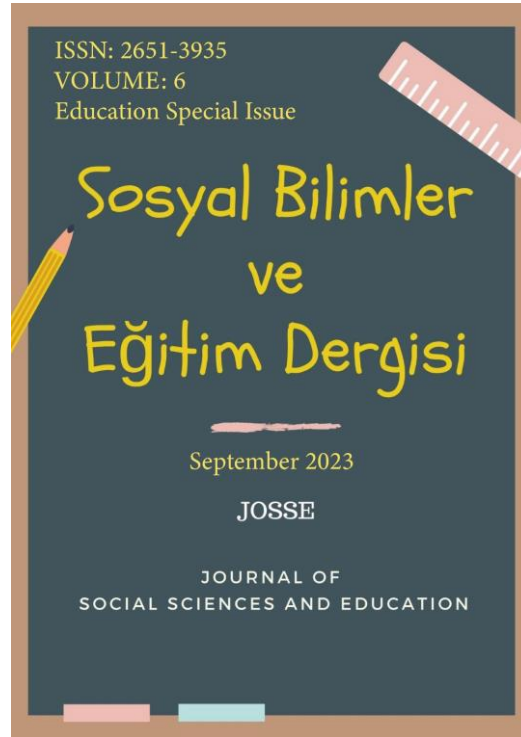


## **JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION (JOSSE)**



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### **Evaluation of II. Abdulhamid and his Period in Terms of Political Geography**

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**Article Type:** Research Article

Received: 12.08.2023

Revision received: 16.09.2023

Accepted: 21.09.2023

Published online: 25.09.2023

**Citation:** Kocalar, A. O. (2023). Evaluation of II. Abdulhamid and his period in terms of political geography. *Journal of Social Sciences and Education*, 6(Education Special Issue), 144-163.

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### **ABSTRACT**

### **Research Article**

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Political Geography is a branch of science that has started to make a name for itself, especially in the last years of the 19th century all over the world. Ottoman Sultan II. Abdulhamid Khan was the leading actor of the world political scene in those years. He was an important personage influencing world politics in the years when such a science emerged. Examining the II. Abdulhamid period will certainly attract attention. Socio-cultural power, which has an important place in political geography, the characteristics of the human who make up a nation are the power formed by educated people equipped with technical knowledge. In a sense, it means that the citizens of the state are well educated from the lowest level to the person who governs the state. From this point of view, Sultan II. Abdulhamid Han was a very perfect carpenter. He also used this carpentry profession in state administration. Because the job of the carpenter is to create perfect furniture sets from raw wood. While governing his state, he showed the whole world that the Ottoman Empire was not destroyed by correcting the unsound parts of the state. After he was dethroned, the collapse of the state accelerated, and those who dethroned him desired for him to come back to power.

*Received:* 12.08.2023

*Revision received:*  
16.09.2023

*Accepted:* 21.09.2023

*Published online:*  
25.09.2023

**Keywords:** Political geography, Sultan II. Abdulhamid, geographical perspective, socio-cultural power

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## **Introduction**

The word of “political” is of Arabic origin and it means political, statesmanship. This can be explained as a unique perspective and mentality of the art of regulating and conducting the wheels of government.

Geography, it is a science that investigates the distribution of natural, human and economic affairs on the whole or a part of the earth, the relations between them, their reasons and consequences. From this line of vision, Political Geography is a science that determines a distinctive perspective or mentality about the art of regulating and conducting state affairs by investigating the distribution of natural, human and economic affairs, their relations, causes and results in the whole world or in a region or country (Özey & Kocalar, 2019).

If an affair or issue is to be discussed from in terms of Political Geography, definitely the geographical factors affecting this affair or issue should be evaluated. Geographical factors are generally examined in three parts as physical, human and economic. The physical factors among them are those that are not very variable and the effect is more permanent and effective. These factors, which are effective on political geography; may be the location, area, shape-semblance or borders of a place or a country. In addition, features such as landforms, climate, territorial waters, soils and natural vegetation of that geographical place can be listed as effective factors.

The human and economic factors, which are more variable according to time and space, can undoubtedly be more effective, especially with the effect of technology developed as a result of scientific discoveries and inventions. Among these factors, geographically, population and settlement characteristics have a separate place. Because, economic factors such as agriculture and livestock, mining, forestry, fisheries, industry, tourism, transportation, communication and trade, which are related to population and settlement, are more effective than other factors today.

It is possible to divide the reign of Sultan II. Abdulhamid into two periods. The first period includes the years 1876-1878. During this period II. Abdulhamid ascended the throne by praising Mithat Pasha and his team, and his words were always valid in the administration until February 1878, when the Parliamentary Assembly was closed. This period ended with the end of the First Constitutional Era. The second period (1878-1909) lasted about 30 years. In this period, he ruled the state with his superior genius and handled authority and power. However, internal and external enemies did not remain idle. From time to time, there were

uprisings, Sultan They attempted to overthrow II. Abdulhamid Han and destroy the Ottoman Empire.

In this research, Sultan II. Abdulhamid Han's personality and the discipline of political geography in his period, who was the sultan between 1876-1909 were tried to be analyzed. When the problem statement of this study is investigated in terms of Political Geography, "What effect did it have during the reign of Sultan II. Abdulhamid Khan?" as a question form. The study also sought answers to the following questions;

- How is the political geography of the II. Abdulhamid Khan Era?
- How is the political geography of the Ottoman Empire after the dethronement of II. Abdulhamid Khan?

## **Method**

### **Model**

Qualitative research method was used in this study. Because in qualitative research, the investigated occurrence, person or phenomenon is analyzed in detail and the problem is tried to be revealed with questions such as "how and why" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). In qualitative research, data is collected through observation, interviews and documents (Berg & Lune, 2015).

### **Data Collection Tools**

In this study, the data was tried to be obtained by document analysis. The reason of this, all kinds of documents can help the researcher to understand and explore the subject, to develop comprehension and to eliminate the uncertainties about the research problem.

Types of documents that can be used in research; invitation cards, official report of meetings, regulations, annotations, books and brochures, diaries, journals, letters, memorandums, maps, charts, newspapers, artwork, program details, survey data, various public records, notebooks, photo albums, etc. is; they provide datas to researchers for use in the researchs (Labuschagne, 2003). Balcı (2006) classified documents as primary and secondary sources. While primary documents are written by the person himself, secondary documents are written by others. In this study we will use secondary sources as documents.

Miles & Huberman (1994) adverted steps such as data collection, data reduction, demonstrate of data, inference and corroboration.

## **Data Analysis**

Document analysis technique was used in the analysis of the obtained data. Document analysis is a qualitative research method used to meticulously and systematically analyze the content of written documents (Wach, 2003). Document analysis requires investigating and interpreting data in order to make sense of it, to form an understanding of the related subject, and to develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Researchers generally revise previous research, review the literature, and incorporate this information into their research. In this process, it is necessary to find, select, interpret, evaluate and synthesize the data in the documents. From this point, in order to classify the data in the sources obtained in the study and to reach a meaningful result and were created subheadings such as the political geography of Abdulhamid Han period, the dethronement of Abdulhamid Han and the political geography of the Ottoman Empire.

## **Findings**

### **How is the Political Geography of the II. Abdulhamid Khan Era?**

II. Abdulhamid Han imagined grand dreams for his major target in his childhood years and thought of restoring the Ottoman state to its former magnificence in the future and endeavored to train himself in this scope. He closely follows the superpowers of that era, learned their policies, their insidious complots on the Ottoman Empire and their denunciators in the country. His surroundings were far from even understanding his dreams. Those who think small cannot understand those who think big, even his elders and teachers were incapable of understanding his thoughts.

While his peers were playing games, he dreamed anticipatory for the peace and tranquility of humanity. "Since childhood, I had a serious nature. I didn't like to play games. When I was very young ages, I began to think about serious issues of the existence of humanity. I was a dreamer. Because of my demeanor, my teachers used to scold me and complain to my father." (Vehbi, 1974).

In line with these informations, II. Abdulhamid Khan's character is one of the greatest qualities of leadership; described as serious, tactful and imaginative.

Even when he was a prince, Abdulhamid Han often met and exchanged of ideas with erudite people and governors in important status of the state. He kept in touch not only local personalities but also foreign statesmen and obtained many informations about Europe from

them. He knew that the courses taught in the schools of the era were not sufficient and that new courses had to be added to them. Especially he followed the improvements in science and technology closely and wanted these developments to be taught in schools. His interest in science and his life away from plays and entertainment did not overlooked. He read books whenever he had the chance and followed the local and foreign press closely. He regularly bought newspapers such as *Ceride-i Havadis*, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, *Basiret*, and observed the effects of humor magazines such as *Çaylak*, *Çingirak* and *Tatar* on the public. He had European newspapers brought, read, or followed up by having them translated, through the famous coffee house owner *Sarafim Efendi* and the bookstore *Elnino*. He didn't neglect the conversation with some intellectual authors. *Abdulhamid Efendi* was analyzing the power of knowledge and the cause of that created public opinion very well. His mindful and discipline skills, and the ability to use the results and information in time and place were also excellent (*Koloğlu, 1987*). Another feature of being a leader is to be aware of the scientific and technological developments around and in the world.

*Abdulhamid Han* had a qualified education. Arabic from *Ferid* and *Şerif Efendi*, Persian from *Kazasker Ali Mahvi Efendi* and grand vizier *Safvet Pasha*, commentary, hadith and canon law sciences from *Gümüşhanevi Ömer Hulusi Efendi*, French from *Gardet*, *Edhem* and *Kemal Pasha* and he had taken Ottoman history lessons from the historian *Lütfi Efendi*. He had learned sports and horse riding from *Lala Mehmet Sadık Agha* and *Mabeynci Osman Efendi*, and learned arms drill training and other military service information from various officers, the sultan's aide, and had learned the sciences of the time. He wasn't satisfied only with the education in the school. He worked without cease improve himself. He was educated and ultimately multicultural, he laid the foundation of his fine politics that he would follow in the future by comprehending the world politics, the conditions of the country, the superpowers of the time and the purposes of their inner infiltrators. *Abdulhamid* knew the ways to earn money, but he didn't like to waste, he was a frugal person. He spent of the salary sparingly during his principedom. Since other princes lived luxurious lives, their salaries were not sufficient and they were constantly in debt. *Abdulhamid*, on the other hand, had earned money as well as make a living with the salary given by the state. He was be occupied with doing in trade and invested (*Engin, 2007*).

II. *Abdulhamid* grew up with dreams of returning the Ottoman Empire to the epochs of his grandfathers, *Fatih Sultan Mehmet* and *Yavuz Sultan Selim Khan*, and became a sultan

within these dreams. However, the times have changed and the internal and external enemies of the state have become very strong.

Sultan II. Abdulhamid Khan knew world politics very well and used the best ways to keep the state alive throughout his reign. Sultan II. Abdulhamid Khan became the sultan on August 31, 1876, at a time when the state was weak, depressed and the enemies were strong. After the emergence of the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian war, known as the 93 war, which cornered the state, II. Abdulhamid Han wasn't responsible of this situation. This war broke out as a result of the bad policies of Midhat Pasha and the constitutional governance. As a result of the war, the Russians defeated the Ottoman Empire and had to sign the Treaty of San Stefano.

The Ottoman delegation that came to Berlin did not even have a map and they wanted to borrow the maps from the British. The Ottoman delegation did not bring the maps with which they would negotiate the border. When the maps could not be found, Colonel Mr Şahap said to Mr Sadullah, who was in a hurry: "Efendi, what are you worried about? These maps were either made by the Germans, the British, the French or the Russians. All of them attended the congress. Whichever state is closest to us, we ask them appropriately and receive them. They have already the originals; we get the map from them. If not, we will buy it again" (Kutay, 1975).

The maps which represent best way and explain geographical features. The narratives made without a map have always tremble in the balance and have been imaginary. Maps are of great importance especially in terms of the past, present and future of the state. Because maps are a two-dimensional representation of the surface of the world.

Preparing the map is as important as knowing how to read a map. Cartography was very advanced during the advancement and expansion of the Ottoman Empire. However, during the decadence period, cartography was transferred to Western countries.

The human factor is important in political geography. First of all, people should be educated and equipped, love their homeland and protect their own identity. For this, one must be educated. It is not solely enough for a leader to be educated. His assistants and people must also be educated. Sultan II. Abdulhamid Khan knew this and gave great importance to education during his reign. Throughout the reign of Abdulhamid, developments regarding to education and training were more regular than in the past. The modern education system has been established and the state has realized its significant role in education. Financial assistance was supported to schools by the state, and taxes were sought to provide resources

for the financing of education. II. Abdulhamid gave special importance to education in the provinces. II. Abdulhamid period is an epoch in which education awareness was ingrained and all efforts were made. II. Abdulhamid was a sultan who knew that education was the only way out for the salvation of the Ottoman Empire (Karataşer, 2017).

At the beginning of the Sultan II. Abdulkhamid's era, reform actions in the field of education, primary and secondary education in general had gone so far as to make it impossible to return. Being aware of this fact, the educators of the period continued their reform endeavours to modernize and extend primary and secondary education (Vurgun, 2022) even if it was rapid or slow, complete or incomplete.

During the reign of II. Abdulhamid, he achieved many things after great efforts. As a matter of fact, middle schools were increased from 250 to 600, high schools from 5 to 104, and dar'ul teachers trade school were increased from 4 to 32 (İnce & Sağdıç, 2020). In addition to that, around 4-5 thousand new ones were added to the 200 primary schools in 1876, and nearly 10 thousand primary schools were converted to the new method. Abdulhamid, he achieved many things after great efforts. All these developments, with their deficiencies, formed the basis of subsequent educational reforms. In addition to these, the first central and provincial education organization in the modern sense was established in this period and has preserved its essence until today. Iptidai school (primary school), Rüştiye school (Junior secondary school) and Idadi (administrative high school) directorates were established under the Ministry of National Education. Through the agency of this organization, primary and secondary education institutions and teacher schools were brought to the province during this period (Kodaman, 1991). During the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid (1876-1909), both textbooks and scientific works continued to be published in the field of geography (Türkay, 1999). Dârülmualimin-i Âliye, which is one of the many modern educational institutions that existed during the reign of Abdulhamid. This school, which trains teachers for high schools, has an extraordinary importance in terms of education and teachers training (Altın, 2018).

It is seen that high school, including high school, spread over a wide area in the Ottoman Empire between 1882-1890. These were high schools that gave education and training for 7 years with secondary schools in provincial centers and for 5 years with high schools in sanjak headquarters. At the end of the Abdulhamid period, there were 619 secondary school (74 of them girls) and 109 high schools in the Ottoman Empire. A total of 60 thousand students were getting education and training, 40 thousand in secondary schools



and 20 thousand in high schools. When the curriculum of the high schools and junior high schools in the 1898-1899 academic year is examined in the Education Yearbook, it was seen that the number and hours of geography lessons have increased. Accordingly, geography lessons were included in the curriculum for an hour in the 7th year of high school and secondary school, and two hours a week in the other 6 years (Özey, 1996).

At the end of the 19th century (during the reign of Abdulhamid II), major geographical dictionaries and military maps were prepared. The Dictionary of History and Geography (7 tomes) prepared by Yaglikçızade Ahmed Rifat Efendi in 1883, Kamusü'l-â'lâm (6 tomes) prepared by Şemseddin Sami between 1889-1899, Memalik-Dictionary prepared by Kolağası Ali Cevad in 1900. Osmaniyye's Dictionary of History and Geography (4 tomes) are important dictionaries containing many items related to geography of the period (Özey, 1999).

The most lively educational advance in Ottoman history, it actualizes with the reign of II. Abdulhamid. According to Sevan Nişanyan's calculations, Turkey, it was only in the 1950s that it was able to reach a schooling level comparable to the Abdulhamid's period. For example, while there were nearly a thousand (835) secondary schools and high schools in the region corresponding to the borders of the Republic of Turkey in 1895, this number decreased to 95 in 1923. The number of students close to one hundred thousand in 1895 (97,837) remained at roughly the same level in the 1950-51 season (90,356).

When we compare it with the previous one, the advance of education in the Abdulhamid period became more visible. The number of Junior high schools, which was 250 in the year he ascended the throne, increased to 900 in 1909, and the number of high schools, which was 6, to 109. While there were only 200 modern primary schools in Istanbul in 1877, it increased to 9 thousand in 1905. An average of 400 primary schools were established every year, which is a record that could not be broken even in the Republican era (Armağan, 2006).

Sultan II. Abdulhamid Han's biggest dream was to take off his state to the advancement of his grandfathers. For this, he kept going his career as a carpenter throughout his life. He worked personally while making the furniture sets to use in the palace. While hosting the emperors of the period in his palace, he demonstrated that his state was not collapsed and still keep up, he used his diplomatic and keen intelligence. Sultan II. Abdulhamid Han also used the profession of carpentry in the state administration. Because the job of the carpenter is to create perfect furniture sets from raw woods. While he was managing his state, he was contended with the whole world that the Ottoman Empire was not destroyed by correcting the unhealthy parts of the state. After he was dethroned, the collapse

of the state accelerated and those who dethroned him wished for him to ascend to the throne again. However, the reversal of the time wheel is no longer possible.

Being a manager is easy but being a leader is very difficult. A leader is someone who is the most superior to those around them. Must be gifted with intelligence. Must have insight, intuition and the ability to instantly analyze and synthesize events. He must also have the ability to predict the outcome of events. Considering this aspect, Sultan II. Abdulhamid Han is literally leader.

In the days when the Western imperialist powers used Armenians as pawns and provoked chaos in Anatolia, the British Ambassador came to Sultan Abdulhamid and arrogantly said: "How many more Armenians will you kill?" Upon daring to ask, the great khan fixed his sharp gaze on the ambassador: "How many guns per Turk were on board the British ship, which approached such and such a point of the Black Sea on such and such a day and at such and such an hour, took out so many crates to arm the Armenians against the Turks, and delivered them to the commanders? If there are any, we will kill just as many Armenians." gave the answer. The British ambassador was horrified and to be gravelled of this enormous intelligence power of Sultan Abdulhamid (Kısakürek, 1988).

Sultan II. Abdulhamid, following a brilliant policy, kept the Hejaz notables of Arabia in Istanbul as a member of the Council of State in order to prevent any revolt. Despite Sharif Hussein's refusal to be an Emir of Mecca many times, the Union and Progress administration, following the dethronement of the Great Hakan, fulfilled this request of the Union and Progress and appointed Sharif Hussein as an Emir. Unfurled the flag of rebellion. Much later, British Prime Minister Lloyd George said in the House of Commons: "After Sheriff Hussein became Emir of Mecca, we agreed with him on Arab nationalism and rebellion. We gave 40 thousand gold coins a month against this rebellion" (Bardakçı, 1985).

Prince Bismark, who founded the German Union; "If there is 100 grams of intelligence in the world, 90 grams of it belongs to Abdulhamid Han, 5 grams to me, and the remaining 5 grams to other world politicians." The Great Khan of the Ottoman Empire, II. Abdulhamid Han is the best practitioner of Central Turkish Domination. During his 33-year reign, he managed to protect the lands owned by the State very well, despite the difficult years of the state. Sultan Abdulhamid Han, to Theodor Herzl, who wanted land in Palestine in return for paying all the foreign debts of the Ottoman Empire; "I do not sell a single inch of land in Palestine, because this land does not belong to me, but to my nation. My nation, on the other hand, won it by shedding their blood and made it productive with its blood. A piece of

homeland bought with the blood of martyrs cannot be sold with money! You should know that I will never allow the treacherous operation you plan to perform on a living body!..”

The Ottoman people knew the land, a mother, a beloved, and put their blood and soul to meet it (Özey & Kocalar, 2019).

Ahmet Vefik Pasha sold the land of the missionary home called "Robert College" established on the upper side of Rumelihisarı to American Protestant missionaries. This person wanted to be buried in Eyüp Sultan as he had willed when he died; However, the Sultan of the time, Abdulhamid Han, did not allow this at all and ordered that the man who sold land to the Protestants listen to their bells until the end of the day, and ordered him to be buried in the Rumeli cemetery right in front of the land he sold, not Eyüp Sultan (Müftüoğlu, 1993). Sultan II. Abdulhamid Han never sold land and property in his life, and he did not forgive those who sold it.

Sultan II. The philosophy of Abdulhamid Han was not "The debt is the whip of the brave", but "The debtor spends from his own pocket". He did not like the fact that he and his state were in debt, and he took great steps to pay off all debts.

During the reign of Abdulhamid, 16 million lira kaime (paper money) came into effect due to the 93 War. But the value of this paper money fell very quickly and foreign borrowing started again and some more debt was borrowed. During the Berlin Treaty, the creditor states increased their anxieties and pressures. Thereupon, with an agreement reached in November 1879, 6 direct taxes started to be allocated to these debts as of 1880. Thus, a step was taken towards the establishment of the Düyun-u Umumiye Administration (Ünlü, 1994).

The state made an agreement with the creditors by abandoning fish, salt, silk, liquor, tobacco and stamp taxes and formalized this with the name of Muharrem Decree. The debt and interest of the state at this time amounted to 252,800,000 Ottoman liras. The taxes of Cyprus and Eastern Rumelia provinces were paid and 146,364,650 liras were deducted from the total debt, and the debt was reduced to 106,437,650 liras (Karal, 2007; Danişmend, 1971).

This decree was a memorandum of understanding between the Ottoman State and a financial group that did not represent any state and acted only on behalf of the creditors. With this decree, the creditors guaranteed the payment of their receivables. The Ottoman government also obtained a reduction of up to 54% from the debts. In addition, interest rates were reduced from 9% to 1%. Most importantly, the Sublime Porte was able to prevent the possible intervention of European states with this decree (Küçük & Ertüzün, 1994).

In the memoirs of Tahsin Pasha (1931), "Sultan Hamid's greatest goal was to pay the debts of the state. Once upon a time, European states tried to intervene in our finances due to the debt issue. Sultan Hamid had formed the Düyün-u Umumiye Administration to prevent this and to be a remedy for the creditors. Due to the fact that the State's actual intervention was partially prevented at that time, it meant a service to the country perseverance and thought."

Those who attacked Abdulhamid for having Düyün-u Umumiye founded, claimed that on November 5, 1901, France, who claimed to be from their own people, occupied the entire island of Lesbos, as Lorando and Tubini could not get back the money they lent to the state during the reign of Sultan Abdulaziz they ignore it (Tahsin Pasha, 1931; Danişmend, 1971).

The leader thinks about his people and works for the peace and well-being of his people. The people also support their leader. Sultan II. Abdulhamid Khan is a sultan who values his people. He always thought about the peace and welfare of his people and took the necessary measures. However, the public could not show the same sensitivity.

The benevolent Sultan Abdulhamid Han, who called the bakers who wanted to increase the price of the bread that was sold for 30 lira, he said: "You continue to sell the bread for 30 money again. For every bread you sell, I will give you the 10 money you want. Because if the price of bread is increased in a country, it will be followed by a move like all the essential needs will become more expensive, and our people will suffer greatly from this," he said, displaying an example of statesmanship that genuinely cares about its people (Banarlı, 1984).

Sultan II. Abdulhamid Han's greatest misfortune is that he lived during the collapse of the state. In this period, the state has strong internal and external enemies. It would be wrong to talk about Constitutional Monarchy at a time like this. As a matter of fact, those who wanted to bring Constitutional Monarchy regretted their demands. In the period of expansion and rise of the state, constitutionalism and democracy are good. It is extremely inconvenient in periods of decline and collapse. Particularly separatist and divisive ideas develop faster in constitutionalism and democracy environments.

Sultan II. Abdulhamid fifteen days after the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy, a banquet was given to the members of the Assembly. The Europeans who met Abdulhamid in the Memoirs of the Constitutional Monarchy of Hüseyin Cahit (Yalçın), the famous clerk of the Unionists, who were the enemies of Abdulhamid, who attended the banquet given that night, tell about this important event that Abdulhamid lived. "The

Europeans who met Abdulhamid talked about his very attractive and binding kindness and personality. We would not believe this, considering it to be flattery and self-interested. But tonight, I saw the great attraction in Abdulhamid up close. At the end of the feast, he won the hearts of almost all the deputies” (Müftüoğlu, 1993).

A leader is a person who sees the future and acts accordingly. Sultan II. Abdulhamid undersigned ingenious projects. He thought of the unthinkable at that moment. He established the world's first serious intelligence agency (Yıldız Intelligence Agency). The purpose of this organization, which consists of many spies, is to gather information about Abdulhamid's political rivals and to prevent coup or uprising attempts against Abdulhamid. The spies not only collected information on their own, but also created a large intelligence network by tying large numbers of people on a salary. Intelligence reported early on activities that could be against the Abdulhamid administration. Sultan II. Abdulhamid said, "If the Russian navy has extra oars in the Black Sea, I will know about it, they cannot do anything." he said, and indeed, during the First World War, Tsarist Russia could not do anything dangerous (Refik, 2005).

The idea of connecting Asia and Europe was first introduced a century ago. It was put forward and designed by Abdulhamid. Thinking of connecting the railways in the south, southwest and center of Europe to the Baghdad railway with this Bosphorus Bridge, II. The project of this giant bridge, commissioned by a Frenchman named F. Arnodin by Abdulhamid Han, included minarets, domes, towers and cannons to provide military defense. Again, in connection with this bridge, Abdulhamid Han had a ring road project drawn with a far-sighted perspective (Document 1).

One of the qualities sought in a leader is to be sensitive to the environment. Sultan II. Abdulhamid Han is a leader who is very sensitive to the environment. During the reign of Abdulhamid, a village was exiled en masse because they damaged and destroyed the Belgrade forests (Sevinç, 1978). With this behaviour, Sultan Abdulhamid Han was able to take more radical decisions than today's environmentalists.

II. Abdulhamid Han had extensive and detailed research done on energy resources (especially oil) and mines within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. During this period, oil research was commissioned by the German mining engineer Paul Groskoph within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. In addition to the oil fields shown in Mosul, Kirkuk, Baghdad and Erbil, oil fields within the borders of Southeastern Anatolia today such as Diyarbakır, Mardin, Bismil, Siirt and Hakkari have also been identified. Sultan II. Abdulhamid gave an

order to start a comprehensive oil reserve study by extracting funds from the Treasury-i Hassa, that is, from the personal property of the sultan.

Foreign and local engineers took part in the works that the sultan had done with his own money. Oil dredging was carried out in the basin of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, around Mosul and Baghdad. The research team, led by German mining engineer Paul Groskoph and Habip Necip Efendi, carried out their studies on October 22, 1901 to Sultan II. He presented this to Abdulhamid in a report. Accordingly, they found significant oil reserves on the banks of the creek called "Bitlis Water". Groskoph noted that there are rich oil deposits around Hakkari, Bingöl, Siirt and on the banks of the Tigris River. Groskoph noted that apart from the banks of the river, oil was also found in the high mountains on the banks of the Tigris. On the oil map covering all of Southeastern Anatolia and a part of Eastern Anatolia; Diyarbakir, Mardin, Bismil, around Hazro Stream, Sinan, Botan Stream, Batman Stream, Tigris region, Midyat, Bedran, Tulan, Siirt, Habur, Fındık, Cizre, Habur Stream, Bitlis Stream and Hakkari are important oil resources (Tozduman Terzi, 2014).

After 1878, the world powers' view of the Ottoman Empire changed. He did not want an Ottoman that had stood strong against Russia until that day. From that date on, they sought to break up the Ottoman Empire and get the best share. Oil had come to the fore as a factor. Oil was also largely in Ottoman territory. II. Abdulhamid had a special policy in this regard. The Ottomans resisted this in the Balkans and the Middle East and fought tooth and nail. During the reign of Abdulhamid, the importance of oil became evident. Britain also started attacks to dominate the Persian Gulf. He made an agreement with some Arab sheikhs in the region and used military force. II. Abdulhamid created a rivalry against this by putting the Germans into action. Thinking that oil regions could be lost after some wars, he made the treasury the property of the owner, that is, his personal property (Engin, 2009).

Leader gives importance to agriculture, industry and trade. Because the economy of the state should be strong. Economic depressions lead to political crises. Political crises lead the state to collapse. Therefore, the economy is very important. Sultan II. Abdulhamid Khan tried to improve and develop the economy of the state. Chambers of commerce, agriculture and industry all over the country again and it was opened during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid. For the first time, the "Tahrir-i nüfûs" organization was established and it was tried to determine the manpower and wealth in the country in a statistical way every year on a regular basis. In addition, zoning and public works activities were accelerated. As most of the Anatolian and Rumelian railways were completed, a road network was created in Anatolia,

where there was no road. Horse-drawn and electric trams and regular docks were built in various cities. Telegraph lines were drawn up to Hejaz and Basra. During the reign of Abdulaziz, some credit institutions were established under the name of "Memleket and Benefit Funds". These were renamed Benefit Funds in 1883 and Ziraat Bankası on 15 August 1888. During the reign of Abdulhamid, the organization of this bank was expanded, branches were opened in various places and farmers were supported. Feshâne and Hereke factories were expanded; Yıldız Tile Factory was opened. While experts were brought from Germany for military reform, Turkish officers were sent to Germany for training. Military secondary schools and high schools were increased. The Turkish army was equipped with new weapons. Important steps have also been taken in the field of law. Criminal procedure and commercial procedure laws were enacted. For the first time, the institution of müdde-i umumi (prosecutor) was established in the courts. The police organization was reorganized according to western examples. Pension fund was established for civil servants (Küçük, 1988).

Sultan II. Abdulhamid Han dominates the foreign policy as well as the domestic policy. The Sultan would follow the policy of Europe and take measures accordingly. He would benefit from the interstate balances and thus take remedies for the continuation of the state. Sultan Abdulhamid Han was not a disregarded sultan. Because it is certain that in his time there was no diplomat in all of Europe as familiar with foreign policy as he was. Being a diplomat with great insight, he handled politics by avoiding dangerous places. Some local and foreign writers who wrote about Abdulhamid said that "if Abdulhamid had been on the throne, a world war would not have broken out, and he would have prevented the Balkan states from uniting and starting the Balkan war and their unification." Day and night, he would examine the incoming documents about state affairs and give his opinion (İnal, 1965).

During the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid, the total population of the state; It reached 17.134.000 in 1884, 17.381.670 in 1893, 19.050.000 in 1897 and 28.652.000 in 1910. However, as of this date, a population of 5.5 million, including the lands lost in the Rumelia region, and then 8.5 million as a result of the ruptures in the Middle East and North Africa as a result of the occupations left the Ottoman Empire and 15.254.000 people living on the Anatolian lands, which included an area of 757,340 km<sup>2</sup> inhabitants remained. Later, after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the population of the new state was determined as 13,649 million in 1927 (Özey & Kocalar, 2022a).

II. After Abdulhamid, the area of the Ottoman Empire in 1913; It had a total area of 4,980,000 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 180,000 km<sup>2</sup> was in Europe-i Osmaniye, 1,800,000 km<sup>2</sup> was in Asia-

i Osmaniye, and 3,000,000 km<sup>2</sup> was in Africa-i Osmaniye. It seems that more than 4 million km<sup>2</sup> of land was lost in just 10 years, from 1913 to 1923. In this respect, it is seen that the Ottoman Empire, which had the dominance of the World, preserved its grandeur and splendor until the years when it collapsed (Özey & Kocalar, 2022b).

### **How is the Political Geography of the Ottoman Empire After the Dethronement of II. Abdulhamid Khan?**

Despite the so-called western wannabe intellectuals who slandered Abdulhamid Han, who governed the Ottoman Empire, which he took over in the most depressed period of his era, by following ingenious policies for 33 years, and even nicknamed him the “Red Sultan”, he said the following about the British Foreign Minister Sir Edward Gray of that period, when he learned of Sultan Abdulhamih Khan’ death, "What a loss! He’s my adversary, but with his death, diplomacy lost its enthusiasm for the profession" (Refik, 1992).

The poet and philosopher Rıza Tevfik, who was among the organizers of the March 31 case, avouched that the British were behind this bad incident, and when he visited to the British consulate after the insurrection, he was greeted very unfriendly. He asked to reason of that so much later Lord Nicholson who was back then the British Ambassador to Turkey. This Englishman answered very exemplary: “Rıza Tevfik Bey, we have spent billions of gold to keep Islamic countries under our rule, especially in India, but unfortunately we were not successful. However, Sultan Abdulhamid sends a 'Greetings' and a 'Hafiz Osman calligraphy Quran' every year and keeps the lettering Islamic Ummah at his disposal with a sense of unlimited respect. We expected the removal of the caliphate from you Young Turks with this revolution, and we were deceived. That's why you got a cold welcome?” (Kabaklı, 1993).

While the wounds of the Balkan War disaster were not healed yet, the unprepared involvement The unprepared participation of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War just to ease the burden of the Germans was the most terrible reason for the collapse. When the end of the war was beginning to appear, the leaders of the Union and Progress, Enver and Talat Pashas, who finally realized that they had made a mistake by overthrowing Sultan Abdulhamid, visited the dethroned Sultan, who was residing in the Beylerbeyi Palace, and asked his opinion. That great Sultan brought an atlas to show them the British colonies. He had calculated their population, then asked about the German colonies. Of course, it emerged that the Germans hadn’t a colony. The Sultan was full of sorrow: “Couldn't you make that take into account too?! Did it ever make sense to go to war on the side of the Germans against



England? I used the Germans to balance British avidity. I didn't think of anything beyond that. Now you're asking my opinion! This was previously necessary; It's too late now!" said.

During the Dardanelles War, it was decided to transfer the sultan and the government to Eskişehir as a precaution, with the fear that the enemy fleet might cross the Sea of Marmara. When Abdulhamid Han became aware of the situation, he rejected it with great courage and bravery: I am the grandson of Fatih Sultan Mehmet Han. I can never be inferior to the Byzantine emperor Constantine! While my grandfather Fatih was conquering Istanbul, he died fighting alongside the soldiers of Constantine. Brother, wherever they go. But it should be known that if he and his government leave Istanbul, they cannot return. For my part; I will not step out of Beylerbeyi Palace! he said.

As a matter of fact, the sultan and the government remained in Istanbul against his determination. Thus, the collapse of the state that day was prevented. Abdulhamid Han passed away on February 10, 1918, at the age of 77, after an extremely intensive, weary and difficult life (Topbaş, 1999).

He followed the world politics closely from his childhood until his death and always keep the "World Atlas" by his side.

### **Discussion and Results**

The number of pieces describing II. Abdulhamid Han in literally are quite insufficient and few. Even, the most of the local authors have unflattering writing about Sultan II. Abdulhamid Khan in their works, this is not seen in most of the conscientious Western writers.

In remembrance of British Admiral Henry F. Woods, who was in charge of the melioration of the Ottoman Navy says: "I have not come across any written document describing Sultan Abdulhamid as he deserves. In particular, any idea close to factual has been put forward about his sentiments and character. In my opinion, Abdulhamid is one of the most exceptional personalities among the Ottoman sultans who have ever lived."

While the British Ambassador O'Connor said "the man who kept the peace in Europe", the British Mediterranean Fleet Commander Admiral Fisher said "Abduülhamid is one of the most adept and serial succession diplomats in all of Europe" (Kocabaş, 1995).

British Prime Minister Disraeli said "Abdulhamid is neither a rascal, a tyrant, a bigoted, nor a sinister man; He is a just man who loves his country and nation." An excellent

diplomat, Abdulhamid knew very well how to utilize the most of the competitive and jealousy between the Great Powers ambitious to expand. His aim was to prevent the danger of war by maintaining the Ottoman Empire's friendship with the Great Powers (Woods, 1976).

II. Abdulhamid Han is a truly political genius. Remaining in his reign of 32 years, 7 months and 27 days, and as a matter of course, many nations and people were hostile to II. Abdulhamid. Because while the Ottoman Empire was on the verge of collapse, he prolonged the life of the state for another 33 years. The Jews were hostile to him because they weren't acquired land in Palestine. They demanded to rent a specific region in Palestine, the sultan had it superintend to see if there was oil there, he had learned that there was not, but he insisted not to give landmass to the Jews. Armenians captured all of Eastern Anatolia and dreamed of Greater Armenia. II. Abdulhamid opposed the reforms, which in favor of the Armenians, and instantly suppressed the rebellions through the Hamidiye regiments. Therefore, they were endeavoured to eliminate and were hostile to him. The so-called intellectuals of the Ottoman Empire, who were wannabe of the west, were also hostile to him. Because he did not give them the freedom they desired and expatriated them from Istanbul.

Consequently, Sultan II. Abdulhamid Khan is a great leader who has shown the whole world how the state will be governed and how the world politics and sovereignty will be provided even during the decadence of the government.

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