Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

Challenging the Islamic City Paradigm: A Trial for Ottoman Urban Spaces through the Lens of Collective Action Theory[*]

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Abstract

This article focuses on collective actions in Ottoman cities to respond to the Weberian notion of the Islamic city, suggesting Islamic city dwellers' incapability to act collectively. For this purpose, the study scrutinizes the collective appeals made by city dwellers to Ottoman courts, employing Charles Tilly's theory of collective action. By conducting an extensive literature review of the Islamic city paradigm and analyzing court records, this article argues that Ottoman city dwellers possessed urban consciousness and engaged in collective actions for the betterment of their living environment, challenging the belief that such actions were absent in Muslim societies. Studies on this topic so far have neither employed a comprehensive theoretical approach nor have they considered the place dimension. Furthermore, this article suggests that essential indicators of Ottoman cities' urban culture are joint decision-making, apprehension of urban problems, organizational capacity, and collective actions.

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Introduction

In recent years, city dwellers worldwide have increasingly voiced their concerns regarding urban spaces through collective actions.[1] This concern has also renewed scholarly attention to the history of urban collective actions. There is a need to explore further and understand the history of urban collective actions and the social dynamics surrounding them since it would provide a better understanding of cities in history and would open new pathways to challenge the generally accepted city theories. Ottoman cities deserve particular attention here, as they are subjected to the influence of the Islamic city paradigm to a certain extent, a paradigm which was blind to collective actions in Muslim societies.

While the urban sphere has remained the main venue for collective actions, be it in the form of local riots, protests or national revolutions, nearly a century-old discourse on the Islamic city (or non-Western cities[2]) dominated the scholarly literature. This discourse has limited the study of collective actions that took place in Islamic cities, as it contends that communities in such cities are composed of isolated groups unable to cooperate and engage in joint action (Lapidus 1). Consequently, the assumption that a group of city dwellers striving for the common good could not exist in Islamic cities has been prevalent. However, the question remains: Can this assumption be generalized to all so-called Islamic cities? Can we argue that Ottoman city dwellers never acted together for the greater good of their cities?"

Departing from the aforementioned questions and adopting a collective action theory perspective, this paper aims to challenge the notion that people in Islamic cities lacked collective action for the betterment of their communities.[3] By reviewing the literature and analyzing examples from primary sources, the focus will be on responding to the limitations of the Islamic city paradigm and exploring instances of collective actions that demonstrate urban consciousness[4] and shared concerns for urban spaces. Consequently, the central inquiry of this article revolves around re-evaluating the conceptualization of the Islamic city and the definition of Ottoman cities, specifically questioning the presence of urban consciousness. However, this re-examination adopts a novel conceptual approach by incorporating Charles Tilly's collective action theory to provide fresh insights into the subject.

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Amid the overwhelming influence of discussions on the Islamic city, studying collective actions within the Ottoman urban context serves not only as an opportunity to examine the Islamic city paradigm but also as a quest to uncover early forms of urban consciousness in the pre-modern Ottoman city. Studies similar to this one have been conducted to unveil the will of urban dwellers in the Ottoman city. However, these studies often lacked analyses from the people-place perspective and primarily focused on political initiatives undertaken by Ottoman subjects. Furthermore, there is a noticeable scarcity of studies that address this issue within a theoretical framework.[5]

In line with the research question, court records *(Şer'iyye sicilleri)* of Ottoman cities will be used as a primary source in this study. In addition to court records, record book of complaints *(Ahkâm defterleri)* will be used when necessary. Court records are reliable sources containing information on daily life in an Ottoman city that no other source can provide, such as "prevention of air and water pollution and infringement of property rights as well as the arbitration of disputes of all kinds between neighbors" (Murphey 117). These records encompass not only instances of collective actions that did not reach the central authority but also decisions made by collective bodies within cities, including guilds and communities. (Gara, 402). This study will disregard the temporal and spatial differences between court records to reveal the general pattern and set forth a typology of collective actions regarding urban spaces to some extent.[6] Collective applications made to the courts will be used as examples of collective action since appealing to the court as a group indicates the community's collective competency (Ergene 151-168).[7] Moreover, this article attempts to test the Islamic city paradigm by applying collective action theory. Hence the selected cases are analysed in detail through the method of deconstruction.

Question of the Islamic City

The first studies on cities have sprouted in the West, where the non-Western cities were examined with the standards of Western cities (Ergenç, "Osmanlı Şehir Tarihi" 27). Max Weber, one of the first theorists on the city, describes the city as an autonomous entity whose dwellers have a civic identity. On the other hand, the Islamic city lacks that civic identity, which arises from the dwellers' action for common civic good (Weber 93-97). According to

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Weber, cities that fit his definition literally existed only in Europe, and his conception of the city requires the existence of an urban community. Neither the city as an economic unit nor the place where a political-administrative structure governs the inhabitants always constituted a community (93). As Weber puts it, the existence of the urban community is the decisive factor of the European city and so Islamic cities "are cities only in an economic sense" (Eickelman 274). Islamic city is a bureaucratic one directly ruled from the center by non-locals, and identities are in the form of tribe or clan (Weber 117-121). Characteristics including civic culture, collective identity, political consciousness, self-management, and municipal organizations, are seen as absent in Islamic cities (Weber; Ergenç, "Osmanlı Şehir Tarihi" 29; Kuban 55). However, does the absence of these traits alone suffice to assert that urban communes did not exist in the Islamic city (Hourani 15)?

Building upon Weber's ideas, William Marçais and his brother Georges Marçais defined Islamic city's unique features as a market/bazaar, a Friday Mosque, and a bath (Eickelman 276). Georges Marçais later added new features to the Islamic city, including a separate residential quarter, hierarchical organization of crafts in the market, and lack of municipal organizations (Uğur, "Şehir Tarihi" 17). However, this definition did not represent the Islamic city sufficiently as those social features were also found in villages (Eickelman 276). Marçais brothers did not look for the social organization of the Islamic city and did not examine the reasons of patterns existing in the Islamic city. These missing aspects were subsequently addressed by Robert Brunschvig, who claimed that the physical form of the Islamic city is the result of customary law applied by judges (Abu-Lughod 157). Lastly, in 1955, Gustave von Grunebaum synthesized the arguments of previous scholars in his article, presenting a comprehensive portrayal of the Islamic city. He emphasized the absence of autonomy in Muslim cities and linked the lack of a government building with the absence of a body politic. Hence, "the major Western interpretation of the relations between religion, power and state in Islamic societies, which conceives Muslim societies as dominated by rulers and bureaucracies" (Burke 44) became a widespread notion within the literature.

Given that Islam originated in Arabia, the initial studies on Islamic cities predominantly focused on Arab cities. However, the first studies on

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Islamic cities such as Aleppo, Cairo, and Jerusalem were quite distant from criticizing Weber's ideas on Islamic cities until Edward Said criticized the orientalist scholarship. These initial studies on Arab cities did not focus on the Ottoman period, which had long been described as the "medieval" period by the successor states of the Ottoman-Arab lands after the birth of nation-states in the region. Another reason for this long neglect of the Ottoman period is that the primary sources were only available after the 1960s (Raymond xii).

Overall, the Islamic city concept had remained unchallenged until the 1960s (Ergenç, "Osmanlı Şehir Tarihi" 28; Çelik 374). The first serious criticism to the Islamic city was expressed in the colloquium held at Oxford in 1965, which was turned into a book in 1970 by Hourani and Stern. The book has filled an important gap in the field, criticize the tendency to generalize the city structures in North Africa to all Islamic geography, and ignore the factors other than Islam that affected those cities (Hourani and Stern 10-11).[8] In a similar vein, Abu-Lughod argued that place-specific research entered the literature by generalizing findings from a single historical moment without examining the various causes behind the outcomes. Certain city forms were associated with the Islamic city, without considering whether the underlying causes are Islamic (Abu-Lughod 160-172). Ira Lapidus, despite acknowledging some of Weber's ideas, maintains that explaining the difference between Islamic and European cities with a clear-cut dichotomy of communes versus bureaucracy is somewhat superficial. Neither European city was always composed of communes, nor associations were permanently excluded in the Islamic city (Lapidus 185). Lapidus does not accept the notion that there is no form in Islamic cities that represents collective interests. The *ulama* and merchants in cities served as the intermediary between the central power and cities, and in times of crisis, they channeled the disturbances within the city (Lapidus 186-190).

The notion of the Islamic city has also influenced Ottoman urban historiography. The categories such as "The Anatolian City of Ottoman Period" or "the Balkan City of Ottoman Period" have flourished only after liberation from Islamic city notion (Ergenç, "Osmanlı Şehir Tarihi" 28). The first studies on the Ottoman city did not adopt a comparative approach and they were rather city monographs written in a descriptive

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manner.[9] Due to the limited availability of chronicles and biographies for cities outside of the Arab region, these early Ottoman-Anatolian studies heavily relied on the central archives of the Ottoman State. This reliance on archival material may have contributed to the misleading assumption that Ottoman-Anatolian cities lacked autonomy and civic pride (Eldem et. al 10). Besides the availability of historical material, "the reason for this neglect can be basically attributed to the particular structure of Ottoman society, whereby the social framework consisted of the capital Istanbul and the regional rural society subordinated to it" (Hayashi 194).

In practical terms, the development of Ottoman Anatolian urban historiography began with studies on cadastral surveys, which provided a demographic, social, and economic reconstruction of Ottoman cities. Although cadastral surveys did not delve into the daily lives of ordinary people or the internal structure of cities, they offered valuable information about various aspects such as demographic composition, occupations, economic activities, buildings, and waqfs. (Hayashi 198; Eldem et. al 10). In the following years, the trend in Ottoman urban history has shifted towards using court records.[10]

By the 1970s, with the opening of archives in Istanbul and increased government-funded programs, historians began to pay more attention to the relationship between the state and society by utilizing court records (Quataert 413; Wilkins 4). Since the 1980s, in line with historiography's general trends, scholars such as Özer Ergenç, Haim Gerber and Suraiya Faroqhi produced more analytical and multi-dimensional studies framing cities into the more extensive network of relationships. These studies have taken a more critical stance on the idea of Islamic city and analyzed Ottoman cities with a combination of theories and sources to elaborate the gist of meaning lying under the texts instead of descriptive analysis (Uğur, *The Historical Interaction* 39-41). In his works on the cities of Ankara and Konya, Özer Ergenç defined the Ottoman city as a synthesis, showcasing the influences of both Central Asian Turkish civilizations and Islamic elements. Ergenç also examined the impact of city dwellers on city administration through neighborhood and guild organizations, highlighting the significant role they played in Ottoman city governance, which should not be underestimated. (Ergenç, *Osmanlı Klasik Dönemi* 45).

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Suraiya Faroqhi has reached the conclusion that the importance attributed to the religion was exaggerated in describing the structure of Ottoman cities (*Orta Halli Osmanlılar*). Subsequently, Zeynep Çelik, Edhem Eldem, and Daniel Goffman made valuable contributions to Ottoman urban history by studying various aspects of cities.

The 1990s were quite productive in terms of bottom-up studies of political processes (Canbakal 7-8). These studies reintroduced the Ottoman State's subjects as active participants in shaping their own destiny, offering a fresh perspective on urban history.[11] The works of Suraiya Faroqhi, Amy Singer, and Karen Barkey were particularly valuable in explaining Ottoman society from a different viewpoint. They questioned the concept of the Islamic city, revealing the social dynamics between the ordinary people and the state from the former's perspective (İnalcık 1). İnalcık gave a comprehensive answer to the notion of Islamic city through an analysis of İstanbul in a short but influential essay. He refuted the argument that Islamic cities emerged without any plan, asserting the existence of "a certain kind of urban autonomy" in Ottoman cities, as evidenced by guilds electing their leaders (İnalcık 18). İnalcık offered a middle-ground approach, neither completely disregarding nor exaggerating this autonomy (7-21). Canbakal examined the city of Ayntâb, exploring the relationship between the urban elite and ordinary people, questioning the city's autonomy, identity, and administration. Similarly, Boğaç Ergene analyzed dispute resolution in cities of Çankırı and Kastamonu through court records, which provided essential data on the everyday life of Ottoman city dwellers. Although these studies did not directly address the notion of the Islamic city, they greatly contributed to our understanding of the Ottoman city and helped define its characteristics, challenging certain arguments put forth by the notion of the Islamic city.

As a result, recent studies on Ottoman cities have challenged and disproven certain claims of the Islamic city, although they may have some limitations. This has paved the way for the emergence of new ideas and perspectives. Consequently, there is a need to establish a new theoretical framework based on these findings.

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Theory of Collective Action and The Review of The Ottoman Literature

The theory of collective action is a field of study on its own. Here I will briefly touch upon the subject since it is vital to understand how the theory of collective action can be applied in the context of writing the history of cities.

"Collective action consists of people's acting together in pursuit of common interests" (Tilly 7). A group of people forms the basic unit for collective action, and these individuals directly engage in the events. There are five components of collective action: interest, organization, mobilization, opportunity, and the action itself (Tilly 9, 54).

Interests refer to the shared advantages or disadvantages which are likely to come up due to interactions with others. Organization pertains to the "extent of common identity and unifying structure" (Tilly 54) among a group's members. The organization is the one with the greatest impact on the action of a group over its interest. The mobilization is about the resources under the control of a group, defined as "the process by which a group acquires collective control over the resources needed for action" (Tilly 7). Votes, labor power and weapons can be given as examples to those resources, "as long as they are usable in acting on shared interests" (Tilly 7). Analyzing mobilization requires understanding how a group acquires these resources and makes them available for collective action. The opportunity is "the relationship between the population's interests and the current state of the world around it" (Tilly 55). However, identifying opportunities available to a group is not always easy and must be considered alongside threats. Sometimes, a given level of threat generates more collective action than the same level of opportunity. For instance, when an opportunity for collective action arises, there may also be accompanying threats. The group's decision of collective acting based on the calculation of gains or losses and possible losses always counts more than gains (Tilly 132-136). Finally, the collective action is the joint action of contenders for a common end, and it arises from "changing combinations of interests, organization, mobilization and opportunity" (Tilly 7). In other words, collective action is an organization or the organizational capacity of people (who are generally distressed) who mobilizes the resources under their control in the face of common interests (Olson 1-16).

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When dissecting each component of collective action, identifying the action itself is relatively less complex since authorities have typically documented the events. Therefore, the action tends to leave its imprint on the historian's raw material (Tilly 231). Tilly argues that historians, while writing the actions of ordinary people, usually do the following:

> Describe what people did, then deduce what interests they were pursuing, what opportunities to pursue those interests they faced, and how they were organized from what they said and did during the action, as well as from general arguments concerning the character of crowds. (232-233)

Studies on Ottoman cities, particularly those focused on collective actions and based on court records, typically adhere to the aforementioned approach. Court records serve as a valuable source for documenting the actions themselves, that is, what transpired. Subsequently, historians undertake the task of dissecting these actions into smaller elements in order to uncover the various components of collective action.

Historians approach the history of collective action as a subsidiary form of political or social history. The focus is more on short and sudden uprisings mostly in the form of political discontent. The lasting relations among institutions, people or urban communities for collective action is rather neglected (Moor 191). However, it is crucial to write the history of collective actions on its own terms because the impact of collective actions on historical events is greater than commonly thought. Unlike other types of studies, research on collective action sheds light on the challenges faced by ordinary historical actors (Tilly 231-232). We know much about the history of ideas, but linking the history of ideas with the history of collective action will provide a more complete picture of the history (Burke 43). Despite this, writing the history from the collective actions' perspective has been disregarded for a long time in the Middle East literature. Generally, with a few exceptions, scholars have followed the "no-revolutions thesis". This perspective, similar to discussions on the Islamic city, contents that "revolts are illegitimate, and social quietism and the support of existing movements (and more generally of traditional values) are chief features of Middle Eastern societies." (Burke 43) The dominance of this opinion led to a limited number of studies on collective actions in Muslim societies. Just like

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the ideas surrounding the Islamic city, which claim the absence of certain social features in Muslim societies from the beginning, this perspective has contributed to a significant gap in the literature while reinforcing stereotypes about Muslim societies.

In relation to the literature on collective actions in Ottoman cities, a question posed by Albert Hourani in 1970 aligns with the aim of this article:

> How was it that the 'Islamic city' was able to maintain its personality, its power of collective action, throughout Islamic history, when it never possessed municipal institutions in which that personality could be formally embodied, or a municipal law which would at once express and legitimize it? (14)

At the International Conference on Urbanism in Islam in 1989, Daunton argued that "by whatever means the mutual identity was created, the quarters might mobilize for collective social action and would have a leading individual who would act as its spokesman and governor" (38). Similarly, in a symposium on urban historiography in 1994, Sina Akşin (12) advised that the extent of Ottoman cities acting collectively must be investigated. While the literature contains various questions and statements on this topic, there are limited studies that directly address the collective action of city dwellers within the context of the Islamic city. Furthermore, any theoretical claims must be substantiated by evidence derived from primary sources.

There is one particular study on the issue of collective actions in the Ottoman State, authored by Eleni Gara titled *"Patterns of Collective Action and Political Participation in the Early Modern Balkan."* Gara begins by emphasizing the significance of court records in comprehending and evaluating collective actions. In the Ottoman context, resorting to courts serves not only as a response to injustices or grievances but also as a means of participating in the decision-making process (Gara 406). According to her analysis, the institutionalization of the network of qadi seats and formalization of petitioning provided incentives to form collective actions among inhabitants (407). The book titled "Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Ottoman Empire," which includes Gara's article, is also of great importance. Although the book primarily focuses on political initiatives within the Ottoman Empire, it becomes evident that these initiatives

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inherently possess a collective dimension. Long before Gara, Özer Ergenç argued that many instances in the Ottoman documents show city dwellers' wishes regarding decisions on the appointment or dismissal of city officials, either through the mediation of the notables or directly by city dwellers' will ("Some Notes" 433). It is not solely the notables who had influence over such decisions; the residents of specific neighborhoods also expressed their opinions on matters that affected them directly. "Any decision on any matter taken without their concern was generally invalidated and renewed due to complaints." (Ergenç, "Some Notes" 435) Although the city officials such as şeyh, *kethüda, yiğitbaşı* were appointed by the central government with a *berat* in theory; in practice, they were chosen by the ordinary people (Ergenç, "Some Notes" 435-439).

Boğaç Ergene, scrutinizes Ottoman courts' function on dispute resolution, finds a strong link between the will of the community and judicial decisions. He criticizes Karen Barkey, Huri İslamoğlu-İnan and Haim Gerber as being deductive and not being a historical observatory since studies of these scholars argue that the absence of political challenges to the Ottoman center is a result of provincial courts' ability to conduct justice (Ergene 3). Ergene thinks that appealing to the court as a group was an essential indicator of the community's collective competency. According to Ergene (152), "the agency of the community, rather than the agency of the court, dominated the judicial processes when cases involved serious criminal disputes, violations of public rights, or threats to local security." Collective appeals had proven more effective and convincing than individual lawsuits, particularly when demanding compensation for harm in Ottoman courts (Akarlı 71). One of the most striking examples is that the power of the elites is shaken when people, who are neither religious nor military officials, act as a group. Such events occurred at times when people were oppressed under severe conditions because only then the interests of the people co-exist, resulting in collective action. Ergene (72) claims that "the community (*ahâli*) was able to win these cases every time thanks to their collective effort in the court." Ergene used the word "community" while referring to collective actions of people however he does not explicitly explain what the word "community" was pointing to.

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On the other hand, Karen Barkey puts forward the argument that the incorporation of peasants and elites into the system prevented them from rebelling. She argues that "collective action was hardly a possible avenue for Ottoman classes: peasants were not organized; elites were split within their ranks and peasants and elites had no preexisting basis for alliance" (11). In contrast to Gara's claims, Barkey (88-89) describes qadi as a handicap to collective actions since the court is in the intermediary position in transferring the problems to the central state, preventing the problems from turning into action. The challenge of civil unrest was counterbalanced with a successful strategy of the state through incorporation, negotiation, and bargaining. Similarly, Amy Singer agrees with Barkey regarding the role of the court in reducing the likelihood of collective action.

There is no doubt that the classical Ottoman legal tradition aimed to reconcile factions in conflict and resolve problems through negotiations and reconciliations. This system was responsive to problems, and this legal structure provided civic autonomy to some extent at least until the 19th century (Akarlı 73). However, it would be wrong to assume that this structure has lowered the chance of collective action. This legal structure itself assigned an essential role to the Ottoman people in negotiation processes. Furthermore, if there is a negotiation process, it must have two sides, which brings us to an important question. If this role of Ottoman courts did not exist, then would all complaints potentially turn into collective actions? If the answer is yes, it becomes even more important to analyze the collective grievances of the city dwellers.

Faroqhi, using the example of a large group protesting tax-collecting tours in Bolu, highlights the lack of knowledge regarding the frequency of such actions due to the limited research on the political behavior of the Ottoman people. She argues that, in order to make more solid assumptions, the number of studies in the field of Ottoman history should increase, similar to the extensive studies conducted in European history ("Political Activity" 32-36). Like Barkey's argument, Faroqhi claims that the possibility of escaping from oppression by enrolling into the army or by emigration to the cities prevented Ottomans from facing peasant rebellions. If such escape points had not existed for peasants, they would have resorted to rebel activities in the classical sense ("Political Tensions" 127-128).

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Leslie Pierce claims that the court of Aintab acts as a public forum that provides a platform for those having marginal status in the community to defend their conduct by means of forming legal solidarities such as mutual guarantorship (*kefalet*). She argues that "collective action was the most effective way to claim a legitimate public voice" (210) for those outside of the elite circle. The practice of mutual guarantorship not only legitimizes the existence of marginalized groups but also provides them with a platform to advocate for their interests within the legal framework. This was a kind of compensation for the lack of class solidarity. She provides two critical examples of collective action. The first one is "the communally requested appointment of a 'market chief'(*pazarbaşı*)" (Peirce 298). In this court case, the term "Muslims" was used to refer to a group of citizens entrusted to represent the public opinion (equivalent to "*cemm-i gafîr*") (Ergenç, "Toplumsal Düşünce"). Similarly, according to Wilkins, within the face of the transformation of state authority in the 17th century, neighborhoods and guilds in the city have gained the ability to move collectively and to create space for themselves. For example, in response to the state's growing financial demands, the joint initiatives established by neighborhoods and guilds are also examples of collective action (Wilkins 8-9). The second example pertains to the formation of a mutual guarantorship among the Armenian community. Internal issues within the Armenian community prompted them to adopt communal strategies, including the establishment of legally constituted representative bodies, which were prevalent in the city. These collective voices were a kind of vocalization of public opinion as a declaration of local legitimacy (Wilkins 296-310). Peirce underscores the usage of the ambiguous pronoun 'they' to refer to the individuals who approached the court, indicating anonymous members of the community. However, no matter which term is used to specify the community, each of these cases refers to popular discontent within the population (Peirce 295-296). Hülya Canbakal argues that by getting involved in the decision-making process in public affairs, elites created a political society at the local level in the 17th century Ayntâb. They were not only an intermediary between the center and the city, but they also represented the *ahâli* and became an authority in their own right. Elites frequently appeared in Ayntâb court records on behalf of the *ahâli*, and traces of collective actions highlight their impersonal nature when advocating for the community. Thus, in

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many instances, city dwellers were represented in the public sphere by the elites (Canbakal 157-175). Another work, which evaluates the political partisanship in Gaza through the practice of mass petitioning, reveals that although the local elites were composed of a large part of the signatories of the collective petition, they were not alone. Merchants, artisans, and cultivators had constituted a considerable part of the signatories of mass petitions. Notables were the anchor of the mobilization; however, they tried to include people from around the city to affect the Ottoman State. This finding challenges the long-held notion that Middle Eastern cities were divided along neighborhood lines. The study explicitly emphasizes that collective petitioning, and therefore collective action, is not limited to elites, and political activities permeate throughout the city (Ben-Bassat and Buessow 544-546).

The examples presented above demonstrate that while many academics have studied collective actions, they have also examined the role of elites. However, the central role of elites in Ottoman local politics has come under recent criticism. The prevailing emphasis on notables in understanding Ottoman politics and the disproportionate focus on vertical relations are now being reevaluated, shedding light on the autonomous role played by ordinary people in Ottoman cities (Ben-Bassat and Buessow 507-508).

The studies conducted thus far, including those mentioned above, provide valuable insights into the terminology associated with collective action in the Ottoman context. According to Ergenç, '*cemm-i gafîr*', '*cem'-i kesîr*', '*ahâli-i belde*' and '*ahali-i vilâyet*' are expressions which refer to a crowd (Ergenç, "Toplumsal Düşünce"). Hülya Canbakal also refers to the importance of the term *ahâli* in this sense and expresses that the *ahâli* has a different meaning than the *reâyâ* (the subjects) and *sükkân* (inhabitants). "When the collective identity of the neighborhood or the town was not in question, the people were referred to as *sükkân*, whereas *ahâli* represented a collective identity" (Canbakal 176-177). *Ahâli* is type of social agent that makes decisions, choices and speaks on behalf of the group it represents. It embodies the notion of numerousness from which collective actions arise. Şeyh, *kethüda* and *yiğitbaşı* who represent a particular group of people in the city, can also be considered in this context. These people represented communities and when they approach the court, the matters they bring forward typically pertain to

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their respective communities (Ergenç, "Toplumsal Düşünce" 442). Leslie Peirce (292-310) similarly argues that the expressions such as Muslims, Armenians and ambiguous 'they' encompass the entire community. It is important to note that within the Ottoman State, individuals may belong to multiple communities simultaneously and possess multiple identities, thereby, "any group of people bound by common interest or pursuing the same goals could initiate collective action" (Gara 408).

After conducting an extensive review of notable studies on collective action among city dwellers, it becomes evident that a significant gap exists, particularly in the interpretation of collective actions in relation to urban consciousness and the common good.[12] Therefore, the subsequent analysis in this work will focus on examining the collective actions undertaken by Ottoman city dwellers with regards to the utilization of urban space for the betterment of the community. This analysis will be conducted through the application of collective action theory.

Unlocking Ottoman Collective Actions: Case Studies

In the exploration of court registers within the scope of this research article, numerous instances of collective action have come to light, corroborating findings from previous studies. This subsection aims to delve into a detailed deconstruction and analysis of specific cases, shedding light on the level of awareness and consciousness among urban inhabitants regarding their cities.

Most of the court registers I studied focus on the collective applications submitted by neighborhood dwellers who are displeased with their neighbors' behavior, which they perceive as going against Islamic norms. As a result, these dwellers demand the expulsion of these individuals from the neighborhood.[13] The registers also contain matters related to internal matters of guilds, such as complaints about artisans who do not comply with the rules set by their associations or about selecting city officials such as şeyh, *kethüda, yiğitbaşı*,[14] as also exemplified in the articles of Ergenç ("Some Notes" 435-439) and Peirce (298); or internal affairs of religious communities[15] such as objecting to state decisions about appointing community leaders. In rare cases, *ahâli* collectively threatened government

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officials who collected taxes,[16] or they demanded the construction of mosques or the appointment of religious officials to their neighborhoods.[17]

The abovementioned collective actions are manifestations of religious, ethnic, or economic motivations. However, these actions are not directly related to commonly shared spaces. Such collective actions present in court records are also significant in understanding the Ottoman city and have already been the subject of many studies until now. However, they go beyond the scope of this article.[18] The framework here is the collective actions of urban dwellers concerning their living space, in other words, the *mahalle* or the city. I would like to emphasize the motives leading to collective efforts stemming from concerns over shared areas other than religion, common identity, or economic interests. So, the cases chosen to examine in this article differ from the abovementioned categories. As Eleni Gara argued in her article on this topic as well, the cases outlined in this manuscript had no particular effect on Ottoman social or political history, and they are, in terms of space and time, not directly interrelated (400). It is important to note that the cases presented here are merely a selection, and there are numerous other instances of collective action. However, However, what unifies the cases is the presence of ordinary Ottomans coming together as a group to pursue a common goal related to their living spaces.

While Tilly's concept of collective action, which has been recently associated with the discourse on "contentious politics," emphasizes forms of expression within collectivities (Moor 192), this paper shifts its focus towards a "silent" form of collective action. The actions examined here are not characterized by rebellions, riots, or protests, but rather by sporadic gatherings of ordinary Ottoman citizens driven by the common goal of improving their living space. These specific examples shed light on city dwellers' concerns about urban areas and their ability to collaborate for the betterment of shared spaces, challenging assumptions put forth by the Islamic city theory. Herewith, I aim to spark light for further studies focusing on the relationship between ordinary Ottoman people and the place.

To demonstrate the capacity of city dwellers' collective actions in Ottoman cities, the following section will provide a summary and deconstruction of seven selected examples from various regions within the Ottoman State.[19] These examples are derived from court applications made by the *ahâli*, which

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highlight their efforts to address issues pertaining to the shared urban space. By deconstructing each case, the components of collective action theory will be identified, further substantiating the argument that coordinated efforts, with their distinct features, were indeed present in the Ottoman city.

The first example of collective action comes from the court records of *Hasköy* dated 1643 (*İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Hasköy Kadı Mahkemesi 5 Numaralı Sicil* hüküm no. 416, 306). Here the *ahâli* collectively complained about an empty piece of land polluted by garbage, then nominated someone to clean the garbage, and informed the court about this chosen person. The *ahâli,* who regularly passed by this land on their way to the mosque, were disturbed by the unpleasant smell and decided to take action. To ensure regular cleaning, they appointed a person living nearby and sought permission from the qadi for this individual to carry out the necessary cleaning duties. In this example, a group of people applied to the court *(…Ahmed Çelebi b. Mustafa ve İbrahim Bey b. Yusuf ve Mehmed Çelebi b. Şaban ve Ahmed Bey b. Abdullah ve Mustafa Çelebi b. Veli ve Ebûbekir b. Mustafa ve sâir ahâlî-i kasaba bi-ecma'ihim…),* which is the basic unit of any collective action. Examining the shared advantages and disadvantages, it is apparent that the presence of garbage on the land was a shared disadvantage for the community. The *ahâli* collectively identified the issue and appointed someone to address it. Their common identity as *ahâlî-i kasaba* further strengthened their sense of shared purpose. In terms of mobilization and opportunity, the resource under their control was their labor power to clean up the land. By appointing a designated individual, they effectively mobilized this resource. Additionally, the likelihood of the court granting permission for the cleaning presented a favorable opportunity, which they seized upon. There were no apparent threats that could prevent them from utilizing this opportunity.

The second example is from the court records of Üsküdar in 1590-1591 (*İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Üsküdar Mahkemesi 84 Numaralı Sicil* hüküm no. 495, 304-305). The *ahâli* of Kartal collectively complained about the *dergâh-ı âli* (supreme lodge) sergeant, who is Hüseyin Çavuş, for forcibly occupying a land previously used by them. İsmail Çavuş, another sergeant, was assigned to investigate the claims. During the investigation, *ahâli* alleged that Hüseyin Çavuş built houses on the land, parked ships and carriages, destroyed the graves, and planted trees on them. The *ahâli* were deeply

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concerned about this occupation, as the land had long served as a shared space where they could enjoy fresh air. In this case, *"…Kartal ahâlîsi…"* as a group collectively applied to the court, and *Kartal nâm karye* is the common unifying structure for this group of people. The shared disadvantage, or interest, in this case, was the forcible takeover of the land that had been jointly used by the *Kartal ahâlîsi* for various purposes. The group's resource in seeking justice was their right to lodge complaints with the court, as the court played a vital role in problem-solving and ensuring justice in the Ottoman city. Applying to the court proves that the city dwellers turned this resource into an opportunity in pursuit of common civic good because only the state can retake the land and give it back to *ahâli* without resorting to violence. Although there were inherent threats, the neighborhood dwellers still chose to apply to the court, seizing the opportunity presented. These threats encompassed two aspects: Firstly, Hüseyin Çavuş, as a soldier, held a position of power and had the potential to abuse it. Secondly, there was a possibility that he might have had legitimate rights to use the land.

In the third example, the dwellers of *Hasköy* (1637-1638) resort to the court to prevent the destruction of a building, where soldiers were stationed to preserve their towns (*İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Hasköy Kadı Mahkemesi 5 Numaralı Sicil* hüküm no. 141, 144). The people of Hasköy had received rumors about certain individuals who intended to remove the buildin. In response to this situation, the residents asserted that they had collectively decided to construct the building and had obtained permission to use it. They expressed their opposition to the building's removal, as it served the best interests of the town. Applicants are people from different religious communities,[20] including Christians, Muslims, and Jews, who coalesce for a common civic good. The destruction of the building would leave the town defenseless, thereby becoming a shared disadvantage for all. The *ahâli* applied to the court, citing their possession of the necessary permits for the building. These permit documents can be regarded as the resource under the control of the group. They mobilized to submit this permit in order to prevent the destruction of the building. In this case, there was no apparent threat that would deter the group from engaging in collective action. On the contrary, there was an opportunity to obtain a court decision that would preserve the status quo and protect the building.

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The fourth example involves the parceling out of a vacant land to the *ahâli* in 1585 (*İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Eyüp Mahkemesi 3 Numaralı Sicil* hüküm no. 330, 209). The dwellers of the *Abdi Çelebi* neighborhood collectively (*müteveffâ Abdi Çelebi mahallesi halkı cemî'an*) appealed to the court. They demanded that vacant land in their neighborhood should be opened for the settlement so that people could build houses and live there. Qadi conveyed the dwellers' claim to the Sultan, and ultimately a decision was reached to grant this land to the *ahâli*. The dwellers sought to allocate this land for two primary reasons: First, unlike other neighborhoods, this was a secluded place, and *ahâli* mentioned that it poses security risks, and they feel insecure when they pass by this empty land. Secondly, if this vacant land belongs to a waqf, opening it for settlement could generate income for the waqf. The residents devised a solution to address the common problem (security) in their neighborhood and subsequently approached the court. Eradicating the security risks deriving from vacant land next to the neighborhood was the common interest in this case. The right to apply to the court served as their resource. The mobilization occured by coming together for this common interest and applying to the court. The opportunity was the court's likelihood of ruling in favor of the contenders. This likelihood is higher since new settlements on that land can bring income for the waqf. There were no particular threats to the *ahâlî* in this case. The potential gains outweighed the losses, prompting them to seek resolution through the court.

The fifth example is from Ankara court records, dating back to the beginning of the 17th century (Ergenç, "Toplumsal Düşünce" 444-445). Town dwellers of Ankara had built walls and towers with their own assets and labor to protect themselves from bandits. When the bandits eventually launched an assault, some of the residents armed themselves and successfully repelled the attack, after which they returned to their regular occupations. After that incident, the military commander in charge of that region forcibly recruited these men who had protected the town, and he took them to military campaigns elsewhere. This compelled the residents to abandon their usual work and leave the town vulnerable to potential future bandit raids. Therefore, it was a losing scenario for the *ahâli*: Shops were closed down, and the town's security was compromised. In response, town dwellers collectively brought the case to the court, seeking a restoration of the initial status quo. Qadi conveyed the complaint to the Sultan, and it was resolved in favor of the city dwellers.

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In this example, city dwellers came together in a situation threatening their security. They not only applied to the court collectively but, prior to that, had built a fortress with their own efforts and fought against bandit attacks. This showcases their capability to utilize the resources under their control for a shared purpose. The bandit attacks represent the shared disadvantage, as they posed a threat to the lives and property of the city dwellers. On the other hand, the shared advantage was the desire to maintain their jobs and businesses unaffected, along with preserving the town's security. The resource is the inhabitants' own labor and assets, which they mobilized for a common defensive purpose. Mobilization was the construction of defense walls and armed city dwellers forming a defense force. I assume that they acted collectively and instantly in the face of a life-threatening situation. The main threat they faced was the potential loss of lives and property due to bandit raids in the absence of proper fortifications and a standing army. Furthermore, at a later stage, another collective action took place when the city dwellers mobilized once again to bring their case before the court and reverse the practice of forcibly recruiting dwellers into the army. The interest here was to regain the previous order, where people continue their jobs and have the capacity to defend the city. The resource utilized in this context was once again the right to apply to the court. Finally, the opportunity was the likelihood of receiving a favorable court decision.

In 1762, the *ahâli* of Tabahane neighborhood in Halep collectively complained about an individual who had purchased ten houses in their neighborhood and built a soap shop *(sabunhane)* there (BOA, A.DVNS. AHK. HL. d.3 s. 10). The reason for the *ahâli* to apply to the court was not only the disturbance caused by the soap shop but also the water scarcity problem it created. The owner of the soap shop had diverted the neighborhood's water supply to his own bath (*hamam*) of the soap shop, resulting in water cuts for the residents. Similar to the previous examples, the shared space of the neighborhood served as the unifying structure for the residents. The interest, or shared disadvantage, was twofold: Firstly, the dirt and inconvenience caused by the *sabunhane*, and secondly, the water cuts that affected the entire neighborhood This case is identical to the fourth case regarding resources and mobilization: The right to apply to the court is the resource. The mobilization is the acting together for the shared disadvantage and applying to the court. Opportunity is the court's likelihood of ruling in

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favor of the contenders. In this case, two adverse factors became the driving force for people to come together.

The seventh and the last example is from Halep of 1746. The *ahâli* of the *Bahsita* neighborhood collectively raised a concern about the disturbance faced by women in secluded areas due to the structure of the dead-end streets (cornered and entangled). They initially demanded the construction of a security wall in these areas to address the issue and received a warrant *(hüccet)* from the court to proceed with the construction. However, while they began the construction, some individuals attempted to prevent it. In response, the *ahâli* collectively returned to the court for a second time, seeking to stop those who were impeding the construction of the wall (BOA, A.DVNS. AHK. HL. d.1 s. 178). The extent of common identity, or organization, was at the neighborhood level, and the resource under the control of *ahâli* was the right to apply to the court. A group of people was mobilized by using the court as a resource. The right to apply to the court served as their primary resource, empowering them to seek a resolution to the issue they faced. It is worth noting that this was the second time they organized collectively, indicating their determination to pursue their shared interest. The opportunity they seized was the warrant they had already obtained from the court, providing legitimacy and support for their construction project.

All cases presented above are primarily collective actions, where a group of people serves as the basic unit of any collective action. In each of these events, dwellers of a neighborhood, one of the main constituents of the Ottoman city, acted together and applied to the court collectively. Phrases used in the records such as "…Abdi Çelebi mahallesi halkı cemî'an meclis-i şer'a gelip…", "…Kartal ahâlîsi…", "…ve sâir ahâlî-i kasaba bi-ecma'ihim meclis-i şer'a hâzırûn olup…", "...ahâlî-i vilâyet…" "…mahallesi ahâlîsi" signify that at least a group of people from a neighborhood applied to the court. As previously mentioned, some scholars interpreted these phrases as signs of collective appeal for a common end (Ergenç, "Toplumsal Düşünce"; Canbakal). As mentioned earlier by Ergenç, Ben-Bassat and Buessow, not only the notables of the city but also the dwellers of a neighborhood, have resorted to courts to make their voices heard in essential matters concerning them (Ergenç, "Some Notes" 435; Ben-Bassat and Buessow 546).

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One of the main components of the collective action theory is the interest, and it is defined as the shared advantages or disadvantages. In all of the above examples, neighborhood dwellers were concerned about the shared space in which they live in terms of shared advantages or disadvantages. The motivation to act had been the interests related to the use of urban space.

Another element of collective action is the organization. The extent of common identity or unifying structure is vital because it delimits the capacity of the action (Tilly 54). In all the examples mentioned, the extent of unifying structure is either at the neighborhood or city level (i.e. Ankara case). The shared identity or unifying structure among the group members is their shared residency in the same urban space. Ottoman society is comprised of diverse communities that form based on various factors such as religion, occupation, ethnicity, and location. Therefore, in the context of collective actions, religious communities often take the lead when spiritual interests are at stake, while occupational organizations play a significant role when economic interests are involved. Since the interests in these examples revolve around place, the expected unifying structure manifests in the form of neighborhood communities. Considering the technological limitations and the speed of information dissemination in the past, we must not underestimate the importance of the neighborhood level as a unifying structure.

As noted by Lapidus (199), the examples presented above affirm the strong bonds and collective actions of neighborhood communities. Contrary to the assertions of the Islamic city paradigm, the Ottoman neighborhood operates as a relatively autonomous structure, characterized not only by shared obligations and responsibilities but also by spatial obligations and a chain of responsibilities (the practice of surety). Hence, this structure in Ottoman cities and neighborhoods necessitated and formed collective actions among inhabitants by working as fora for collective action (Topuz Demir and Uğur 478). Therefore, it is possible to argue that the main factor that brings people together would be consciousness about their neighborhood. As shown in the third example (*İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Hasköy Kadı Mahkemesi 5 Numaralı Sicil* hüküm no. 141, 144), people from various religious groups came together to prevent the destruction of a building in their neighborhood. Contrary to the Islamic city theory, which claims that

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the Muslim cities are composed of separate and distinct groups, in the form of clan or tribe, and which cannot act together; those presented examples indicate that individuals from different religious groups could unite under a neighborhood identity and act for a common cause. Additionally, the case of Ankara showcases the city as a whole working together, surpassing the neighborhood level as the unifying structure.

Lastly, recalling the components of the collective action theory, mobilization is about the extent of making resources available under the control of a group. Opportunity describes the link between the perceived interests and the extent to which a group may realize these interests vis-a-vis the environment they interact with. Tilly argues that defining mobilization and opportunity for past events is challenging. Accordingly, for the abovementioned cases, I tried to deconstruct, through some extrapolation, what the concepts of mobilization and opportunity could possibly mean for each case. As seen in the cases presented above, each collectivity had various resources to mobilize (in most cases the court itself), and in each case, they seized available opportunities by assessing potential gains and losses.

In the light of the detailed deconstruction of examples mentioned above, I argue that in Ottoman cities, one can find the elements of collective action, a concept which was described by Charles Tilly, as emerging from changing combinations of interests, organization, mobilization, and opportunity in varying degrees. This observation holds significance because when these events are examined through the lens of collective action theory, they transcend mere court records and offer valuable insights into the nature of collective action within Ottoman cities. These examples serve as crucial clues for scholars studying Ottoman urban dynamics.

City dwellers have come together to address neighborhood-wide concerns, such as environmental clean-up, protection of the common area, parceling out the land for housing, preventing the destruction of a building, and construction of walls. They prove that the dwellers of the neighborhood were not insensitive to the events and environments around them. They did not have economic interests or religious motivation for the cases discussed here. Even they had to put extra effort into the issues. The primary motivation for them to engage in collective action is related to the common spaces they share. These actions indicate a level of consciousness developed

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by residents regarding their urban environment. Typically, collective action among neighborhood dwellers took the form of a collective appeal to the court. However, in some cases, decisions were made collectively without resorting to the court. For example, in the first case, people agreed on cleaning garbage themselves and deciding who would do the cleaning work. They were only asking the court to allow this work. In the second case, they complained about the person who forcibly seized the land for common use before.

In addition, the courts were not the sole avenue for lodging complaints in the Ottoman State. In cases where the courts were unable to resolve issues, individuals had the right to directly present their grievances to the *Dîvân-i Hümâyun*, or sometimes the qadi would act on behalf of the *ahâli*. This mechanism played a vital role in ensuring justice and meeting the demands of the people. Above summarized, the cases of preventing the recruitment of armed city dwellers and distributing the vacant land to the neighborhood dwellers had been conveyed to the Sultan by the qadi. Transferring the demands to the center, which cannot be solved at the local level, is significant in terms of the availability of government mechanisms at every level.

As mentioned earlier and supported by some scholars, the existence of courts in Ottoman cities has played a significant role in resolving problems and reducing the occurrence of large-scale collective events. For instance, if the court did not exist in the second case, probably dwellers would still act together; perhaps this time, they would have expelled the person who had seized the land forcibly with their actions. This situation aligns with Karen Barkey's thesis, which emphasizes the intermediary role of the court in addressing local issues and preventing city dwellers from engaging in potentially illegitimate forms of collective action. Still, this does not change the fact that these collective appeals to the courts are indeed collective actions. These were not sporadic actions. The fact that city dwellers collectively appealed to the court indicates that they had already come together, engaged in discussions, and reached a joint decision on how to address the problem. The submission of their collective appeal to the court was based on a pre-determined consensus. So, even if one can argue those collective appeals cannot be considered a collective action, then how can one explain the nature of potential previous events which prepare the

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ground for joint request? What is more, deconstructing each case according to the theory indicates that those appeals have every founding component of the collective action theory. Taking a broader perspective, while the societal structure of the Ottoman state may not have allowed for systemic change or direct challenges to central authority, as argued by Barkey or Ünsar (43), a different lens focused on the Ottoman urban context reveals an organizational capacity that facilitated collective action. The structural characteristics and control mechanisms of the Ottoman State may have influenced the methods by which collective actions occurred, but they could not prevent them from taking place.

Concluding Remarks

This article aimed to provide a concise overview of collective actions in Ottoman urban culture, challenging the notion of the Islamic city and its assumption that city dwellers cannot act collectively for the common good. Although a comprehensive understanding of the scope and various forms of collective action in the Ottoman urban realm would require further empirical analysis, the existing scholarly work and archival sources sufficiently support the argument that the portrayal of Ottoman city dwellers as passive and silent masses does not align with reality. On the contrary, it is reasonable to assert the presence of a collective will, through which local residents actively influenced their own future and destiny. Ottoman city dwellers were not mere passive elements; they were conscious of the issues affecting their environment, cared about these problems, and actively engaged in collective actions.

Within the scope of this study, the collective actions of Ottoman city dwellers have been examined through the lens of the collective action theory. The aforementioned seven examples illustrate that city dwellers were capable of organizing themselves at the neighborhood level and resorting to the courts to address issues pertaining to their shared spaces. In nearly all cases, the city dwellers had already reached decisions regarding potential solutions. When presenting their cases to the court, they also proposed these solutions to the identified problems. These collective actions were driven not by individual interests, but by concerns for the collective well-being of their neighborhoods or the city as a whole. Examples include addressing environmental pollution, preventing the destruction of buildings, allocating

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vacant land for housing, reclaiming forcibly seized common areas, or constructing protective walls for the city's defense.

In the light of these findings, it is argued that Ottoman city dwellers possessed a distinct urban consciousness regarding their living environment, challenging the notion that such awareness was absent in Muslim societies as suggested by the Weberian concept of the Islamic city. Common decision-making, concern for civic problems, organizational capacity, and collective actions are indicators of such urban culture. Claiming that these indicators do not exist in Islamic cities just because they do not appear as they are in Western cities is quite a reductionist approach. As the examples provided above reveal, city dwellers were organized around 'certain' urban concerns and made joint decisions. Certain institutional mechanisms were absent within Ottoman cities, yet that does not mean the absence of collective capacity or urban consciousness. After all, it should not be forgotten that the manifestation of collective actions varies across different cities due to their unique cultural, socio-economic, and political contexts.

This article has provided a starting point for understanding the elements of collective action in Ottoman cities. However, a comprehensive exploration of this subject extends beyond the scope of this study. Future theoretical and empirical research, supported by primary sources, is needed to shed further light on this neglected field that has long been overshadowed by debates on the Islamic city.

Support and Acknowledgment Statement

Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of this study.

Notes

1   The Arab Spring started in 2010, is one of those social upheavals in the form of collective action that has led to the scholarly reconsideration of cities as the place of social struggles.

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2   The non-western city is an umbrella term used in urban history to define cities that are different from the European city. Within the limits of this study, the term non-Western will be limited to the "Islamic city". See Çelik, Zeynep. "New Approaches to the Non-Western City." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* vol. 58, no. 3, 1999.

3   See Barkey, Karen. *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization.* New York: Cornell University Press, 1994. Weber, Max. *The City,* trans. and ed. Don Martindale and Gertrud Neuwirth. New York: Free Press, 1958. Lapidus, Ira. *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages.* Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967. For a detailed discussion of the absence of collective actions in Islamic cities, see the second heading of the article.

4   The concept of "urban consciousness" is discussed within the broader framework of other related ideas in the literature, such as being responsible to the city, feeling belonged to the city, place attachment, etc. Without delving into further theoretical discussions, this study interprets the concept as residents' awareness of their living environments and their responsible actions in addressing urban issues. Beyazlı Dilek and Aydemir, Şinasi. "Does Urban Consciousness Help Understand the Citizen's Role in Planning." *European Planning Studies,* vol. 19, no. 5, 2011, pp. 841.

5   The study of Eleni Gara stands out differently from other studies on this subject as her work directly focusing on collective actions in the Early Modern Balkans. See Gara, Eleni. "Patterns of Collective Action and Political Participation in the Early Modern Balkans." *Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Ottoman Empire,* ed. Antonis Anastasopulos, Crete University Press, 2012.

6   Disregarding the spatial and temporal differences does not mean that these differences are not significant. Nonetheless, this study aims to establish a typology of collective actions in Ottoman cities by focusing on the key aspects and characteristics that unify cities under common themes. To achieve this, it is essential to take an overarching perspective. Additionally, this paper primarily examines the pre-modern period of the Ottoman State. In contrast to the modern period, the rate of change in the pre-modern era was relatively slow, which minimized spatial and temporal differences. Case studies in this article are from Istanbul, Ankara, and Aleppo, dating between the 16th and 18th centuries.

7   Since the concern of this paper is to collective competency of city dwellers about shared spaces of cities, the chosen cases of joint actions are limited to concern over shared places.

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8   Hourani and Stern asked that "Did cities in the Muslim world have any important features in common, and if so can they be explained in terms of Islam, or must we look for other types of explanation?" (11).

9   For example, the works of Çağatay Uluçay, Fahri Dalsar, İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı can be given as examples of this genre. See Uluçay, Çağatay. *Manisa Tarihi.* Manisa Halkevi, 1939; Konyalı, İbrahim Hakkı. *Abideleri ve Kitabeleri ile Konya Tarihi.* Enes Kitap Sarayı, 1997; Dalsar, Fahri. *Türk Sanayi ve Ticaret Tarihinde Bursa'da İpekçilik.* İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1960.

10   The series of cadastral surveys available for the 15th and 16th centuries did not exist for the following centuries *Avarız defters k*ept in the 17th century was different in terms of the content and method, thus not comparable with the cadastral surveys. Therefore, it is challenging to monitor Ottoman cities demographically after the 16th century, although it is possible to examine cities' social, economic, and administrative aspects through court records. A shift from tahrirs to court records was inevitable in that sense. Koç, Yunus. "Osmanlı'da Kent İskânı ve Demografisi (XV. ve XVIII. Yüzyıllar)," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi,* vol. 3, no. 6, 2005, pp. 184-185.

11   The work of Suraiya Faroqhi is pioneering in terms of "bottom up" perspective in Ottoman Studies. Faroqhi, Suraiya. "Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Sixteenth – and Sevententh-Century Ottoman Empire: Some Evidence for their Existence." In *Osmanistiche Studien zur Wirtschafts – und Sozialgeschichte In memoriam Vančo Boškov,* edited by Hans Georg Majer. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1986. See also Barkey, Karen *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization.* Cornell University Press, 1994; Farqwohi, Suraiya. "Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanic Legitimation (1570-1650)." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient,* vol. 35, no. 1, 1992.

12   In the context of this article, the term "common good" is not exclusively associated with the concept of "*maslaha,*" derived from the Ottoman-Islamic tradition. *Maslaha* refers to the judicial processes employed by the Ottoman States, which aimed to promote the "common good" through the principles of moderation, reconciliation, and accommodation as objectives of the law. However, in this article, the term "common good" is used in its most fundamental sense, denoting the collective interests or benefits of all. For a detailed discussion of the "*maslaha,*" see Akarlı, Engin Deniz. "Maslaha from 'Common Good' to 'Raison D'etat' in the Experience of Istanbul Artisans, 1730-1840." *Hoca, 'Allame Puits de Science: Essays in Honor of Kemal H. Karpat,* ed. Kaan Durukan et al., 2010, pp. 63-79.

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13 See as instances, *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri İstanbul Mahkemesi 3 Numaralı Sicil*, 34b-1; *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Bab Mahkemesi 54 Numaralı Sicil*, 95b-3, 41a-4, 75b-4, 75b-1; *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Bab Mahkemesi 3 Numaralı Sicil*, 40a-4; *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Eyüp Mahkemesi 74 Numaralı Sicil*, 54b-2, 96b-2; *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Eyüp Mahkemesi 90 Numaralı Sicil*, 12b-1, 17b-2; *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Galata Mahkemesi 90 Numaralı Sicil*, 3a-3; 28b-2, 32b-2. See also Topuz Demir, Beyza and Uğur, Yunus. "Mahalle: Bir Mensubiyet ve Mesuliyet İlişkisi Osmanlı şehirleri ve Kefalet Sistemi Örneği." *Kent ve Maneviyat,* ed. Seyfettin Erşahin and Zehra Erşahin, İdealkent Yayınları, 2020.

14 See as instances, *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Üsküdar Mahkemesi 84 Numaralı Sicil*, 106a-2, 108b-2; *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri İstanbul Mahkemesi 24 Numaralı Sicil*, 19b-2, 20b-1, 56b-3, 57a-1, 60a-2, 62a-2, 66a-2, 73b-1, 75a-1, 87a-1, 87a-2; *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Eyüp Mahkemesi 3 Numaralı Sicil*, 21b-2, 22b-4; *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Hasköy Mahkemesi 5 Numaralı Sicil*, 252-2; *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Eyüp Mahkemesi 19 Numaralı Sicil*, 20a-1.

15 See as instances, *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Üsküdar Mahkemesi 84 Numaralı Sicil*, 34b-5; *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Bab Mahkemesi 54 Numaralı Sicil* 3b-4, 5a-2; *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Eyüp Mahkemesi 74 Numaralı Sicil*, 27a-3.

16 See as instance Atabey, Halil. *Manisa'nın 79 Numaralı Şer'iyye Sicil Defteri.* Master Thesis, Ankara University, 2014, pp. 49-50.

17 See as instances, *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri Üsküdar Mahkemesi 2 Numaralı Sicil*, 24b-2; Yıldız, Hamza. 2142 Numaralı Şer'iye Sicili Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirmesi. Master Thesis, Karabuk University, 2017, pp. 73, 97.

18 As an example, the practice of surety (*kefalet*) in the Ottoman State also entailed collective responsibility among neighborhood residents in areas such as crime prevention and maintaining order. Consequently, forms of collective actions would naturally arise when problems emerged within the framework of surety. However, it is important to note that this aspect of the surety practice falls beyond the scope of this article and would require a separate and detailed discussion of its own. For a recent study, see Topuz Demir, Beyza and Uğur, Yunus. "Mahalle: Bir Mensubiyet ve Mesuliyet İlişkisi Osmanlı şehirleri ve Kefalet Sistemi Örneği." *Kent ve Maneviyat,* ed. Seyfettin Erşahin and Zehra Erşahin, İdealkent Yayınları, 2020.

19 The sample used in this manuscript is limited due to the necessity of conducting a detailed examination of each case within the established theoretical framework. Since it was not possible to multiply the sample, the cases were carefully selected from cities that exhibit high representativeness. Two crucial aspects of Ottoman cities were taken into consideration to ensure this representativeness. Firstly, since they were gathered under the umbrella of the Ottoman Empire, there are

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standard features established by the Ottoman State administration in almost all of the cities in different geographies Secondly, these cities also possessed unique local characteristics that continued to exist within the framework of the Ottoman State. In this context, the examples of Istanbul, which are mainly selected in this article, are pivotal in understanding both the general and specific structures of cities. Istanbul is both the center of the mentioned umbrella and carries the effects and characteristics of different geographies. Other analyzed cities, such as Ankara and Aleppo, were selected to represent the research subject within the vast Ottoman territory and to understand the aforementioned local characteristics. Moreover, in some Ottoman cities, medium and distant relationships hold greater importance than the immediate hinterland. The social and economic connections that develop due to trade with other cities at medium and long distances play a significant role in this context. Thus, in this article, the cities selected outside of Istanbul were chosen with this consideration in mind, aiming to achieve greater inclusiveness.

20 "…Hasköy nâm karye ahâlîsinden Mustafa b. Ali üstâd-ı Hadîka-i sultânî ve Mahmud Çelebi b. Mehmed serrâc-ı hâssa ve Mahmud Ağa b. Mirza el-Cündî ve Abdi Bey b. Şaban serrâc-ı hâssa ve Mahmud Beşe b. Abdullah er-Râcil ve Hasan b. Mehmed ve Mehmed b. Mustafa el-İmâm ve Mehmed Hoca el-Müezzin ve Kadri b. Hüseyin ve Ahmed Çelebi b. Mustafa el-Cündî ve Hüseyin b. Mehmed serrâc-ı hâssa ve zimmî tâ'ifesinden Erzenos v. Yani ve Dimitri v. Kosta ve Angeli v. Mavridi ve Mihal v. Yani ve Zaharya v. İstefo ve Yani v. İspalepo ve Yahud tâ'ifesinden Yasef v. Avraham ve A[v]raham v. Kemal ve Haron v. İsrail ve Sâlel v. Sâlel ve İlya v. Kemal nâm Yahudiler…"

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İslam Şehri Paradigmasına Meydan Okumak: Kolektif Eylem Teorisi Merceğinden Osmanlı Kentsel Mekânları Üzerine Bir Deneme[*]

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Öz

Bu makale, İslam şehri sakinlerinin kolektif hareket edemediğini öne süren Weber'in İslam şehri kavramına yanıt vermek için Osmanlı şehirlerindeki kolektif eylemlere odaklanmaktadır. Bu amaçla çalışma, şehir sakinlerinin Osmanlı mahkemelerine yaptıkları toplu başvuruları Charles Tilly'nin kolektif eylem teorisini kullanarak incelemektedir. İslam şehri paradigmasının kapsamlı literatür taramasına ve mahkeme kayıtlarının analizine dayanan makale, Osmanlı şehir sakinlerinin kentsel bilince sahip olduklarını ve yaşam alanlarının iyileştirilmesi için kolektif eylemde bulunduklarını ileri sürerken Müslüman toplumlarda bu tür eylemlerin olmadığı inancına meydan okumaktadır. Bu konuda şimdiye kadar yapılan çalışmalarda kapsamlı bir kuramsal yaklaşım kullanılmadığı gibi mekân boyutu da dikkate alınmamıştır. Ayrıca bu makale, ortak karar almanın, kentsel sorunların kavranmasının, örgütlenme kapasitesinin ve kolektif eylemlerin Osmanlı kent kültürünün temel göstergeleri arasında olduğunu öne sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

İslam şehri, kolektif eylemler, mahkeme kayıtları, Osmanlı şehri, kentsel bilinç.

Вызов парадигме исламского города: османские городские пространства через призму теории коллективных действий[*]

Хандан Каракаш Демир[**]

Аннотация

Эта статья посвящена коллективным действиям в османских городах в ответ на веберианское понятие исламского города, предполагающее неспособность жителей исламских городов действовать коллективно. С этой целью в исследовании исследуются коллективные обращения горожан в османские суды с использованием теории коллективных действий Чарльза Тилли. На основе обширного литературного обзора парадигмы исламского города и анализа судебных протоколов в этой статье утверждается, что жители османских городов обладали городским сознанием и участвовали в коллективных действиях для улучшения своей жизненной среды, таким образом оспаривается убеждение в том, что такие действия отсутствовали в мусульманских обществах. Исследования по этой теме до сих пор не использовали ни всеобъемлющего теоретического подхода, ни пространственного измерения. Кроме того, в этой статье предполагается, что важными показателями городской культуры османских городов являются совместное принятие решений, понимание городских проблем, организационные способности и коллективные действия.

Ключевые слова

Исламский город, коллективные действия, судебные протоколы, Османский город, городское сознание.

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