



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Reflections of Tanzimat Reforms on Urban Governance, and the Establishment of Modern Municipalities: The Case of the Jerusalem Municipality

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the establishment and development of modern municipal governance in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat Period, specifically as a case study focusing on the Jerusalem Municipality. From a public administration and urban governance perspective, it investigates how Ottoman reform efforts in the 19th century—shaped by increasing population, urbanization, and Western influences—laid the groundwork for the transition from traditional governing approaches to modern local administrations. The study analyzes the effects of the centralized administrative approach brought by the Tanzimat on the newly established local administration structure and municipal organization, based on the laws and regulations of the period and the extensive academic literature on the subject.

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In conclusion, while the municipalities of the Tanzimat Period did not possess a fully autonomous and participatory structure when compared to contemporary local government concepts, they are considered a critical first step in the emergence and institutionalization of modern local governments, extending from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Türkiye. This study illuminates the complex nature of Ottoman administrative reforms and their impact on the contemporary local government system by highlighting the continuities and ruptures between the old order and new practices, as well as the dynamic interplay between centralism and the necessity for local governance.

INTRODUCTION

It's widely known that in Ottoman history, especially following significant military setbacks, reform efforts were initiated, often concentrating on military issues. From the 18th century onwards, these endeavors to innovate began to shift towards the West, making it clear that reforms were necessary in other domains as well. By the early 19th century, the need for change and innovation in administrative, judicial, and financial spheres became a subject of debate. Particularly during the Tanzimat Period, with the promulgation of various fireman's, individual rights and freedoms also began to be addressed within the framework of these reforms. Ottoman administrators of the Tanzimat era recognized the imperative to modernize existing governance structures while simultaneously increasing the influence and control of the centralized system. It became evident that dysfunctional units and structures with diminished efficacy, ranging from the central administration to provincial organizations and even local administrations, needed replacement with modern counterparts. This period marked a process of profound transformations, the establishment of new institutions, and the reshaping of traditional structures, all critically aimed at ensuring the state's survival and adapting to the demands of the age. Cities and their governance were central to this sweeping transformation.

This study explores how the concept of modern municipal governance emerged and evolved within the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat Period, utilizing the Jerusalem Municipality as a specific

case study. Written from a public administration and urban governance perspective, this work delves into the transformations in Ottoman administrative structures brought about by 19th-century population growth, urbanization, and Western interactions. It specifically focuses on the core dynamics of the transition from traditional governance forms to contemporary local administrations. In this context, the study seeks answers to key questions concerning the impact of reforms on the Ottoman local governance system, the primary reasons behind the changes in urban administration and the formation of modern municipalities, and the administrative, financial structure, organs, and operations of the Jerusalem Municipality. Furthermore, it discusses from which perspective Tanzimat-era municipalities should be evaluated as an administrative reform.

The primary objective of this research is to present the theoretical underpinnings of Tanzimat Period municipal governance, to examine in-depth its practical characteristics through the specific case of the Jerusalem Municipality, and to analyze the interaction between these institutions and the Ottoman administrative legacy alongside Western influences. The study relies on relevant official regulations, laws, and ordinances from the period, coupled with an extensive body of academic literature in the field, to meticulously analyze the effects of the centralized administrative philosophy introduced by the Tanzimat on the newly established local administrative structures and municipal organizations. A principal limitation of this study is that it provides an analysis based on existing secondary sources and published official regulations, rather than direct engagement with primary archival documents. This approach aligns with the methodological framework of public administration and urban governance, distinguishing it from the in-depth archival research typical of historical scholarship. This study's significant contribution to the literature lies in its detailed examination of Tanzimat-era municipal governance through a case study of a strategically important urban center like Jerusalem, and its offering of a fresh perspective on the relationship between centralism and the need for local governance from a public administration viewpoint. Through this, the study aims to foster a more comprehensive understanding of local governance dynamics within the Ottoman modernization process.

Tanzimat Reforms and the Reasons for the Establishment of Municipalities

The period beginning with the proclamation of the Imperial Edict of *Gülhane* (*The Gülhane hatt-ı şerif/hatt-ı hümayun*) on November 3, 1839, and extending until the declaration of the First Constitutional Era (*Birinci Meşrutiyet*) in 1876, is recognized as the Tanzimat Period. During this era, significant reforms were implemented within the central administrative organization, and new institutions, particularly councils, were established.¹ Beyond the redefinition of the legislative function of the previously established *Meclis-i Vâlâ* (or otherwise known as *Meclis-i Vâlâ-yı Ahkâm-ı Adliye/The Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances*), the most crucial reforms concerning the Empire's administrative structure pertained to provincial governance. For each provincial governor, a local council was formed to represent the local population. This initiative expanded the application of the principle of equality among Ottoman subjects and marked the initial implementation of the principle of representation within administrative councils (Roderic, 1963)

The imperative for administrative modernization during the Tanzimat Period arose concurrently with broader political, legal, social, and cultural transformations. Changes in sectors like agriculture and industry necessitated a certain degree of participation from local groups in provincial governance. Prior to the 19th century, it is known that the Ottoman administration delegated certain public services to local groups, religious communities, and endowments (*waqfs*). However, Tanzimat administrators, striving to establish a robust central government structure and organization, integrated these public services into the functions of the central administration (Ortaylı, 1985).

Prior to the mid-19th century, Ottoman cities notably lacked a municipal administration comparable to those found in European cities. There were no official administrative institutions specifically designated for urban management, nor was a unified legal framework established for municipal affairs through codified statutes or regulations. In the classical period, urban governance was carried out based on specific imperial decrees (*fermans*), judicial rulings, customs, and traditions. Municipal services for residents in Ottoman cities were primarily managed through local institutions such as

¹ For detailed information on reforms made in the central organization during the Tanzimat Period, see: Akyıldız, 1993; Seyitdanlıoğlu, 1994.

neighborhood organizations (*mahalle teşkilatı*), guilds (*loncas*), and endowments (*waqfs*) (Tekeli, 1996). The oversight of these local institutions fell under the jurisdiction of judges (*kadis*) (Gerber, 2011). A "kadı" performed their duties within a settlement unit known as a *kaza* (*sub-district/county*), which comprised one or more villages and towns, forming an administrative district (Eryılmaz, 2020). *Kadis*, possessing an autonomous character vis-à-vis other administrators within their assigned *kazas*, also held the authority to directly communicate with the central administration (Ekinci, 2004)

The reform movements initiated during the Tanzimat era led to a significant shift in traditional understandings, the decline in the effectiveness of traditional institutions and structures, and the emergence of new administrative units within the state (Tekeli, 1996; Gerber, 2011). In this process, the influence of *waqfs* and *ulema* (religious scholars) in education, one of the most crucial service areas, began to wane, with the state directly assuming responsibility. Gerber regards this development as 'one of the biggest blows to traditional institutions' (Gerber, 2011, pp. 259-261). Examining the essence of the Tanzimat movement reveals that the renewal of traditional structures and institutions was a natural progression. Within this framework, the state's development of new methods for social change and the elimination of old ones were seen as an ordinary process (Çiydem, 2014, p. 89). Particularly, the rise of new urban centers, rapid growth, and increasing populations in cities accelerated the emergence of new infrastructure and institutions. The transformation of the urban sphere thus emerged as a necessity under the changing conditions of the era, making the formation of new institutions and structures indispensable (Tekeli, 1996).

During the Tanzimat Period, three fundamental administrative reforms were implemented in local governance. The first of these reforms was the transition from *eyalet* (province) to *vilayet* (governorate) administration. With the *Vilayet Regulations of 1864* (*Vilayet Nizamnamesi*), the administrative divisions of the Ottoman Empire were reorganized into *vilayets*, *sancaks* (*districts/sub-provinces*), *kazas* (*sub-districts/counties*), and *karyes* (*villages*). Each *vilayet* was divided into *sancaks*, each *sancak* into *kazas*, and *kazas* were further subdivided into *karyes* (*villages, neighborhoods*) and *nahiyes* (*hamlets*). The second reform involved changes in provincial administration, specifically in neighborhood and village governance. The "Instruction Regarding the Duties of Governors, Mutasarrifs, Kaymakams, and Directors"² issued in 1858, for the first time, explicitly mentioned villages when listing the administrative units within the Ottoman State in its first article. Furthermore, the *Vilayet Regulations of 1864* stipulated that at least fifty households in towns and cities would constitute a neighborhood, and each neighborhood would be considered a *karye*. The third and arguably most significant innovation made by Tanzimat administrators in local governance was the establishment and development of municipal organizations, initially in Istanbul and subsequently in other cities (Eryılmaz, 1992; Roderic, 1963).

Before the Tanzimat era, *kadis* (judges) were primarily responsible for urban administration in Ottoman cities. At that time, civil and municipal functions were integrated. A *kadı*, as a judicial authority, was responsible for both policing matters and municipal services, overseeing *waqfs* (endowments), *esnaf* (guilds), and *bazaar* (markets). Officials such as the *subaşı* (police chief), *naib* (deputy judge), *muhtesip* (market inspector), and *imam* served as assistants to the *kadı* in these duties. Municipal services were carried out by *kadis*, government representatives, city notables, and artisan associations. In 1826, the *İhtisap Nezareti* (Ministry of Police and Market Affairs) was established, becoming responsible for municipal services alongside policing in urban areas. With the establishment of the *Evkaf Nezareti* (Ministry of Endowments) in 1836, *waqf* affairs were transferred to this new institution. Consequently, *kadis* began to be responsible solely for judicial duties. However, the newly established institutions that took over the *kadis*' previous responsibilities could not perform these services as effectively or efficiently as the *kadis* had. As a result, new service needs arose for urban dwellers, and a significant vacuum in authority and responsibility emerged in some service areas (Eryılmaz, 1992).

Due to this fragmented, tripartite structure, there were crucial urban services that no one undertook and were never adequately provided. The lack and neglect of lighting, sanitation, pavement, and

² "Instruction Encompassing the Duties of High Governors, Noble Mutasarrifs, Kaymakams, and Directors (*Vülât-ı İzâm ve Mutasarrifin-i Kirâm ve Kâim-i Makâmların ve Müdîrlerin Vezâifini Şâmil Tâ'limât*)" dated September 22, 1858. See: Kartal, 2013; Değirmendere, 2015.

sewage services were the most evident reasons necessitating the establishment of a municipality. Furthermore, observations and recommendations from Italian, French, and British officials, who arrived in Istanbul as allies during the Crimean War, regarding the deficiencies in municipal services also brought the need for a municipality to the forefront. During those years, European travelers visiting the Ottoman Empire, particularly Istanbul, frequently wrote highly negative accounts concerning the lack of municipal services and the general disrepair of the city (Ergin, 1936).

The capital, Istanbul, struggled to modernize some of its defunct traditional institutions. Moreover, as the city became an even more frequented hub for international trade, the number of foreign merchants staying for varying durations increased. The ongoing mass migrations resulting from territorial losses began to strain Istanbul's infrastructure, rapidly escalating issues related to public sanitation, food supply, and civic order within the city. Adding to these difficulties, the Crimean War led to a continuous influx of soldiers and supplies via ships into Istanbul. Carts transporting people and materials caused significant traffic congestion, and existing inns and hospitals proved inadequate. This period also saw the emergence of serious health concerns, with growing fears of epidemics (Ortaylı, 2020).

The deficiencies in municipal services had become widely apparent, and it was understood that the institutions established by the Ottoman government for urban management and services were ineffective and inadequate. It was evident that the transformation envisioned by the Tanzimat reforms could not be achieved with traditional institutions. Criticisms from European diplomats and experts visiting Istanbul were taken into consideration, and efforts were made to establish a modern municipality in line with their demands and recommendations. On August 16, 1854, the first municipal organization in Istanbul was established through a communiqué issued by the Meclis-i Âli-yi Tanzimat (*Supreme Council of Tanzimat*). This communiqué created a new office called Şehremaneti (*formerly the city government of Istanbul - Municipality*) and a City Council composed of necessary individuals. The *İhtisap Nezareti* (Ministry of Police and Market Affairs) was abolished, and its municipal services were transferred to the Şehremaneti (Çadırcı, 2013).

In an environment lacking sufficient accumulation of knowledge and experience concerning urban administration and municipal affairs, the *Şehremaneti* (Municipality) failed to demonstrate the expected progress. Consequently, it was decided to establish an *İntizam-ı Şehir Komisyonu* (City Order Commission), comprising certain Ottoman subjects and foreign residents of Istanbul who possessed expertise in urban and municipal matters. The majority of the commission members were non-Muslim bankers and merchants engaged in foreign trade. Since it was impossible for such a commission to directly undertake the administration of this vast city, the commission proposed the idea of dividing Istanbul into fourteen municipal districts. A communiqué issued in 1857 announced that, due to insufficient resources, it was not feasible to establish all municipal districts simultaneously, and implementation would therefore commence with the formation of the "Altıncı Daire-i Belediye" (*Sixth Municipal District*). Beyoğlu and Galata constituted this Sixth Municipal District. Despite resource limitations, the most developed area of the city was chosen as a pilot region for this new application. The Sixth Municipal District implemented numerous services that served as a model for other municipalities. A cadastral map of this region was prepared. Wide stone-paved roads and sidewalks were constructed. Cemeteries were relocated to Şişli, and parks were established in Taksim and Tepebaşı in their place. Hospitals and healthcare facilities were opened, and a slaughterhouse was built. Following the example of the Altıncı Daire-i Belediye, municipalities began to be established, initially in developed port cities, and then throughout all Ottoman cities with the promulgation of the Vilayet Municipal Law in 1877.³ The primary reason for the establishment of municipalities was the inability to provide fundamental municipal services such as road and pavement construction, water and sewage systems, street cleaning, and lighting (Tekeli, 1985).

In the 19th century, Ottoman cities, particularly port cities that served as intensified centers for foreign relations, underwent significant structural transformations. As the Ottoman Empire experienced profound social, economic, political, and administrative changes, its traditional urban

³ Detailing the processes of establishment and widespread adoption of municipalities in the Ottoman Empire and the legal regulations enacted falls beyond the scope of this study. For detailed information, see: Ortaylı, 2020; Ergin, 1936; Çadırcı, 2013. However, relevant aspects will be provided within the section concerning the Jerusalem Municipality in this study.

governance had to adapt to these evolving circumstances. With the burgeoning commercial and economic relations with Europe, there was a pressing need for a new organizational framework in the Eastern Mediterranean port cities to provide adequate infrastructure, transportation, accommodation, and other essential urban services crucial for the era's trade activities. Consequently, the establishment of modern municipalities, capable of delivering these new services, became a necessity (Ortaylı, 1985).

In Ottoman territories, the municipality emerged as an integral component of an authoritarian centralizing system that began to develop during this period. This centralizing, absolute governance philosophy gave rise to a legal state⁴. However, in every legal state, the meaning of legal order may not necessarily include political participation. The modern state concept of the era aimed not at individual participation rights, but at establishing law and order against anarchy, disorder, insecurity, and corruption that threatened societal and urban life. Individual rights and freedoms, the right and desire for citizens' participation, and their transformation into action, constituted a later stage. Thus, municipalities in the Ottoman Empire were born and had to develop within a society that had not yet transitioned to this second stage (Ortaylı, 2010; Ortaylı, 1985).

Urban Governance and the Establishment of the Municipality in Jerusalem During the Tanzimat Period

The Tanzimat Period, spanning from 1839 to 1876 in Ottoman history, represents a pivotal era of reform where the phenomenon of modernization fully manifested within the state's structures and institutions. Jerusalem, an Ottoman city holding a unique position due to its distinct religious, cultural, and geographical parameters, was among the significant urban centers that began to modernize under the influence of these reforms, particularly concerning its municipal structure. This section of the study will delve into the process leading to the establishment of modern municipalities in Jerusalem, addressing the municipality's legal, institutional, and administrative infrastructure, as well as its budget. This will provide a detailed foundation for understanding the structure and functioning of modern municipalities during the Tanzimat period and will, in the final section, lay the groundwork for an analysis of this administrative reform.

Undoubtedly, there are valid reasons why Jerusalem, rather than other cities in Palestine like Jaffa, Gaza, or Nablus, was impacted to such an extent by the Tanzimat reforms. Firstly, with a population of approximately twelve thousand, Jerusalem was the region's largest city, and its inland location made it perceivably more secure than coastal cities like Jaffa or Gaza. The increasing number of visitors due to Christian nations' interest in holy sites and the establishment of a British consulate in Jerusalem further elevated the city's international significance (Abu-Manneh, 1990). All these factors propelled Jerusalem to prominence compared to other Ottoman cities and made it a crucial target in the Empire's centralization policies. Consequently, Jerusalem, being the first municipality established in Palestine in 1863 and the second after Istanbul (Kark, 1980), secured its place in history as a significant city showcasing the impact of Tanzimat era reforms in local governance.

The Ottoman government established modern municipalities with the aim of consolidating urban services, previously managed by various institutions and authorities, under a single command. This move was intended to strengthen the centralist structure and facilitate easier control over these services. This approach, which perfectly aligned with the core philosophy of the Tanzimat reforms, aimed to rebuild Ottoman urban governance through mechanisms of centralization, systematization, and control. In this context, the objective of the reforms was to leverage European achievements while contending against their perceived superiority. The manifestation of this struggle, conducted through the central government, was the endeavor to construct a city in the Western sense (Yerasimos, 2012). The inspiration for this construction process was drawn from Western urban organizations, particularly French municipal institutions (Zeba, 2017). The Tanzimat Period, marked by a series of administrative and legal reforms and the reshaping of political power's governance strategies, represented an era of reforms not only for the central administration but also for Ottoman cities (Avcı & Uçar, 2023).

⁴ To emphasize the rigid, centralist, and non-participatory state based on law of that era, and to indicate that it did not encompass the full depth of the modern concept of the rule of law, the term 'legal state (kanun devleti)' has been deliberately chosen instead of 'rule of law' or 'state of law'.

From the perspective of the Tanzimat reformers, the establishment of municipalities stemmed from necessities brought about by internal dynamics, while also representing a natural progression in the formation of a centralist governance approach (Avcı, 2004). To rebuild a centralized state and achieve the goals of asserting state authority over the populace, it was essential to develop public services, communication infrastructure, schools, and urban amenities (Avcı, 2011). In fact, from the Ottoman Empire's viewpoint, municipalities were not a stage for the creation of autonomous local administrations; rather, they were designed as a component of the central government's organization, serving centralism and intended to augment central power (Ortaylı, 2000; Ortaylı, 1985; Avcı, 2014).

The government's primary motivation for reforming municipalities was to ensure that cities were developed, well-planned, clean, and well-lit. During this period, the Ottoman government faced numerous political challenges in the province of Jerusalem, which led Jerusalem to experience the central government's intervention more intensely than other provinces in Palestine. The increasing interest of foreigners, who demonstrated their "presence" in these lands through the construction of many buildings like monasteries and new churches, the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, and the start of Jewish immigration in the 1890s, were among the most significant of these challenges (Avcı, 2014). Table 1 clearly illustrates the ethnic development of the city by examining Jerusalem's demographic distribution between 1849 and 1922.

Table 1. Demographic Structure of Jerusalem

Ethnic Identity	1849		1872		1886		1911		1922	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
Arap	9892	84.7	10578	73.7	1354	66.9	25477	58.3	29118	44.9
Jew	1790	15.3	3780	26.3	7105	33.1	18190	41.7	33971	54.3
Total	11682	100%	14358	100%	21459	100%	43667	100%	62578	100%

Source: Walid, 2000, p. 47.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, the municipalities that emerged from the Tanzimat Movement also served to demonstrate the Ottoman administration's modernization efforts in Palestine (Gerber, 1986). The Jerusalem Municipality was a significant player in the city's modernization, particularly in terms of governance and infrastructure improvement. It also undertook a traditional role in regulating conflicts and ensuring social peace. Generally, it was a respected local authority with broad powers. Concurrently, it acted as a crucial mediating actor between the Ottoman imperial momentum and local demands (Schölch, 2005). Despite operating under tight financial constraints, the Jerusalem Municipality managed to improve living conditions in the city to a certain extent through its policies in infrastructure, health, security, and culture. Shortly thereafter, the municipality's activities began to spread to other areas within the Jerusalem region (Ben-Bassat & Büssow, 2019).

Legal Regulations Concerning the Establishment of the Municipality

Although the initial legal regulations for the establishment of municipal organizations in Jerusalem were enacted after the Vilayet Regulations of 1864 (Ortaylı, 1974, p. 175), Jerusalem gained its municipal status earlier, in 1863, prior to the promulgation of the said legislation (Ben-Bassat & Büssow, 2019). Avcı (2004, p. 137) states that while no archival source confirming the approval of the Jerusalem Municipality's establishment date by the Sultan has been found, the minute books containing the municipality's decisions between 1892 and 1915 indicate the establishment date of the municipal council as 1867-1868. Therefore, it's safe to say that Jerusalem, as the first municipality established in Palestine, had been operational since 1867. The 1864 Vilayet Regulations are considered the first comprehensive regulation concerning provincial municipalities, including provisions for the establishment of a municipal administration in every village (Ortaylı, 1974, p. 166). However, this regulation was not highly functional due to its lack of clear stipulations regarding municipal operations, its extremely ambiguous provisions, and its failure to define the necessary status for the organizational structure. Despite this ambiguity, municipalities were successfully

established; this success was significantly influenced by the strong connections of cities like Izmir, Alexandria, Beirut, and Jerusalem with the outside world (Yılmaz Aslantürk, 2018).

According to Ortaylı (2000, p. 175), the 1864 Vilayet Regulations, which laid the legal groundwork for the establishment of municipalities to ensure the modernization of local administrations, served as a preliminary implementation for the transition to Ottoman urban reform. The establishment of municipal organizations and the legal definition of their duties were realized through instructions issued in 1867. These instructions included provisions concerning the duties of the municipality, the appointment process of the municipal head, and matters related to the members of the municipal council. The section dedicated to municipal organization in the Vilayet Regulations promulgated in 1871 was further expanded (Avcı, 2004, pp. 136-137; Sharif, 2014, pp. 54-56).

A dedicated section of the Vilayet Regulations was entirely devoted to the institutional structure, powers, operational procedures, and organizational arrangements of municipal administrations in Ottoman cities and towns. This expanded section detailed the provisions found in the 1867 instructions, outlining the duties of the municipality, the qualifications required for election to the municipal council, and detailed items of municipal revenues and expenditures. According to these instructions, a municipal council was mandated to consist of a head (*reis*) and six members. With the 1871 Vilayet Regulations, comprehensive, law-level regulations concerning municipalities were introduced, granting them administrative entity status within the vilayet. Article 111 of these Regulations stipulated the establishment of a municipal council in every city where a vali (*governor*), mutasarrif (*district governor*), or kaymakam (*sub-district governor*) served (Avcı, 2004, pp. 136-137; Ortaylı, 1974, pp. 166, 176; Sharif, 2014, p. 85). Following the enactment of the 1871 Vilayet Regulations, the Sanjak of Jerusalem separated from the Damascus Vilayet, becoming one of the "independent" vilayets directly affiliated with the central government in Istanbul (Avcı, 2014). During this period, the Governor of Jerusalem became directly accountable to Istanbul. The regulation stipulated that the honorary president of the Council (*Meclis*) would be selected from among officials, and their tenure would commence with the appointment and approval of the mutasarrif (*or governor*) (Ortaylı, 1974, p. 186). Therefore, it's fair to say that the municipal council, from its inception, was subordinate to the Governor of Jerusalem (mutasarrif) and the administrative council (*meclis-i idare*), indicating that the Jerusalem Municipality did not possess a fully independent organizational structure (Avcı, 2011; Tekeli, 1996; Ortaylı, 2000).

The Vilayet Municipal Law, solely dedicated to municipal regulations and stipulating the establishment of municipalities in all cities and towns, was enacted in 1877. This ensured that all municipalities within the Ottoman provinces began operating under the same law (Ortaylı, 1974). After the Municipal Law came into force in 1877, municipalities gained greater authority, and the scope of their activities expanded to improve infrastructure and urban living conditions (Avcı, 2011; Tekeli, 1996; Ortaylı, 2000). One provision revised by the law stated that there would be one municipal district per 40,000 inhabitants. However, this provision rarely found practical application (Hanssen, 2018).

In all cities and towns, municipal council members, whose numbers varied between 6 and 12 members depending on the population, were determined by election and took office (Ortaylı, 1974). Municipal council members were chosen through popular elections. The fact that these elections were single-stage and based on secret ballot indicates a more democratic electoral process. In this regard, the 1877 Municipal Law holds a significant place in the history of democracy, as it introduced, for the first time, single-stage elections based on secret ballot and open tabulation (Büssow, 2011). In this respect, the 1877 Municipal Law is a crucial document for the institutionalization of local administrations since 1864 and for defining the fundamental elements of Jerusalem's local administrative structure.

Organizational Structure, Duties, and Powers of the Municipality in Jerusalem

The Jerusalem municipal organization during the Tanzimat Period consisted of a president, a municipal council, and personnel responsible for carrying out various duties. This structure, which reflected the city's ethnic and religious diversity, contributed to Jerusalem's modernization process.

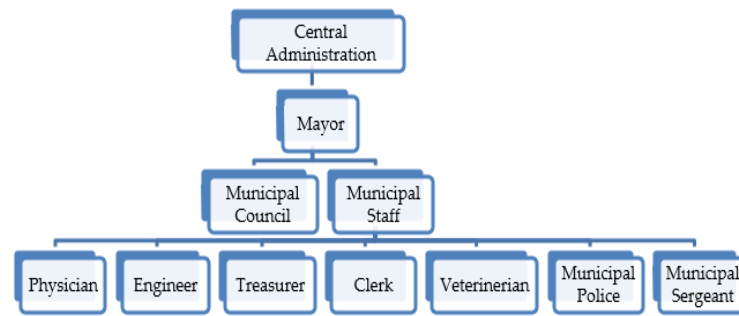


Figure 1. Jerusalem Municipality Organization Structure

As illustrated in Figure 1, the municipality operated directly under the central administration. It functioned under the control of government officials like the *mutasarrif* (governor) and the *meclis-i idare* (administrative council), who operated at the local level and represented central authority, similar to other government organs. Other components within the organization included the municipal council and municipal staff. The physician (doctor), engineer, treasurer, clerk (secretary), veterinarian, municipal police, and municipal sergeant were the other elements within the municipal organization working towards the city's modernization and the provision of public services (Avci, Lemire & Naïli, 2014; Avci, 2014; Ortaylı, 2000).

As will be discussed further in later sections of this study, the municipal council, a crucial component of the municipal organization, was theoretically subordinate to the Governor of Jerusalem (*mutasarrif*) and the administrative council. The Mayor's election by a limited electoral base and his appointment by the *mutasarrif* stemmed from the central government's desire to control local authorities as much as possible (Avci, Lemire & Naïli, 2014). This desire of the central administration obliged the municipality to undertake duties in coordination with other government organs. The municipality derived its powers from the government in Istanbul (*Babiali*) and from the Governor in Jerusalem, who was then called "mutasarrif" and represented the Ottoman Sultan. The duties, powers, and establishment procedures of the municipality, which were unclear in the 1864 Vilayet Regulations, became more explicit with the enactment of the 1877 Vilayet Municipal Law, which stipulated that municipal councils should comprise six to twelve members elected for a four-year term (Halabi, 1993). According to the regulations, municipalities were responsible for carrying out numerous public services, including (Halabi, 1993; Ergin, 1995; Avci, 2004; Eryılmaz, 1992):

- Ensuring public order and security,
- Conducting inspections and taking measures for the protection of public health,
- Overseeing construction work, and inspecting entertainment venues and restaurants,
- Constructing roads, sidewalks, and sewers,
- Carrying out the demolition of dangerous buildings,
- Constructing and repairing public and private waterways,
- Implementing expropriation for public benefit,
- Registering births and deaths,
- Illuminating the city and conducting cleaning operations,
- Constructing and maintaining public buildings, roads, and markets,
- Establishing fire departments,
- Opening hospitals, reformatories, and vocational schools.

In addition to these duties, the municipality also had to smoothly perform some important tasks, such as collecting its own taxes, and had to prove its effectiveness to local taxpayers and voters. Despite its efforts to operate under tight financial constraints, the Jerusalem Municipality succeeded in improving living conditions in the city through its policies in infrastructure, health, security, and culture. Shortly thereafter, the municipality's activities began to spread to other areas within the

region. The success of municipal projects was particularly influenced by religious endowments (waqfs), businessmen, and other partners (Büssow, 2014). The idea that physical forms of urban development such as roads, railways, tramways, ports, and telegraphs encouraged the integration of a region with the imperial center was undoubtedly one of the principles of Tanzimat modernization. New technologies adopted from Europe not only improved urban infrastructure in specific cities but were also used by the central government to increase its control over its population throughout the state (Avci, 2011).

The municipality in Jerusalem played a significant role in the development of the city's "New City" center, which extended westward along Jaffa Road from Jaffa Gate (Naïli, 2018, p. 10). The Jerusalem-Jaffa Road, completed in 1870, became the first paved road (Kark, 1980) and one of the main transportation arteries between the coast and the country's interior. By 1885, 50 carriages were transporting passengers on a journey that could last up to 18 hours (Walid, 2000, p. 24). Basic municipal services such as street lighting, street sweeping, and waste collection gradually extended to the New City as well. In 1895, the municipal council began operating on Jaffa Road, opposite the Old City (Lemire, 2017, pp. 32, 123; Naïli, 2018, p. 9). Here, the municipality established a hospital, a pharmacy, a municipal park, and its own offices. The Ottoman Jerusalem Municipality facilitated the establishment and modernization of new neighborhoods in forms distinct from Jerusalem's Old City (Naïli, 2018, p. 10). The Jerusalem-Jericho Road was completed in 1882, followed by the Jerusalem-Bethlehem-Hebron Road in 1889, and the Jerusalem-Nablus Road in 1907. This period marked the first time roads were paved with asphalt (Kark, 1980).

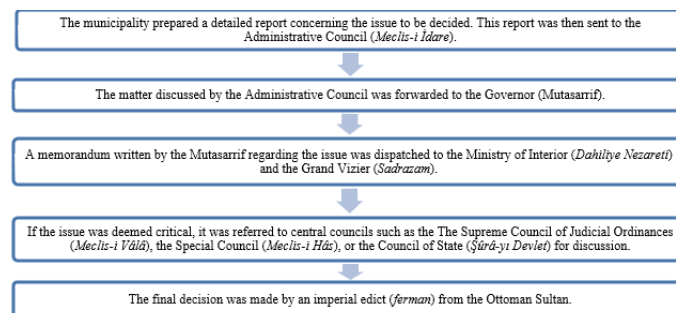


Figure 2. Decision Making Process in Jerusalem Municipality

These projects not only improved the quality of life for the city and its inhabitants, enhancing industrial and travel infrastructure, but also strengthened the Ottoman Empire's image as modern and forward-looking (Naïli, 2017). While the Jerusalem Municipality aimed to make decisions by considering the needs of the local population, it was simultaneously subject to the oversight of the central government and the influence of international parameters. Consequently, decisions to be made were not solely at the discretion of the municipality. For instance, solving a significant urban problem typically involved five stages (Avci, 2014).

As seen in Figure 2, an urban issue to be discussed by the municipality had to go through five stages until it was finalized by an imperial edict from the Ottoman Sultan. Each of these stages in the Jerusalem Municipality's decision-making process, in fact, represents different dynamics influencing the governance process. These dynamics are related to both the demands emanating from the central administration and the ethnic and religious diversity of the local population. In the decisions to be made, on one hand, the framework outlined by institutional regulations was considered, while on the other hand, ensuring the compatibility of local decisions with central administration and maintaining balance among different communities were observed.

The Mayor

In the legal regulations prior to 1877, the Mayor was appointed from among state officials. With the 1877 Vilayet Municipal Law, this was changed, introducing the provision that the Mayor would be appointed by the state from among the elected members of the municipal council (Ergin, 1995, pp. 1659-1660). During this period, the Mayor endeavored to fulfill his duties within the intervention limits of the central administration, which he represented, and simultaneously under the authority of the mutessarifat (Avci, 2004). The duties of the Mayor, as specified in the 1877 Municipal Law, included presiding over the municipal council meetings held at least twice a week, executing

payments, ensuring the implementation of decisions made by the council, and establishing a connection between the municipal council and the provincial administrative authorities by referring necessary matters to the vilayet administrative council (Ortaylı, 2000).

While the Mayor, whose salary was paid from municipal revenues, was seen as a state official within the administrative organization, the position was also perceived as an office for which Jerusalem's notable families competed to strengthen their prestige and influence (Avcı, 2004). Consequently, the mayorship was often held by certain Jerusalemite Arab families who actively worked to develop the city. Yousef Ziya Khalidi, who served as Mayor for nine years starting in 1874, was one such leader (Walid, 2000, p. 24, citing Manna', 1981). From Yousef Ziya Khalidi's perspective, Tanzimat politics should have had five objectives: (i) the construction of an education system based on European models, (ii) the elimination of administrative inefficiency and arbitrariness, (iii) the establishment of religious tolerance, (iv) the safeguarding of constitutional rights and freedoms, and (v) the implementation of infrastructure improvements (Schölch, 2005, p. 73). Carrying out his duties with these objectives in mind, Yousef Ziya Khalidi was regarded as an Ottoman reformer from the provinces and contributed to the execution of essential municipal services such as improving city roads, transporting water from the Sultan's pool to the city, and constructing the road between Jerusalem and Jaffa (Schölch, 1993).

The Jerusalem Municipality was led by sixteen Mayors between 1863 and 1913. Among these were Omar Abdul Salam al-Husseini, Salim al-Husseini, Hussein Salim al-Husseini (Porath, 2020), Muhammad al-Alami, Ra'afat Abu al-Su'ud, and members of other Jerusalem tribes (Naser, 2016). Of these, six belonged to the Hussein family, three to the Alami family, three to the Daoudi family, and two to the Khalidi family. The Husseinis and Khalidis, prominent families of the city, played a dominant role in the appointment of the Mayor and the formation of the municipal council (Schölch, 1993). The fact that the city's leading families undertook this role can be seen as a reflection of Jerusalem's social and political structure during the Tanzimat Period.

The Mayor, on one hand, endeavored to strike a balance in a city with a multicultural structure defined by its ethnic and religious parameters, while on the other hand, was obliged to respond to the demands of the central administration. Thus, the Mayor served as a bridge between the interests of the local population and the policies of the central government.

The Municipal Council

The municipal council was established based on the provision in the 1871 Vilayet Regulations, which stipulated the formation of a municipal council in every city where a vali (governor), mutasarrif (district governor), or kaymakam (sub-district governor) served (Avcı, 2004, p. 136). Within this framework, the municipal council—comprising the Mayor, his deputy, and six elected members—was not constituted as an independent governing body to primarily grant the city's inhabitants a significant voice in local administration. Instead, it was formed as a means of connecting municipal governance to the imperial center (Ortaylı, 2000; Avcı, Lemire & Naïli, 2004). Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh, in his work "Our Country Palestine," described the first municipal council as "...a small organization with limited powers, whose minimum income did not exceed 500 gold liras (Ottoman currency unit), and which lacked a charter" (Naser, 2016, p. 2, citing Dabbagh, 1976).

The qualifications of individuals to be elected to the municipal council and of those eligible to vote for these members were regulated by specific rules within the framework of local government reforms in the Jerusalem Municipality and the Ottoman Empire in general. These rules clearly outlined the criteria sought in both candidates and voters for municipal council membership. Accordingly, half of the council members were replaced every two years without losing their right to re-election (Ortaylı, 2000; Sharif, 2014). Which members would not be replaced was determined by drawing lots. Elections were open to Ottoman males over the age of 25 who paid at least 50 kuruş in property tax annually (Sharif, 2014). Municipal council members were chosen from individuals who possessed civil and personal rights, had not been convicted of any crime, paid at least 100 kuruş in annual tax, were over 30 years old, were literate in Turkish, were Ottoman citizens, and had not sought non-Ottoman citizenship or foreign protection (Sharif, 2014; Ortaylı, 2000; Naïli, 2014). Later, the eligibility age for election was reduced to 25 (Ortaylı, 2000).

To be eligible to vote, individuals had to be Ottoman citizens, over 25 years of age, have paid at least 50 kuruş in property tax, possess civil and personal rights, and not have been convicted of any crime. Doctors, municipal officials, active military personnel, police officers, and individuals in judicial service, as well as those with privileges granted by the municipality or municipal tax collectors, were not eligible for candidacy (Sharif, 2014). Lists of voter names were announced by the municipality from time to time (Gerber, 2011).

The municipal council convened every six weeks. Its duty was to discuss, propose, and decide on all matters falling within the municipality's jurisdiction, and to review and approve the annual budget and all contracts made on behalf of the municipality. All municipal revenues and expenditures were reviewed once a month. The Mayor, appointed by the governor from among the elected council members, also served as the council's president, holding a position as *primus inter pares* (first among equals) compared to the other council members. The unique privilege of the council president, who was responsible for implementing all decisions made by the municipal council, was receiving a monthly salary (Sharif, 2014).

The representation of the city's inhabitants in the municipal council was regulated based on wealth and taxation. As in other Ottoman cities, those eligible to vote and be elected in Jerusalem constituted a specific minority. Therefore, municipal council members came from established notable families of Jerusalem such as the Daoudi, Khalidi, Husseini, Alami, and Nashashibi families, as well as newly emerging wealthy families like the Dakkak and Nimr (Avci, 2004).

In the second half of the 19th century, Jerusalem's increasing cosmopolitan nature necessitated the shaping of municipal council membership according to the conjuncture of the period. As a significant portion of the Ottoman subject population in the city was Muslim, the influence of Muslims in municipal elections gradually increased. In 1870, only one member of the municipal council was Jewish, and one was Christian (Avci, 2004, pp. 146-147, citing Rubinstein, 1984). Ortaylı states that although the criteria for municipal council elections were clearly specified in archival sources, elections were not always held. The municipal council, mandated solely to deliberate on municipal affairs, was prohibited from interfering in financial, judicial, and administrative matters. In this context, the duties and powers of the municipal council, as stated in Article 124 of the Municipal Law, included (Ortaylı, 2000, pp. 174, 176):

- Discussing and deciding on municipal affairs,
- Preparing the annual budget,
- Maintaining waterways and overseeing urban development,
- Constructing and repairing roads and sidewalks,
- Ensuring the order and cleanliness of the locality,
- Providing transportation means,
- Establishing fire brigades,
- Auditing financial transactions,
- Appointing and dismissing personnel,
- Imposing fines on those who did not comply with the municipality's stated prohibitions.

The municipal council responded to the needs expressed by citizens and maintained direct contact with various ministries and directorates in Istanbul. The municipal council spearheaded significant infrastructure projects in and around Jerusalem, such as the construction of roads and railways and the modernization of the water supply system. It was highly active in matters of food safety, hygiene, and public health, including slaughtering practices, food preservation, and vaccination campaigns. It implemented and enforced urban planning regulations. Furthermore, in cases of disputes, it initiated solutions by appealing to legal bodies (Avci, Lemire & Naili, 2014).

As previously stated, the Jerusalem Municipality's direct subordination to the central government and the significant influence of consuls and heads of foreign communities in protecting their citizens clearly indicate that the Jerusalem Municipal Council was not a body that made decisions solely on

its own initiative. In this framework, the council would discuss important decisions concerning Jerusalem's residents and then forward them to the Administrative Council or the mutasarrif. If a matter exceeded the Mutasarrif's authority, it would then proceed to the relevant bureau of the central government, typically the Ministry of Interior (Dahiliye Nezareti). Given Jerusalem's politically sensitive position within the Ottoman government, it is quite difficult to assert that the mutessarifat exercised decisive authority. With all these characteristic features, it cannot be said that the municipality was fully functional (Avcı, 2014).

Municipal council members served on an honorary basis rather than for a fixed salary, and their positions were understood as an indicator of high social status and standing within the community. Simultaneously, holding office in local administrative bodies bestowed social prestige and renown upon municipal council members. This allowed them to both safeguard their own interests or those of the group they represented and gain the power to influence the decisions of the municipal council. All city services and the collection of municipal taxes were consistently carried out through the "iltizam system"⁵. (1) The municipal council was also responsible for organizing iltizam auctions and drafting contracts. Due to their ownership of property and wealth, municipal council members were known to facilitate the easier participation of their relatives in iltizam auctions (Avcı, 2004). The council was obliged to continuously control its revenues and expenditures. Due to their limited budgets, municipal councils occasionally faced difficulties regarding personnel appointments and salary payments. The central government and vilayet officials directly interfered, especially in personnel appointment matters (Ortaylı, 2000, pp. 173-174).

Municipal Staff

According to the 1877 Municipal Law, the personnel serving within the municipal organization consisted of advisory members of the council such as the physician (tabip), veterinarian (baytar), and engineer, along with the clerk (kâtip), treasurer (sandık emini), and the necessary municipal police (zabıta), as well as the municipal sergeant (belediye çavuşu). The clerk was responsible for the municipality's correspondence. The treasurer, on the other hand, was the chief accountant of the municipality. The municipal engineer, often absent in most rural towns with small populations and undeveloped areas, was responsible for overseeing road and building construction and ensuring urban development regulations were observed within municipal boundaries (Ortaylı, 2000). Muslims, Christians, and Jews from diverse backgrounds were represented at every level of the municipal organization, including in the council, administrations, public service positions, and as beneficiaries of public services (Naïli, 2014).

As previously stated, the municipal council had the authority to appoint and dismiss municipal personnel. However, any increase in personnel numbers and allocated funds required approval from the administrative council. The number of physician and engineer positions within the municipality was determined by the Ministry of Interior (Dahiliye Nezareti). Legally, the municipal physician was responsible for taking necessary measures to ensure public health. By the early 20th century, every sub-district municipality affiliated with Jerusalem had at least one municipal physician. The municipal physician's duties included performing medical and sanitary inspections to maintain public health and hygiene standards, and providing treatment for indigent patients. Furthermore, they were obliged to record the number of deaths occurring within the sanjak and send these reports to the Ministry of Interior at the end of each month. Their salary was paid from the revenues of the Jerusalem Municipality. With the increasing emphasis on public health during that period, there was a rise in the number of medical personnel who held a significant place in municipal services (Avcı, 2004).

The most significant indicator of the administration's emphasis on public health during the period, and simultaneously considered one of the municipality's most important achievements, was the establishment of Jerusalem's first municipal hospital, where all city residents could receive free medical care regardless of their religion. The construction of the hospital also served as a response from the Ottoman administration to the intensive investments made by missionary medical institutions in the city (Naïli, 2017).

⁵ Iltizam is a system where a private individual undertook to collect any tax revenue belonging to the state in return for a fixed annual payment. For detailed information, see Genç, 2000.

The municipal engineer was another advisory member of the municipal council. This individual was responsible for overseeing all types of infrastructure construction to be carried out by the municipality and for determining the costs by inspecting all planned constructions on-site. Furthermore, the engineer would inform the municipal council about unlicensed structures in the city, ensuring that measures were taken. The municipal engineer also supervised whether licensed building constructions were being carried out according to the granted permits (Avcı, 2004).

According to the 1877 Vilayet Municipal Law, municipal sergeant positions were established in provincial municipalities to carry out duties and services assigned by the municipal president under the command of an inspector. Their responsibilities included ensuring public compliance with municipal rules and reporting those who violated these rules to the council. In 1891, the total number of sergeants working in the Jerusalem Municipality was seven, which increased to ten by 1908. The municipality, having certain duties to ensure urban security, began employing a specific number of night guards to fulfill these responsibilities. However, as the number of guards increased, the municipality lacked the budget to finance them, leading to the transfer of this duty to the police administration in 1907 (Avcı, 2004).

Municipal Budget

The Tanzimat Period marks a turning point in the Ottoman state, witnessing significant changes in its financial structure, akin to its administrative reforms, with the emergence of budget and local government concepts (Çetin, 2021). During this era, the most significant weakness of modern municipalities was their scarce financial resources, which could only be utilized under the full control of the central government. Unfortunately, this situation did not provoke much opposition under the circumstances of the time; on the contrary, some voices in the council even suggested that certain revenues should belong to the state treasury rather than the municipality (Ortaylı, 2000).

From the year it began operations, the financial means of the Jerusalem Municipality were quite limited. Its annual income, around 300,000 kuruş (*Ottoman currency unit*) in 1873, was barely enough to finance city services such as urban sanitation, road construction, official salaries, and a small amount of social welfare provisions (Avcı, 2004). The preparation of the annual budget and its financial control were carried out by the municipal council (Sharif, 2014). The Municipal Law, enacted in 1877, ensured the separation of the municipal budget from the government budget. While this law assigned municipalities the task of performing certain public services, it left them with a very insufficient source of income (Ergin, 1995). The municipality, in essence, possessed a certain autonomy in determining its budget, but the subsequent questioning of every decision by other political and administrative institutions (Mazza, 2009) restricted its freedom of action.

Following the diversification of municipal duties with the 1877 Law, the scope of its activities also expanded. The municipal budget, which was 430,000 kuruş in 1902, increased to 900,000 kuruş by 1908 (Avcı, 2004, pp. 165-166), and further rose to 11,000 liras by 1913 (Kark, 1980, p. 127). The municipality generated annual rental income from numerous shops and hotels it owned in the city. The Ministry of Interior (Dahiliye Nezareti) regularly monitored municipal budgets each year. Through these audits, it aimed to control potential unlawful practices in budget expenditures (Avcı, 2016).

The municipal budget was primarily used for urgent matters requiring immediate solutions. The rapidly increasing urban population and the city's development led to the inadequacy of the municipality's financial resources. Consequently, the municipality resorted to obtaining bank loans to secure the necessary revenue for providing city services. Businesses such as shops, stores, restaurants, and coffee houses were operated to generate new income. In 1907, there were plans to establish a hippodrome in the Bekaa region outside the city walls to organize horse racing competitions (Avcı, 2004).

Tanzimat Period Municipalities as an Administrative Reform

Discussions concerning the restructuring of Turkish public administration today can be traced back to the reform movements of the Tanzimat Period, when modern municipalities were established. In the Republic of Türkiye, the foundations of state administration—ranging from the structure of provincial administration to local governments, from legal-constitutional developments to governance principles—began to be laid during that era. Indeed, a full understanding of why it is

crucial for local governments today to be founded on certain core values and structured with good governance principles is directly linked to a thorough reading of these historical developments.

It's possible to say that the reforms attempted in state administration and even in local and urban structures during the Tanzimat Period were not a "bottom-up" revolution. In other words, these intended reforms were not designed based on the expectations of the populace from the state (Pustu, 2007). The establishment of local administrations was one of these modernization efforts.

It's possible to view the modernization experienced during the Tanzimat period as a transformation process of traditional Ottoman administrative governance, involving the adoption of new legal and administrative tools. The change and transformation referred to as modernization should be seen as a productive comparison between old and new forms of urban governance, inspired by Western ideals. While some processes and ideas were indeed brought to the region by Europeans, it was the local population that adapted and implemented these reforms according to their own needs and interests. Modernization can only be meaningful when it resonates with the relevant populace (Mazza, 2009).

Despite some setbacks, Tanzimat administrators made considerable progress in establishing and ensuring the functioning of a centralized state structure. As this modern centralized approach strengthened, a modern understanding of local governance began to emerge in the Ottoman lands, and local communities started to participate in administration. During a period when the central government sought to bring various sectors—primarily the military, but also the entire provincial administration with its central and local units, financial management concerning tax collection and expenditures, education, and other public policies—under its direct control, it became inevitable to seek the support of local representatives. Even if not democratic, achieving a just and law-based administration required engaging with the governed and, though not a local political participation as we understand it today, appealing for their assistance. In this regard, it is accepted that the necessary environment for the emergence of local administrations in our country was created by the administrative reforms initiated during the Tanzimat Period (Ortaylı, 2020).

It is known that modernization was not rapid in Europe, just as in the Ottoman Empire, and that modernization, especially in provincial and urban administration, was a long-term process. When examining the administrative reforms and modernization efforts experienced by European countries and the Ottoman Empire, it is evident that they did not arise from a complete abolition of the "old order"; rather, modernity was constructed within the existing framework of the old order. Naturally, modernization can follow different paths for different social structures. A closer look at the Ottoman example reveals that the methods and actors valid for urban administration within the old order also found their place in the "new order" established by the Tanzimat. In the old order, urban administration was in the hands of local elites, and a structure deriving power from guilds was influential over the city. The city council, composed of urban notables, landowners, and merchants, possessed broad powers. There were certain executive duties reserved for members of this elite group in urban life and administration. A system of urban taxation based on property and trade existed. The city was defined as a collective body before the central government. The governor played a significant role in regulating the relationship between the (organized) local elites and the central government (Lafi, 2007).

Just as the administrative reforms implemented during the Tanzimat Period influenced subsequent eras, and the establishment of the vilayet system and municipalities shaped today's provincial administration and local government system, the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman administrative structure and institutions also influenced the structures and institutions that began to be established with the Tanzimat. It is undeniable that these reform movements were influenced by Europe and involved the transfer of administrative reforms and policies from other countries. However, these new institutions and rules did not arrive in a completely raw, unprocessed, or empty social structure. The Ottoman Empire had its own state system and a unique urban administration.

For example, European expertise was used to develop Ottoman urban administration. Yet, it would be incorrect to examine the municipal reforms undertaken by the Ottomans during the Tanzimat Period in isolation from the country's urban history, as if there was no preceding context. In fact, it's necessary to find the connections between the previous urban management structure and the new implementation. Every Ottoman city had an urban management system that, though old, functioned

within a certain order. The reforms represented significant innovations, but they did not introduce something entirely alien to local communities. Reformers used the existing urban administration within the old order as a foundation for implementing the new administrative scheme. Moreover, the municipal reforms in the Ottoman Empire also included an effort to secure the loyalty of local elites by not abolishing their historical privileges. In a sense, these established municipalities were the result of a compromise between local elites and central administrators (Lafi, 2007).

It's important to remember that the impetus for seeking administrative restructuring stems from the need to adapt governance issues to current conditions, respond to societal expectations, and deliver higher quality, more effective, and efficient services (Urhan, 2008). From this perspective, the establishment of modern municipalities during the Tanzimat Period occurred as a natural progression, responding to the needs of the era. However, the centralized structure of the Ottoman Empire and the unique social, cultural, and political fabric of Jerusalem during this period may have slowed the evolution of local administrations towards a more modern and democratic understanding.

It's important to recognize that the primary aim of bureaucrats during this period was not to foster local democracy, but rather to improve provincial administration, increase revenues, and establish a stable governing system. In the 19th century, the Ottoman state philosophy was highly centralized. Consequently, the growth, organization, legal infrastructure, and democratic structuring of local governments during this era often contradicted this centralized approach (Yılmaz-Aslantürk, 2018).

In the case of Jerusalem, local administrations followed a top-down operational model and continued their activities far removed from an understanding that prioritized local democratic demands. Furthermore, innovations directed at local administrations did not persist in a continuous manner after the Tanzimat (Doru, 2015). For this reason, while the modern municipalities established during the Tanzimat Period can be considered a significant step for the genesis of local governments in our country (Ortaylı, 2000, p. 192), their operation within significant conjuncture and structural differences presents a stark contrast to today's understanding of municipal governance.

Municipalities were not transferred from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Türkiye with a brilliant tradition. An autonomous municipal understanding couldn't possibly develop in poor cities and towns. The ongoing debate surrounding municipal autonomy today stems from the weakness of the material and legal foundations inherited from that period. Although the Jerusalem Municipality, like other municipalities during the Tanzimat Period, possessing a separate budget might suggest its existence as an administrative body independent of the government (Gerber, 1986), considering that municipal budgets had to be approved and were subject to strict control, it becomes clear that the reality did not reflect modern local government principles (Avcı, 2016).

CONCLUSION

Modern local governments are founded upon core values such as *freedom, autonomy, participation, effectiveness in service delivery, and redistribution* (Sharpe, 1970; Keleş, 2014; Eryılmaz, 2020). Furthermore, their structure is shaped by *good governance principles*, including openness, transparency, responsibility, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, responsiveness to human needs, participation, rule of law, strategic planning, consistency, accessibility, responsiveness, equality, and inclusivity (UNDP, 1997).

Today, the fundamental characteristics of modern local governments (Şengül, 2014) include their responsibility and authority for local public services within a specific geographical area, possession of legal personality, elected bodies and local personnel, their own budget and assets, and a certain degree of autonomy that grants them the power to levy taxes and determine their own policies.

The Tanzimat Period, which saw the beginning of significant changes from central administration to local governments, was characterized by the *dominance of centralism* due to the state's tendency to retain all its territories. In this era, where global shifts and socio-economic developments reshaped state and national governance, the discussions surrounding decentralization naturally emerged alongside centralism. The center was compelled to prioritize the administration of provinces and cities to avoid losing control over the periphery. Consequently, it was decided to establish municipalities with the aim of creating a specific administration that could be controlled by the

center, thereby eliminating the multi-headed nature of local governance and ensuring the execution of affairs and municipal services in settlements.

Like other municipalities established in Ottoman cities during the Tanzimat Period (Samani, 2018; Yılmaz-Aslantürk, 2018), the *Jerusalem Municipality served as an extension of the centralized structure in the provinces*. Operating under the central government's control and subordination, these municipalities became the primary units for delivering essential urban services, taking over from traditional institutions that had become weak and dysfunctional. The provincial administration, the governor, and the administrative council exercised *absolute oversight* over the municipality. Under the conditions of the period, the municipality was not seen as an autonomous administrative body but rather as an instrument to enhance the central government's power. The Jerusalem Municipality remained in the guise of a local department that was not administratively or financially autonomous. It performed local services assigned by the central government, such as market supervision, thereby generating revenue that was then spent on urban services and its personnel. Although the municipal budget was separated from the government budget in 1877, its revenue sources remained inadequate compared to the local public services it undertook. The municipality's revenues generally consisted of taxes and rents collected from municipality-owned properties.

Among the innovations introduced by the Tanzimat was the aim to eliminate the governors' influence in the election of members to the provincial administrative councils and municipal councils, ensuring that members were elected by the public. Initially, the *municipal president (council president)* was appointed from among civil servants, but after the 1877 regulation, they were appointed by the governor from among the elected council members. This demonstrates that the municipal council was *subordinate to the Governor of Jerusalem*, indicating that the Jerusalem Municipality was not a fully independent administrative body.

Council members were elected by the public who were obliged to pay a certain amount of tax. Since those eligible to vote and be elected constituted a specific elite minority in the city, the council members comprised members of prominent families. In Jerusalem, local participation mechanisms were quite limited, and it's evident that the *centralized structure and the influence of local elites* prevailed at the local level.

The establishment of the Jerusalem Municipality is explored as a direct result of the central government's quest to manage the holy city more effectively, boost revenues, and elevate public services to modern standards. The municipality's financial structure limited budgetary capabilities, and subordination to central oversight are detailed. This analysis reveals that Tanzimat-era municipalities operated with restricted financial and administrative autonomy, subject to the absolute control of the governor and the administrative council. Despite possessing elected bodies, the limited local participation mechanisms and the enduring influence of local elites show that these institutions differed significantly from a modern democratic understanding of local governance.

The Jerusalem Municipality became one of the first municipalities established during the Tanzimat Period due to several factors: the increasing population and demand for municipal services in the city; the Ottoman Government's desire to better manage the holy city of Jerusalem in response to Western countries closely monitoring the region; the growing interaction with the West leading to a need for reform and modernization; new settlements emerging in the area; the development of trade and tourism; and other social and economic advancements. Alongside these reasons, the central government's efforts to retain and control the periphery were also significant.

Indeed, the Tanzimat was a period of significant reforms for the establishment of modern municipal governance. However, it is quite difficult to argue that these reforms ensured local governments were sufficiently autonomous administratively and financially, or that they enabled them to operate effectively and efficiently. It would be a harsh endeavor to compare the municipalities established and striving to develop in Jerusalem and other Ottoman cities during the Tanzimat Period directly with the municipalities of the modern era. However, it is appropriate to acknowledge that these municipalities, representing the first step in the blossoming and development of the modern local government concept, were a crucial stage for today's municipalities.

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