their own interests in the foreground. As a matter of fact, the ships that formed the Greek Navy during the Greek uprising were obtained by attaching guns and guns to the merchant ships of the Greek merchants (Wakabayashi, 1992: 97). While the Christian population in the Balkans, starting from the Seljuk period in the traditional Ottoman lands, formed a relationship with the state and served, especially after the French Revolution, they fell into separatist ideas and began to look more coldly towards reforms such as compulsory military service, which was increasingly in their own interests, and started to get rid of their sense of belonging with the state (Ortaylı, 2006: 117). Although in social classification the farmers were above the artisans and traders, in fact the farmers, who were at the bottom in economic and therefore social life, were the group most prone to rebellion, and top-down reforms did not bring great variability in their lives (Çırakman, 2011: 58).

Since the middle of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire used most of its economic power to strengthen its existing army. In Japan, he took a similar stance. In particular, they have entered into a work aimed at protecting their existing resources rather than developing them. The main reason for this situation is that the financial debts are too high. In this context, towards the end of the 19th century, both states tried to protect their existing armies. Especially with the Balkan Wars, the armies suffered a great economic loss. With these losses, especially the Ottoman Empire tried to keep its army strong with the concern of protecting the territorial integrity and transferred all the resources it had here.

### **3. RESULT**

Japan, which was in a period of isolation for approximately two hundred and fifty years, opened to the outside world starting from 1868 and this situation was led by Emperor Meiji. In this period, many initiatives were taken, reforms were carried out and the development of the empire gained momentum. In this context, the first attempts of the Japanese Empire with the

Ottoman Empire also coincide with this period. Immediately after the reform process started and gained momentum, Japanese delegations were sent and assigned to many parts of the world. These delegations closely followed and reported the developments in every field and became the pioneers of Japanese development. Entrepreneurial development activities in many fields have also had a positive impact on military renewal. The first proposal for the development of diplomatic relations in this process came from Japan.

Similarities and differences are observed intensely in the armies of both powerful states and states. Especially in military education, the Ottoman Empire and Japan were able to progress intensively. However, the differences between the two states, especially in the social and in the demographic areas in general, caused the targeted developments to fail. The main reason for this is the macro-level differences as well as the intense similarities between the two states.

Having nationalized its army with the industry it created with its own resources, Japan also supported its army with its intense resources. However, despite this, the industrial developments that he targeted could not be brought to the desired levels, and the traditional social order was continued, leading to class interests. This situation caused them to be inadequate in the long term and was reflected on the battlefields.

Eurocentric powers influenced both the Ottoman Empire and Japan in mutual relations. Along with this situation, modernization studies have also caused differentiation from each other. Especially their approaches in political and social fields form the basis of these differences.

The intense power of the Ottoman Empire, especially in the 17th century, caused it to feel itself as a rival, so it could not pay as much attention to innovations in military fields as Japan. With this situation, the Ottoman Empire was not able to set an example for other states in the military field, but only in the social and social fields. In this context, the Ottoman State considered it sufficient to examine only the technical fields, not the military ideologies of the West. Therefore, it can be seen that modernization attempts were never initiated in the army position in the military areas in the Ottoman Empire.

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