

A Comparative Analysis of the Society and State Theories of “Ahlâk-I Alâî” and “Leviathan” Based on the State and Governance-Oriented Paradigms

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Abstract

Although Ottoman political thought has been studied in its own structure in many ways, the studies which demonstrate its position against different political structures, at least, those in Europe are very limited. Accordingly, in order to figure out whether this political thought differed in certain respects from one polity to the other, this study has attempted to analyse the society and state theories of “Ahlak-ı Alâî”, which was written in the second half of the 16th century by Kınâlîzade Ali Çelebi, who was an Ottoman thinker, and “Leviathan”, which was written by Thomas Hobbes, who was a British philosopher and political theorist in England in the mid-17th century, in relation to the state and governance-oriented paradigms in a comparative framework. Inspired by the American political theorist Sheldon Wolin, the study has been divided into three sections. The first section presents the socio-economic, political and institutional environment in which the works were written; the second section presents the methods applied in the works. And the last section describes the main message and common ground of the theories. This study has determined that differences and similarities of the methods applied as well as the views argued about the matters such as the legitimacy of the state, the base of the sovereignty, the rights, duties and governance principles of the sovereign based on the temporal and geographical differences in the two works. These findings have significant implications to see the differences and similarities of the Ottoman political thought against political structures in Europe.

Keywords: Kınâlîzâde Ali Çelebi, Ahlâk-ı Alâî, Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, The Ottoman State, England

Introduction

In the most general terms, comparative history is a method of social science that analyses similarities and differences between nations, states,

revolutions, regions, cases etc. in order to set out explanations that are valid beyond a particular time and place. The aim of comparative history is to present alternative systems of values and world views by analysing a system with other systems in different geographical and historical settings. Thus, comparative history makes it possible to discover historical and social connections across separate historical settings and allows us to assess the nature of a given system in the broader context of structurally similar entities (Scheidel, 2006, 4). Comparative history is not a new method. It has a long and distinguished history in the social sciences. In a way, it was applied throughout history whether consciously or unconsciously, but it gained general acceptance in the real sense, in the first half of the 20th century. In this period within the teachings of the Annales School, which was founded and edited at the Strasbourg University by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre to develop a history-approach in cooperation with various social sciences such as sociology, economics, social psychology and anthropology, the conditions of comparative methodology was formulated and became decisive and directive in social sciences. In particular Marc Bloch's works¹ made a breakthrough in the field. The comparative history method, which reached a completely different dimension with the works of Fernand Braudel² in the later period, have begun to be practiced in many disciplines including history discipline as well as sociology until now (Burke, 1990, 1-5).

The developments that took place in this sense in history, of course, had an affect on Ottoman history researches too. As well as Fernand Braudel's above-mentioned work, of which the focus is the Mediterranean world in the second half of the sixteenth century, historians such as Karen Barkey, Rhoads Murph, Sam White and Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj have also done studies on the basis of comparative analysis. With these studies new perspectives have been set forth about Ottoman history. Because these studies have determined whether the links between the political and socio-economic structures in the Ottoman state were similar to those in Europe. From this perspective, in order to determine whether Ottoman political thought differed in certain respects, at least, from those in Europe, this study will attempt to analyse the society and state theories of "Ahlak-ı Alâî"³, which was written in the second half of the

¹ March Bloch's masterworks in this sense are France Rural History, Feudal Society and Historian's Craft.

² In particular "The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II" is his masterpiece in this field.

³ It is the most significant work of Kınalızâde Ali Çelebi. It was composed in 1563-1565, while Kınalızâde was judge of Damascus. It was written in Turkish and has three epistles: individual ethics, household economics and political theory with the claim that it would encompass all ethical issues of its time. In this paper, Murat Demirkol's transcription to modern Turkish was preferred. For a summary of the literature on Ahlak-ı Alâî see Saraç, C. (1956). Ahlâk-ı Alâî. *AÜFİİED*, 1, 19-28; Kahraman, A. (1989). Ahlâk-ı Alâî. *DİA* (c. 2,

16th century by Kınalızâde Ali Çelebi⁴, who was an Ottoman thinker, and “Leviathan”⁵, which was written by Thomas Hobbes⁶, who was a British philosopher and political theorist in England in the mid-17th century, in relation to the state and governance-oriented paradigms in a comparative framework.

The Socio-Political and Institutional Structure

The *Ahlâk-ı Alâî* and *Leviathan* were written to find answers to the social, economic and political problems that their authors faced. In other words, the main concerns of both works were determined by the socio-cultural and socio-economic conditions their authors' time. Both asked questions about the historical conditions in which they lived and tried to find systematic answers to these questions. From this perspective, it is not possible to evaluate Kınalızâde Ali and Thomas Hobbes in a vacuum. In a way, both are the spokesman of their own historical conditions.

When we examine the socio-political and theoretical atmosphere in which Kınalızâde Ali and Thomas Hobbes lived; the year 1511, the birth date of Kınalızâde, marks a period in which the Ottoman state struggled with social conflicts on the basis of Shiite ideology led by Shah Ismail, the Safavid ruler. But the Ottoman state overcame this situation and was stabilised in the political sense until the 1520's. In the later decades of the sixteenth century, war was as much the natural state of affairs as shortages and epidemics. The

ss. 15-16). İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı; Tezcan, B. (1996). *The definition of Sultanic legitimacy in the sixteenth century Ottoman Empire. The Ahlâk-ı Alâ'î of Kınalızâde Ali Çelebi (1510-1572)* unpublished M.A. dissertation, Princeton University; Unan, F. (2004). *İdeal Cemiyet, İdeal Devlet, İdeal Hükümdar*. Ankara: Lotus Yayınevi; *Ahlâk-ı Alâî*. M. Koç (Ed.). İstanbul: Klasik Yayınevi; Oktay, A. S. (2015). *Ahlâk-ı Alâ*. İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık.

⁴ Kınalızâde Ali Çelebi, who was born in Isparta in 1510/11 and died in Edirne in 1572, worked as a *müderriş*, *kâdî* and *kâdiasker*. However, because of his treatises in many fields such as history, moral philosophy and politics, he is considered one of the leading thinkers of Ottoman political thought. For Kınalızâde Ali see Aksoy, H. (2002). Kınalızâde Ali Efendi. *DİA* (v. 25, pp. 416-417). İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı; Oktay, A. S. (2015). *Ahlâk-ı Alâî*. İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık.

⁵ It is a book written by Thomas Hobbes and published in 1651 (revised Latin edition 1668). Main concerns of the book are the structure of society and legitimate government. It is regarded as one of the earliest and most influential examples of social contract theory. For this paper, J.C.A. Gaskin's edition of *Leviathan* with an introduction, which was published in 1998 by the University of Oxford press, was preferred.

⁶ Thomas Hobbes was born at Westport, now part of Malmesbury in Wiltshire, England, on 5 April 1588 and died on 4 December 1679. He is considered one of the founders of modern political philosophy. However, he contributed to many other fields such as history, jurisprudence, geometry, physics, theology, ethics and philosophy. For Thomas Hobbes see Martinich, A.P. (1999). *Hobbes-A Biography*. Cambridge University Press; Sabine, G. (1959). *A History of Political Theory*. New York: Henry Holt and Company; Tannenbaum, D. G. (2017). *Siyasî Düşünce Tarihi*. Özgüç Orhan (Çev.). Ankara: BB101.

Ottoman state either launched a campaign against Habsburgs in the west or launched a campaign to the east against Safavid Persia until 1572, which was the date of the death of Kınalızâde. But this situation doesn't have a negative effect on Kınalızâde's writing, because the war states Ottoman philosophy of existence based on the conquest (İnalçık, 2000, 23-52; Kunt, 2011, 104-130; Shaw, 1976, 55-110). For Hobbes the situation is completely different. Hobbes's biography is dominated by the political events both in Europe and England during his long life. The period between 1603-1714 of English History called the *Age of Revolution* by Christopher Hill (2002), means a period of painful change and transformation in the economic, cultural and political fields. This period, which also determines the fundamental problems of the mind world of the thinkers of the period, led to question the phenomenons such as state, sovereignty, equality of rights, freedom, and religion in the light of the problems faced by the thinkers. The first major conflict that Hobbes consciously witnessed in this period was the Thirty Years War, which arose out of religious beliefs and territorial disputes in Europe. These wars, which led to a great destruction of both human and material interests, caused the English Civil War (1641-1652). Hobbes, who witnessed this process, was greatly influenced by these events, so his fear of death and his motive to survive shaped both his life and philosophy of politic. Leviathan's publication date of 1651, at the same time, marks the period of the civil war in England, and this means the social and political turmoil above-mentioned, constituted a source of inspiration for Leviathan. Therefore, Leviathan can only be evaluated in the context of the English civil war (Sarıca, 1983, 61-63; Şenel, 1995, 318-319; Copleston, 1994, 32-51; McClelland, 2005, 182).

The period in which Kınalızâde lived were the summit years of the Ottoman state. Until the 1570's, continued military success, in an area stretching from central Europe to the Indian Ocean, had given the Ottoman state the status of a world power. The state was ruled by absolute power in this period, and apart from a few situations, there wasn't any social situation that would jeopardise or create chaos. Therefore, in almost all "books of advice" (nasihat-nâmes), which were written in the late sixteenth-century, was emphasised this period as a beacon for an ideal structure of society. The idealisation of mentioned glorious past played a central role in these authors' argumentation. From this perspective, it can be inferred that Kınalızâde's motivation was based on the evaluation and contribution of these existed paradigms. At this point, the motivation sources of Kınalızâde and Hobbes differ from each other. Because, unlike Kınalızâde, Hobbes's life was directly affected by the chaotic environment, which was caused by the lack of authority. However, given that some moments of childhood engraved in subconscious have an influence that could determine the future stages of life

in every respect; it can be inferred that the factors such as the influence of the fear atmosphere dominating in Hobbes's family and leaving of his father at an early age were also decisive in his writing. Because, according to psychoanalytic doctrine, the first traces, which direct human life, appeared at these times, so the childhood experiences have a great importance. In a way, the troubles faced in life usually have the characteristics of returning to the first trauma.

The Method

The method reveals the qualitative direction of the path followed in the process of making answers to the questions. After determining the problem, the way of reporting the findings for its solution reveals the method of work. From this perspective, when we examine Kınalızâde's method, we can see that his work is based on a tradition. The fundamental references of Kınalızâde are Nasir al-Din Tusi's *Akhlâq-e Nâsirî* and Jalal al-Din Davvani's *Akhlâq-e Jalâlî*. He drew intensively from his predecessors, but he also studied on the works of Islamic philosophers such as al-Farabî and Ibn Khaldun. In addition, he used al-Ghazali's philosophy and Ibn Sina's terminology. As a result, his work became more systematic and comprehensive than his predecessors. However, even if we can't know whether he studied on these philosophers directly or through his predecessors, it is clear that he was influenced by the works of ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle too, because he quoted from Plato and Aristotle intensively in his work. In a way, he improved and extended the theory of the virtues, which came from a combination of Aristotle's and Plato's ethics, with Islamic ethical values. In addition to this, it can be determined that he followed the theology of Aristotle which is based on that of:

“The things are designed in such a fashion as to achieve the predetermined objective of their existence. The movements which things undergo are not mere irrational transitions from one state to another; they constitute motivated activity from a potential condition to the final state of actualisation of their possibilities. All motion is goal directed and after reaching this goal they become stationary again.” (Sahakian, 1968, 61).

This interpretation of Aristotle constitutes the starting point of Kınalızâde's thoughts about human nature and political theory, and at the same time gives a data for his method. From Aristotle's viewpoint, it can be argued that Kınalızâde's method is based on inductive reasoning on the basis of observations.

Unlike Kınalızâde, Thomas Hobbes lived in an environment where science was dominant. Therefore, he was influenced by the prevailing scientific understanding of the time while he set out his political theory

(Tannenbaum, 2017, 204-2005). In particular, he was influenced by his contemporaries Galileo and Kepler, who had discovered laws governing planetary motion, so he hoped to establish similar laws of motion to explain the behaviour of human beings. Thus, a deep admiration for the emerging scientific method, alongside an admiration for a much older discipline, geometry was extremely marked in Hobbes's work. He regarded geometry as a science of motion, so he believed that the physical world was a mechanical system in which all that happens could be explained with geometrical precision. From this perspective, he believed that everything that occurs in this system is a displacement of bodies relative to one another (Sabine, 1959, 457). This perspective of Hobbes also states the rejection of the Aristotelian worldview, which was dominant in science throughout centuries, based on the thought that "Things are designed in such a fashion as to achieve the predetermined objective of their existence." Because in contrast to Aristotle's viewpoint, this new perspective argues that everything in the universe is in motion until it is not constrained by another matter or entity (Tannenbaum, 2017, 205). He reached this conclusion by "resolutive-compositive" method. According to this method, one comes to understand a given object of inquiry by intellectually "resolving" it into its constituent parts and then subsequently "composing" it back into a whole (Finn). Thus, according to Hobbes, this mechanical scientific system based on laws of physics is enough to account for scientific principles, for all the facts of nature, including human behaviour both in its individual and social aspects (Sabine, 1959, 457). Taking all of this into account, it can be argued that the moral and political ideas of Hobbes are extremely based on the *mechanistic* view of science and knowledge. This, at the same time, marks the difference between the method of Kınalızâde and Thomas Hobbes.

The Theoretical Content

The theoretical content is the third and last element that would guide our assessments. It states the common ground and the main message of two works. In this section comparisons will be made on the basis of items such as the legitimacy and definition of the state, the succession of sovereignty, the rights and duties of the sovereigns as well as their government principles.

The Legitimacy and Definition of the State and the Succession of Sovereignty

Both Kınalızâde and Hobbes's starting point of approach to legitimacy of the state is the "human nature". Both developed their assumptions about the individual, society and the state using this approach. At this point, Kınalızâde's thought about human nature significantly does not differ from the traditional thought, which was systematically explained by Aristotle and

was also shared by later Roman thinkers such as Cicero and Seneca as well as in the Islamic world by al-Farabî and Ibn Khaldun. This viewpoint is expressed by Kınalızâde (2016, 114,370) as “Humans are by nature social beings.” (*İnsân medeniyîyün bi't-tab.*) The basic assumption of this thought is that it is inevitable for a person to live in a community and in society. Man is biologically and psychologically equipped to live in groups, in society. All his basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, health and education are fulfilled only within the framework of society. He also needs society for his social and mental developments. His need for self-preservation also compels him to live in society. According to Islamic belief, man was created as the most honourable creation and all of the earth was given to man's service, but this does not mean that man does not need the help of other people. In almost all aspects of his life man feels the need of society (Kınalızâde, 2016, 369-376). In short, Kınalızâde (2016, 376-377) believes that “Man can't live without community and society.” (*İnsân ictimâ' ve temeddün itmeyince maâş idemez.*) But he thinks that it does not necessarily mean that they live in peace. Each of them have a different profile from the other. Everyone has particular desires and may seek them without regard for others. As such, the main motivation of their behaviour will be to meet these needs. Discussions and contentions will be inevitable if everyone is making an effort to meet their desires and if different people desire the same thing. Because, each of them in order to meet his needs will naturally struggle to eliminate others. This situation will lead to a conflict environment. In such an environment, it is impossible to live peacefully in a society.

Unlike Kınalızâde's approach to human nature, Thomas Hobbes's approach reflects a new perspective on fundamental assumptions about the individual, society and state in the modern period. In this period, Niccolò Machiavelli appears as the first modern political thinker, who rejected Aristotle's view as unrealistic and looked upon politics as a secular discipline and divorced it from theology. Later, this viewpoint developed by political thinkers such as Michel de Montaigne and Thomas Hobbes, and occurred a more comprehensive philosophy (Strauss, 1953, 61). The movement point of this paradigm stems from the difference in approach to human nature. At this point, contrary to classical political thought, Thomas Hobbes argues that “Humans are not by nature social beings.” That is, he has a pessimistic view on human nature. According to him, the decisive and guiding motive of human behaviour is the self-preservation instinct, as opposed to a moral cause or an ideal (Sabine, 1959: 460). Therefore, Hobbes (1998, 84) argues that the state of nature is a constant and violent condition of competition in which everybody has a natural right to do everything. This is a constant war in which “*Every man is against every man.*” According to him (1998, 87), the reason for this war is that everyone is equal in rights and the ability to survive

by nature. The fact that humans are equal in nature, both physically and mentally, constitutes the main source of insecurity and fear among humans. Because “*From equality of ability, arises equality of hope in the attaining of ends.*” A situation in which all humans are equal and there is no power of control would inevitably lead them into conflict with each other. Because:

“If any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they can not both enjoy, they become enemies; and on the way to their end, (which is principally their own conservation, and sometimes their delectation only,) endeavour to destroy, or subdue one another.” (Hobbes, 1998, 87).

Hobbes sets out a pessimistic picture for human nature stating that people are competing for fear and distrust, as well as for honour and reputation, and at the same time, they are self-interested or egoistic by nature. According to Hobbes (1998, 87), for this reason, human life outside society is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. In short, in Hobbes’s own Latin phrase “*Homo homini lupus.*” (Man is a wolf to [his fellow] man.) (Hobbes, 1949, I).

When we compare the approaches of Kınalızâde and Hobbes, abovementioned, to human nature, it can be argued that Kınalızâde repeats the classical view, while Hobbes represents a radical break from classical view. The main difference is whether the nature of human beings is social or not. According to Kınalızâde, humans are social beings by nature while according to Hobbes, it is the fear and insecurity that bring humans together. However, with the beginning of the life of society, Kınalızâde’s thought overlaps with the thought of Hobbes. He also argues that because the desires of humans are unlimited, this inevitably would lead to conflict after a while. He thinks that limitless desires of humans would lead to competition in life of society and this also would be reason for conflicts. At this point, the main message and common ground of the solution developed by them in order to end the conflicts is in common. Kınalızâde argues the existence of a power, which removes the conflict and fighting among humans. According to him (2016, 378), these conflicts can only be ceased by government. In parallel with classical Islamic thought, denominates government as “high politics” (*siyâset-i uz mâ*) and emphasises that it is impossible for humans to live in a civilised union without this high politics. He argues this view using the sentence as follows: “High politics makes social life and the prevention of disorder possible.” (*Siyâset-i uz mâdır ki bununla ictimâ’ mümkün ve fesad mündefî’ olur.*) Thus, the fact that humans are in need of an order and high politics when they live together explains the origin and cause of politics. This high politics can be applied only by a state and the state government can only be maintained through three elements: laws of a legislative power (*nâmûs-u şâri’*), a ruler with restricting power (*hâkim-i mâni’*) and a useful medium of exchange (*dînâr-ı nâfi’*). These elements, at the same time, explain the sovereign power (Kınalızâde, 2016,

378). Because according to these elements, the high politics can be applied by the state through the “president” (*hakim-i kahir*), and this means that the president also has sovereignty. Hobbes (1998, 114) also argues that in order to put an end to this war of all against all and make human life more peaceful, individuals should come together and make a “*social contract*” decline some of their individual rights so that others cede theirs. However, since men are naturally driven by their self-interests there is no guarantee that both parties will keep up their end of the deal. At this point, this sovereign authority is called COMMONWEALTH, which was established by social contract to have absolute power over them all, for the purpose of providing peace and common defense. This political organisation, in a way, is a “state”. According to Hobbes (1998, 115), the man or assembly which holds power in a state, at the same time, points out the “power of the sovereign”. Thus, all the rights and authorities of the sovereign power are revealed.

The Rights, Duties and Governance Principles of the Sovereign

The origin of the sovereignty is based on a divine principle within the framework of classical Islamic view by Kınalızâde. He argues that the sultans are chosen with power and endless help from God. He regards this duty as a gift from God to the sultans. According to Kınalızâde (2016: 426), God crowned some of his servants and glorified them. He expresses these thoughts by referring to the verse of “*We did indeed make thee a vicegerent on earth.*”⁷ Therefore, according to Kınalızâde (2016, 380), the sultan is “the vicegerent and, so the shadow of God on earth” (*zillullah-i fi'l-arz*). This thought of Kınalızâde, at the same time, states one of the basic understandings of the Ottoman political thought. At this point, Hobbes differs from Kınalızâde. He looked upon politics as a secular discipline divorced from theology. He argues that the sovereignty should not be founded or justified by religion. The sovereignty should be founded on civil authority and justified only by a philosophy derived from what he thought was universal observations of human nature. In short, Hobbes thinks that the sovereign has right to obedience from his subjects, whether he is religious, Christian or not.

Kınalızâde (2016, 446-447), except for the sovereign power, i.e. the sultan, divides the society into four classes such as “the men of the pen (‘ulemâ), the men of the sword (military commanders and soldiers), the merchants-artisans and craftsmen, the agriculturists (reaya)” based on the principle of “*erkân-ı erba‘a*” and evaluates all of these elements as “subjects” (*teba‘a*). While the responsibilities of the subjects against the sovereign power are based on love and respect by Kınalızâde (2016, 471-476), at this point, he puts responsibilities onto the subjects on the basis of absolute obedience. He

⁷ Koran, Sâd: 26.

emphasises that all of these are essential for survival of the state (Kınalızâde, 2016, 437). It is possible to say that this interpretation of Kınalızâde, which expresses the situation of the subjects against the sovereign power, is based on the principle of “Obey the Messenger and those charged with authority among you.” (*Ulu’l-emr’e iṭā’at edin.*)⁸ in the context of the Islamic concept of state. In parallel with this thought of Kınalızâde, Thomas Hobbes (1998: 115-122) also sees all society as a “subject”, except for the sovereign. The subjects must obey the sovereign, and this obedience continues as long as the power of the sovereign protects the subjects with it. According to him (1998, 139-148), “The end of obedience is protection; which, wheresoever a man seeth it, either in his own, or in another's sword, nature applieth his obedience to it, and his endeavour to maintain it.” The subjects are obliged to obey any rule that the sovereign sets up for their own security. Although Hobbes refers to the different forms of the sovereignty, we are going to focus on the rights of sovereigns whose sovereignty was formed by a social contract. At this point, Hobbes (1998, 115-120) lays out the rights of the sovereigns as follow:

- The subjects can not change the shape of government.
- Sovereign power is indispensable.
- No one can make a stand against the sovereign without violating justice.
- Actions of the sovereign can not be criticised by the subjects.
- Nothing done by the sovereign can be punished by the subjects.
- The sovereign dominates what thoughts would be taught to the subjects.
- The sovereign has the right to make all kinds of rules for community life.
- The right to judge and resolve disputes also belongs to the sovereign.
- The right of making war and peace with other nations, and commonwealths belongs to the sovereign.
- The sovereign has the right to choose all the peace and war consultants and ministers.
- The sovereign power has the right to reward and punish (if a previous law has not specified its measure) and to do so as it pleases.
- The sovereign has the right to honour and show deference.
- All of these rights can not be divided in any way.

Hobbes, who enumerates the rights of the sovereign in this way, regards the sovereign as absolute power and argues these rights as a necessary condition for continuity of the state. He also precisely rejects any view which presupposes the division of this power. Because according to him (1998, 176), the legislator is the sovereign power, and since he is not subject to any law of society, there is no rule of administration to limit himself. The laws can be

⁸ It states the inference of the 59th verse of An-Nisâa sura of Koran that means “O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if ye do believe in Allah and the Last Day: That is best, and most suitable for final determination.”

used only on the basis of sovereign power. The sovereign power merely renders account to God (Hobbes, 1998, 222). Hobbes legitimises this situation with the fear of going back into the chaos of the state of nature. Hobbes, at the same time, lays out some duties which the sovereign has to fulfill. It is possible to enumerate these duties as follows:

- To teach the reasons of sovereignty rights to the subjects.
- To legitimise absolute sovereignty on rational principles.
- To teach the subjects in order that they can not object to the sovereign power.

All these duties laid out by Hobbes are duties to reinforce the authority of the sovereign. However, he sets out the duties such as providing the safety and well-being of the subjects, to teach the subjects that avoid injustice, and to prevent the subjects from laziness as well (Hobbes, 1998, 222-235). These duties are relatively duties based on the improvement of the subjects' situation. Whereas, in spite of the fact that the sovereignty is based on a divine principle and obligates the subjects with absolute obedience, Kınalızâde expresses the theoretical measures of sovereignty as well. At this point, according to Kınalızâde (2016, 446), the fundamental measure of administration is “justice and moderation”. The sultan must apply principles such as to treat everybody equally and with dignity no matter what their circumstances (Kınalızâde, 2016, 446-470). He emphasises the “circle of justice” (*dâire-i âdliye*), which is a recurrent theme of Ottoman political ideology, quoting from Aristotle. According to this pattern, which was to find its way into all Islamic works on political theory:

“To control the state requires a large army. To support the troops requires great wealth. To obtain this wealth the people must be prosperous. For the people to be prosperous the laws must be just. If any one of these is neglected the state will collapse.”

That is, justice is the key concept of the foundation of both a powerful state and authority of the sovereign, therefore, to ensure this is the sovereign's most important duty (Kınalızâde, 2016, 498).

Conclusion

This paper has been a discussion of the use of the comparative method in history. It has argued that in order to determine the place of the Ottoman political thought in the world, at least, in Europe, and offer a new interpretation of Ottoman political thought, historians must take into account comparative approaches. In addition, this paper has reached the conclusion that differences of socio-political and institutional structure in which the *Ahlâk-ı Alâî* and *Leviathan* were written had a significant influence on methods applied in both theories. Accordingly, while Kınalızâde was applying the “classic” Aristotelian political and moral philosophy (mainly through al-Farabi's version), Hobbes, like other major thinkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth

century, tended to abandon this approach in favour of European scientific and critical methods. This paper has also determined that common ground and the main message of the theories about the state and government-oriented paradigms were in common in certain respects. In this regard, both Kınalızâde and Thomas Hobbes argued that the birth of state based on human nature emphasising men are driven by “a perpetual and restless desire of power”. In accordance with this view, both argued the necessity of an absolute power to put an end to conflicts among men. They considered that this absolute power is the “state” and whomsoever held power in this state is the “power of sovereign”. Their views about the rights, duties and governance principles of the sovereign also did not differ from one to the other. Both advocated high authority of sovereign but at this point, in contrary to Hobbes, Kınalızâde set out the measures such as “justice and moderation” for governance principle of sovereign. As a result, the main concern of both works was the problem of social and political order. All of these findings have made it possible to see some differences and similarities of the Ottoman political thought against political structures in Europe.

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