



The Emergence of Public Opinion

Nineteenth-century Ottoman politics was filled with casual references to public opinion. Having been popularised as a term in the 1860s, the following decades witnessed a deluge of issues being brought into ‘the tribune of public opinion’. Murat R. Şiviloğlu explains how this concept emerged, and how such an abstract phenomenon embedded itself so deeply into the political discourse that even sultans had to consider its power. Through looking at the bureaucratic and educational institutions of the time, this book offers an analysis of the society and culture of the Ottomans, as well as providing an interesting application of theoretical ideas concerning common political identity and public opinion. The result is a more balanced and nuanced understanding of public opinion as a whole.

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The Emergence of Public Opinion

State and Society in the Late
Ottoman Empire

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It is evident in history that rulers can assert themselves at will against any individual and only public opinion can restrain them. In some countries, public opinion is always open and declared, but in others it is latent, and emerges only when provoked to the extreme. In every state, consequently, rulers are acutely apprehensive of its power.

— Cevdet Pasha (From a report written to Sultan Abdülhamid in 1892)

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Note on Transliteration, Place Names, and Dates

Terms in Ottoman Turkish rendered in the Arabic script are transliterated according to the orthographical conventions. Modern conventions in the transliteration of personal and place names are retained. Gregorian equivalents of both Muslim *Hicrî* and the *Rumî* dates are provided either in parentheses or after a solidus.

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