

THE BERLIN WEST AFRICAN CONFERENCE 1884-1885
AND
THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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ABSTRACT

BERLIN WEST AFRICAN CONFERENCE 1884-1885 AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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It is an undeniable fact that Africa continent is important place for history of imperialism. European Powers had interested in Africa for a long time in history. 19th century witnessed many important developments which shape history of world. It is also important for history of Africa. Among many important developments in this century, Berlin West African Conference, or Congo Conference is very crucial for Africa. In literature, this conference is considered as the key development which give a path to partition of Africa. 14 participants attended this conference which was established between November 1884 and February 1885. The Ottoman Empire was one of the participants. Africa continent and the Empire had been in relations for centuries. That's why the participation of the Empire to the conference is important. In this context, this thesis aims to examine the Berlin West African Conference and the Ottoman participation in this conference.

Keywords: The Ottoman Empire, The Berlin West African Conference, Congo, Ottoman Africa, colonialism

ÖZ

1884-1885 BERLİN BATI AFRİKA KONFERANSI VE OSMANLI DEVLETİ

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Afrika'nın sömürgecilik tarihi için önemi yadsınamaz bir gerçektir. Avrupalı güçler Afrika'ya uzun süre ilgi duydular. 19. yüzyıl dünya tarihini şekillendiren birçok önemli olaya tanıklık etmiştir. Bu yüzyıl Afrika tarihi için de önemlidir. Bu yüzyıldaki önemli olaylar arasında Berlin Batı Afrika Konferansı, ya da Kongo Konferansı, Afrika için hayati öneme sahiptir. Bu konferans literatürde Afrika'nın paylaşımına yol açan gelişme olarak kabul edilmektedir. Kasım 1884 ve Şubat 1885 arasında düzenlenen konferansa 14 ülke katılmıştır. Osmanlı Devleti bu katılımcılardan biridir. Osmanlı Devleti ile Afrika arasındaki ilişki yüzyıllar boyunca devam etmiştir. Bu sebeple Osmanlı Devleti'nin konferansa katılımı önem arz etmektedir. Bu kapsamda bu tez Berlin Batı Afrika Konferansı ve Osmanlı Devleti'nin bu konferanstaki katılımını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı Devleti, Berlin Batı Afrika Konferansı, Kongo, Osmanlı Afrikası, sömürgecilik



To my beloved mother...

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOA. HR. SYS.	Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi: Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi
BOA. İ. HR.	Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi: İrade Hariciye
BOA. İ. MMS.	Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi: İrade Meclis-i Mahsus
BOA. Y. PRK. EŞA.	Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi: Yıldız Arşivleri Elçilik Şehbenderlik ve Ataşemiliterlik
BOA. Y. PRK. TKM.	Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi: Yıldız Arşivleri Tahrirat-1 Ecnebiyye ve Mabeyn Mütercimliği
B.O.A. Y.A.HUS	Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi: Yıldız Arşivleri Hususi Maruza

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study tried to examine the Berlin West African Conference of 1884-1885, which led to considerable consequences for the African continent in the 19th century. The Berlin West Africa Conference¹, held between 15 November 1884 and 26 February 1885, was an event where the principles of the colonization of Africa were determined by the Great Powers. As an African state at the same time, the Ottoman Empire was one of the states that participated in the conference. In this context, this study also aimed to reflect the Ottoman perspective, contrary to the works done up to now, while the Berlin Conference was examining.

By the 19th century, it is seen that colonialism had evolved into a new form and gained momentum. This era, which is also called New Imperialism, or Neo-colonialism in the related literature, has different characteristics compared to the previous one. It is possible to categorize these features into two groups as material and moral elements. It is an undeniable fact that technological and economic developments had a tremendous effect in the aforementioned period. During this era, it is seen that the need for raw materials increased, and searches for new markets began for the emerging surplus production with the Industrial Revolution, which firstly appeared in Britain. Correlatively, searching for new settlements for the surplus population, which emerged as a result of increasing prosperity, was one of

¹ Considering the literature on this subject, it is seen that this conference is called by different names such as the Berlin West African Conference, Berlin Conference, or Congo Conference. Therefore, these names were used interchangeably throughout this study.

the features of new imperialism. The factors which have been covered up to this point can be considered as material elements.

On the other hand, attempts for proselytism of Christianity and bringing “civilization” to the African continent come into prominence as other elements that give momentum to colonialism in the continent. Correspondingly, another prominent factor on this subject is the increase in nationalism. According to this understanding, having colonies became the prerequisite for being considered a major power. This situation prompted states to be involved in the colonial race. These factors constituted the moral elements of the new imperialism.

Considering the history of imperialism in Africa, it is seen that the Portuguese were the first comers to the continent with this purpose. It is known that the Portuguese established trade centers on the African coast as early as the 15th century. Then, Holland, France, and Britain followed the same path as Portugal. These states established control over the various locations on the coasts of Africa throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. Intensifying foreigner existence in the African coastlines until the 19th century, started to advance towards the interior of the continent from this time onward. The expeditions made were of great importance in the emergence of this situation. With the development of the industry, businesspeople and merchants were involved in this phenomenon initiated by explorers and missionaries. Then, governments involved in this.²

The states that came to the fore in advancing towards the inner parts of the African continent were England, France, Portugal, and Belgium. Later, Italy and Germany were also included. Britain tried to penetrate the inlands of the continent through South Africa at the beginning of the 19th century and from Egypt after 1881. As the oldest colonial power in Africa, Portugal struggled to wield power over Angola, Mozambique, and Congo. The French activities had started on the northern part of the continent and in the Sahara region, then advanced towards the inlands through

² Abdurrahman aycı, *Büyük Sahra'da Türk-Fransız Rekabeti (1858-1911)* (Erzurum; Atatürk Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1970), p.77.

Senegal after the 1850s. The activities of De Brazza³ were of great importance in terms of both the French existence in the inner parts of the continent and the Berlin Conference, which constitutes the subject of this study. De Brazza, originally Italian, made expeditions in Africa on behalf of France and obtained many concession agreements from local chiefs, allowing France to dominate a large territory in this region.

Like De Brazza, Henry Morton Stanley⁴ was another important figure who was active in Africa. Stanley made Leopold II gain a vast amount of colonial land in Africa by making expeditions on behalf of the International Association of the Congo, founded by Leopold II, and signing agreements with local chiefs. On the other hand, these activities of France and Belgium in Africa drove Britain into doubt. For this reason, Britain signed the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty with Portugal on 24 February 1884 to get Portugal onside. According to this treaty, while Britain recognized the Portuguese claims over the mouth of the Congo River, Portugal accepted the implementation of free navigation over the river and granted Britain the status of the most favored nation.

Germany was also great of importance in terms of both leading to the establishment of the conference and affecting its process. Providing its political unity in 1871, Germany experienced rapid development under the leadership of Chancellor Bismarck and became one of the major powers of Europe in a short time. Considering the German colonial policy, it is seen that Bismarck was against it at the beginning. However, Bismarck's attitude regarding colonialism changed over time. It can be said that the increasing activities of German merchants in Africa and their

³ Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza (1852-1905), Italian-born French Explorer and colonial administrator who founded the French (Middle) Congo, explored Gabon, founded the city of Brazzaville. For details please see, Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Pierre de Brazza." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (Accessed: December 22, 2020), Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Pierre-de-Brazza>

⁴ Henry Morton Stanley was British journalist and explorer. While he was working for American newspaper New York Herald, he was sent to Africa to find Livingstone who had lost during his expeditions. For details please see, (Accessed Date: December 22, 2020), https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/library_exhibitions/schoolresources/exploration/stanley

need for the protection of the German government to compete with merchants from other countries played an important role in this change. On the other hand, Bismarck wanted to take advantage of the disagreements between colonial powers in Africa, especially Britain and France, in order to turn the balance of power in Europe in his favor.

The Anglo-Portuguese Treaty provided the opportunity that Bismarck had looked for. This treaty was met with reaction from France and Belgium. Bismarck got involved in this matter and stated that this agreement was stillborn by contacting the British Foreign Minister, Lord Granville. At this point, the idea of gathering an international conference, which is first offered by Portugal, to deal with this issue was resurrected by Germany with the cooperation of France. The German proposal was accepted by other European states in accordance with the trend of the time that the European states resolved disputes through international conferences. As mentioned above, the Berlin West African Conference was held in Berlin between 15 November 1884 – 26 February 1885.

The Ottoman Empire was among the states that participated in the conference. The Ottoman presence in Africa dated back to the 16th century. However, European powers seized the Ottoman lands in the continent by the time. Algeria, one of the Ottoman provinces in Africa, and Tunisia were occupied by France in 1830 and 1881, respectively. Also, another important Ottoman province Egypt was dominated by Britain in 1882. When the conference had gathered, the Ottoman Empire had only Tripoli, located in the northern part of Africa.

On the other hand, Abdulhamid II was sitting on the Ottoman throne in the aforementioned period. Ascended the throne in 1876, Abdulhamid II came to power in one of the most difficult times for the Ottoman Empire and had to deal with many problems, particularly military and economic. During this period, the protection of the Ottoman territorial integrity was the priority of Abdulhamid II. To realize this aim, he attached importance to diplomacy and developed a foreign policy approach called balance policy. Additionally, another policy that Abdulhamid II appealed to

protect the Empire's territorial integrity was the policy of Panislamism.⁵ This policy has been mattered for this study in terms of explaining how the Empire maintained relations with the Muslim population, which live in the regions where the Ottoman Empire did not establish dominance.

Participation and attitude of the Ottoman Empire in the conference consist of the focal point of this study. Due to the Empire was not among the countries, which were first invited to the conference, this issue attracts attention. Invitation of countries to the conference like Russia, Austria, and Norway, in spite of that they did not have any land in Africa, caused the reaction of Abdulhamid II and his administration. On the other hand, Italy, in a similar situation with the Ottoman Empire, was invited to the conference as a result of its insistent attitude. The Empire followed a similar path as Italy and made diplomatic attempts. As a result of negotiations made with Germany and Britain, the Ottoman Empire took her place among the invited countries to the conference. The Ottoman Ambassador to Berlin, Mehmed Said Pasha, and Undersecretary Ohan Efendi represented the Empire in the conference.⁶

Considering the works done in Turkey, it is seen that there is a gap in the field of African studies.⁷ Reviewing the general works regarding to history of the Ottoman Empire, it is seen that the Berlin West African Conference was not mentioned.⁸

⁵ During the reign of Abdulhamid II, Panislamist policy was one of the important components of his foreign policy. For detailed information regarding Abdulhamid II Panislamist policy please see Cezmi Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği* (İstanbul: Ötügen, 1992).

⁶ BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:183; Kuntay Gücüm, "1884-1885 Berlin Konferansı ve Kongo Örneği; Afrika'nın sömürgeleştirilmesi karşısında II. Abdülhamid yönetimi", *Teori Dergisi*, Nisan 2019, p.74; Gürkan Kocamaz, "1884-1885 Berlin Konferansı ve Afrika'nın Avrupalı Devletler Tarafından Paylaşımı" (Master Thesis, Celal Bayar Üniversitesi, 2015), p.39-40.

⁷ For detailed bibliography experimentation please see Ahmet Kavas, "Türkiye'de Osmanlı Afrikası Araştırmaları", *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 1, no.2 (2003), p.513-528.

⁸ Among these studies these stand out; Robert Mantran, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi (XIX. Yüzyıl Başlarından Yıkılışa)*, translator Server Tanilli, Vol.2 (İstanbul: adam Yayınları, 2000), Erik Jan Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, translator Yasemin saner, 26th ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011); İsmail Hakkı Uzun Çarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 7th ed. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1959); Enver Ziya Karal, *Büyük Osmanlı Tarihi* Vol.8 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1962).

When the conference gathered, the Ottoman ruler was Sultan Abdulhamid II. Therefore, studies on this period also reviewed.⁹ These studies also did not mention about the conference.

When the first studies about Africa are reviewed, it is noticed that they are mostly limited to Northern Africa.¹⁰ Recently, this gap is tried to be closed through an increasing number of think tanks, and research centers in universities. By virtue of studies done in these institutions, invaluable information regarding the presence of the Ottoman Empire in Africa has started to come to light. At this point, the works of Ahmet Kavas are of great importance in terms of presenting the field to the attention of researchers. His studies also have exhibited how the Ottoman archival documents are significant for writing the history of Africa. Similarly, Muhammet Tandoğan's studies shed light on Ottoman-African relations. Both Kavas' and Tandoğan's studies have brought the unknown parts of the Ottoman archives, particularly significant in terms of Ottoman Africa, to light. Another significant work done recently was written by Serhat Orakçı. In his work, Orakçı tries to give a general framework of relations between Turkey and Africa by ranging from the Ottoman period to modern Turkey. In terms of the Ottoman relations with the southern part of the continent, the works of Halim Gençoğlu¹¹ are among which need to be mentioned. In these works, Gençoğlu tracks the Ottoman traces in the southern part of the continent by depending on archival sources both in Ottoman and South Africa archives. Retired ambassador Numan Hazar has also contributed to the relevant literature through his

⁹ Vahdettin Engin, *II. Abdülhamid ve Dış Politika* (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları, 2005); İlber Ortaylı, *İkinci Abdülhamid Döneminde Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Alman Nüfuzu* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1981); Cezmi Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 1992); F.A.K Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdülhamid II and the Great Powers 1878-1888* (İstanbul: ISIS Press, 1996).

¹⁰ As samples to those studies; Mehmed Muhsin, *Afrika Delili* (Kahire: el-Ferah Ceridesi Matbaası, 1894); Aziz Samih İltar, *Şimali Afrika'da Türkler*, Vol. 1-2 (İstanbul: Gazete Matbaa Kütüphanesi, 1937); Ercüment Kuran, *Cezayir'in Fransızlar Tarafından İşgali Karşısında Osmanlı Siyaseti*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayını No.731, (1957); Abdurrahman Çaycı, *Büyük Sahra'da Türk-Fransız Rekabeti (1858-1911)* (Erzurum: Atatürk Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1970).

¹¹ Halim Gençoğlu, *Güney Afrika'da Osmanlı İzleri* (İstanbul: Tezkire, 2016); *Güney Afrika'da Osmanlı Kültürel Mirası*, (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2020); *Türk Arşiv Kaynaklarında Türkiye-Afrika* (Ankara: SR Yayınevi, 2020).

works, particularly related to Ottoman-African relations in the Abdulhamid II era mostly relying on primary and secondary sources.¹² The aforementioned studies were referred to throughout this master thesis when required. However, it should be noted that consisting of the subject of this study, Berlin West African Conference was either mentioned briefly or not at all in these studies.

The first study in Turkey focusing on the conference was written by Sabit Duman.¹³ Reviewing this study, it is detected that the general aspects of the conference were discussed by referring mostly to secondary sources. On the other hand, similar to international literature, Duman did not include the Ottoman participation in the conference in his work. The master thesis was done by Gürkan Kocamaz in 2015 is another study prepared on the same topic. In his thesis, Kocamaz handled the subject in general terms. Considering the sources of the thesis, it is seen that archival documents were used. It also benefitted from a foreign newspaper, namely *New York Times*. However, it can be said that Korkmaz's work falls short in terms of reflecting the Ottoman perspective although his thesis mentioned the process of the Ottoman invitation to the conference. Additionally, it should be noted that this study is mostly based on newspaper articles and secondary sources rather than archival documents while it discusses the process of the Berlin West African Conference. Another study in Turkish literature on the conference was prepared by Kuntay Gücüm. In his study, Gücüm intensively relies on Ottoman archival documents. In this sense, his study has crucial importance for this thesis in terms of introducing the correspondences made between the Ottoman delegation Said Pasha and then Minister of Foreign Affairs Asım Pasha. The work of Gürsoy Şahin about the conference, on the other hand, discusses the conference from the aspect of its reflections on the African press.¹⁴ In

¹² Numan Hazar, *Küreselleşme Sürecinde Afrika ve Türkiye-Afrika İlişkileri* (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2003); "Sultan II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti ve Afrika Siyaseti" in *Devr-i Hamid*, Vol.4 (Kayseri: Erciyes Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011), p.183-218.

¹³ Sabit Duman, "Berlin Kongresi", 38. ICANAS, (Uluslararası Asya ve Kuzey Afrika Çalışmaları Kongresi) 10-15.09.2015 Ankara, Bildiriler, Tarih ve Medeniyetler Tarihi, Vol. III, (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Yayını, 2012), p.1183-1190.

¹⁴ Gürsoy Şahin, "Afrika'nın Sömürgeleştirilme Sürecinde Berlin Konferansı (1884-1885) ve Afrika Basımına Yansımaları", *History Studies* 10, no.1 (2018), p.247-268.

this work, Şahin mostly benefits from African newspapers. He also refers to archival documents.

On the other hand, it is seen that there are numerous studies about the conference written in international literature. However, it is seen that any of them do not mention the Ottoman Empire. Yet, they contain significant data regarding the conference. One of the prominent works is written by Sybil Eyre Crowe. As far as it has been encountered in the reviewed studies, this work was frequently cited. Although the full text of this work is not available in libraries in Turkey or pdf format, it was possible to reach its abbreviated form in a book chapter. Another frequently cited work is Arthur Berriedale Keith's *The Belgian Congo and the Berlin Act*. The article was written by Daniel De Leon, *The Conference at Berlin on the West-African Question*, is another prominent study on the same topic. As one of the participants in the conference and the most influential actors in the history of Africa, Henry Morton Stanley wrote a book that includes a chapter about the conference, as well. Aforementioned studies were also used throughout this thesis.

Here, it had better to mentioning about a study which was written by Mostafa Minawi. In his book, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz*, Minawi argues that the Empire pursued a colonial policy in Africa and attempted to involve in the colonial race especially after the Berlin West African Conference. Given the Ottoman attitude in the conference and in general about Africa, it can be said that the Ottoman presence and her policies in the continent were misinterpreted by the author.

In the light of such information, this thesis aimed to close a gap in the literature by examining the Berlin West African Conference and the Ottoman attitude in the conference. In accordance with this purpose, primary and secondary sources were intensively utilized throughout this study. The main primary sources consist of archival documents and foreign newspapers. It could not be benefited from Ottoman newspapers since they did not include any information about the conference. Among the Ottoman newspapers published in the same period with the Berlin West African

conference, *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, *Ceride-i Adliye*, and *Ceride-i Hakayık* were scanned, and no news about the conference was found. Additionally, Gürkan Kocamaz states in his thesis' introduction that in addition to the aforementioned newspapers, he also scanned *Sabah*, *Ceride-i Askeriye*, and *Saadet* but could not find any related news about the conference. In terms of archival documents related to the Ottoman period, the Directorate of State Archives contains invaluable records. These records have importance in reflecting the Ottoman attitude in the conference, as well. These documents were also intensely used in this thesis. Another feature that distinguishes this study is that conference protocols were used intensively for the first time throughout this study. Thus, the attitude of the Ottoman representative on the issues discussed at the conference could be revealed.

The conference protocols were published in the Ottoman alphabet by *Matbaa-i Osmaniye* in a book format in 1885. It contains protocols of 10 sessions and the text of the General Act of the conference. It totally consists of 208 pages. The protocols can be found in the archives of “*İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı*” in Istanbul. Also, copies of the protocols can be found in the British Foreign Office Archive with reference code FO 341 and in German Federal Archive with the reference code Barch, R 1001/4116. Considering the fact that the conference was not mentioned in Ottoman newspapers, it can be speculated that the publishing of this source was mainly for archival purposes. The publication of these protocols immediately after the conference also supports this speculation.

This thesis also differs in terms of secondary sources it utilizes. In addition to the frequently cited works on the subject, the works written in the same period with the conference were also used. Among these, the works of people who personally attended the conference were included. In this way, it was possible to double-check information related to the conference. Thus, it was aimed to provide the most accurate information about the conference process.

On the other hand, the absence of any news related to the conference in the Ottoman press creates one of the limitations of this study. Additionally, it could not be reached

to the archives in France and Germany, as two prominent actors in the conference. Also, the press in these states could not be scanned because of the language barrier. These can be considered as other deficiencies for this study.

Accordingly, this thesis is composed of three main sections, excluding the introduction and conclusion parts. In the first section, it was tried to exhibit the historical background of the Ottoman presence in Africa. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that the Ottoman Empire was an African state at the same time. For this purpose, the Ottoman Empire's presence in the continent was tried to be examined. However, since the main subject of this study happened in the 19th century, this chapter focused mostly on the 19th century in general.

Once the Ottoman footprints in the continent are examined, it is seen that the Ottoman presence in the continent is realized in two forms. In other words, it is possible to consider the borders of the Empire in Africa as physical borders and mental borders. In the first form that can be called physical borders, it is seen that the Empire existed through the provinces in Africa that is directly controlled. In this context, the situation of the Empire's provinces in Africa in the 19th century was tried to be examined.

Additionally, once the mental borders of the Empire are examined, it is referred to the Ottoman relations with the Muslim population who live outside of the Ottoman territory in the continent. It is seen that the Ottoman influence reached the southernmost corner of the continent through this kind of relations. At this point, the relations established with the Muslim population under the rule of foreign states, as well as Muslim sultanates and tribes, were also tried to be addressed.

The second section of the study dwelled on the Berlin West African Conference. In order to embrace this process comprehensively, this part firstly discussed the general situation before the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. In this sub-section, it was tried to evaluate the situation of the European states that were influential in the colonial race in Africa, in the 19th century. Here, the motivation was to reflect the details of the struggle which lies behind the establishment of the conference. Also, new

imperialism which is one of the triggers of the scramble for Africa was discussed. Then, the conference process was elaborated in detail. In this part, protocols of the conference and contemporary newspapers were intensively used. Also, it was supported by secondary sources. Lastly, this section focused on the process after the conference. Here, it was aimed to show how the conference affected the African partition process.

In the third section, it was tried to be evaluated the Ottoman attitude in the Berlin West African Conference. In here, the situation of the Empire in the 19th century was discussed. Having knowledge about the circumstances of the Empire in that period was important to understand the process of the Ottoman participation in the conference and her attitude in there. The Ottoman participation process in the conference was particularly important because it caused a diplomatic crisis, as mentioned in detail in the relevant section. Lastly, this section tried to shed light on the Ottoman attitude throughout the conference. For this purpose, the discussions that the Ottoman delegation involved, and his statements were presented in detail. Also, to exhibit the Empire's perspective, the correspondences between the Ottoman delegation and the Ministry of Foreign affairs were frequently benefitted.

CHAPTER 2

THE ROOTS OF THE OTTOMAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA

The Ottoman Empire's first contact with the Africa started at the beginning of the 16th century. It was the time that the Empire conquered Egypt which was under the Mamluk rule for three centuries. After that time, Ottoman dominance which was established firstly on coasts of Northern Africa, Egypt, and the Red Sea started to expand through the continent. When Ottoman footprints in Africa is followed, it is seen that this expansion took place in two separate routes. One of them, as centered from Egypt, proceeded toward the west direction which contained the Empire's western provinces, namely *Garp Ocakları*. On the other hand, the Ottoman expansion continued in the south direction through the Habesh Province.

However, it should be noted that the Ottoman presence in Africa was not limited only these provinces. As long as the Empire remained in Africa, she managed to be influential in the inner parts of the continent by establishing relationships with other states and sultanates on the continent. Furthermore, the Ottoman effect reached the south end of the continent, thanks to her relations that were established with local Muslims in the region. Thus, the influence of the Ottoman Empire on the African continent was realized in a way to cover the vast majority of the continent. That presence is now known as "*Afrika-i Osmani (The Ottoman Africa)*".¹⁵ Therefore, in this chapter, the Ottoman presence in Africa will be analyzed under two distinct

¹⁵ This term refers to the physical boundaries that the Ottoman Empire reached in Africa, as well as the places that entered into relations with the Ottoman State and where the Ottoman Empire had socio-cultural and spiritual influences. For the study which this terms was borrowed and a more detailed explanation, please see. Hatice Babavatan, *Osmanlı Afrikası'nda Bir Sultanlık Zengibar* (İstanbul: Küre, 2005).

subtitles. In this chapter, by this, it is aimed to highlight the fact that the Ottoman Empire was an African state, as well.

2.1. The Ottoman Provinces in Africa

The conquest of Egypt in 1517 not only opened the doors of Northern Africa to the Ottomans but also, this conquest gave the Empire opportunity to gain ground toward the south of the continent.¹⁶ During the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire established four provinces. As indicated in the map below, these were Algeria (1516-1848), Egypt (1517-1882), Tunisia (1535-1881), Tripoli (1551-1912), and Habesh (1555-1916). These provinces were ruled under different administration approach than the Empire had implemented in her different parts of the country. While the Empire preferred to administer most of her territory directly from the Ottoman center, the Ottoman provinces in Africa were governed by administrators who elected within local leaders. In other words, that provinces were autonomous in general sense. However, it should be noted that that administration understanding of the Empire regarding to those provinces had been changed from time to time in accordance with the conditions which the Empire involved in.¹⁷

Besides, those provinces constituted the physical borders that the Empire had reached in Africa. When all these provinces' total lands are considered together with current borders, it is seen that it covers today's 15 different African countries. Namely, these were Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria in the Mediterranean basin; Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti in the Red Sea basin; Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya in the Horn of Africa; and Niger, Nigeria, Chad, South Sudan and Uganda in the Central Africa.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ahmet Kavas, *Osmanlı-Afrika İlişkileri*, 3rd ed. (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2015), p.36.

¹⁷ For the details of the Ottoman administration approach in those region please see Seydi Vakkas Toprak, "Osmanlı Yönetiminde Kuzey Afrika: Garp Ocakları", *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, (2012), p.223-236.

¹⁸ Serhat Orakçı, *Türkiye Afrika İlişkileri* (İstanbul: İnsamer Yayınları, 2018), p.54.

Given this, it is normal to expect that the Ottoman Empire should be among the participants in the Berlin West African Conference.



Figure 1. Map illustrating the Ottoman territories in Africa in 1803 (pink colored region)
Source: <http://www.midafternoonmap.com/2014/11/africa-uncolonized.html> (Accessed Date: May 10, 2020)

By the 19th century, it is seen that the Ottoman territorial possession in Africa still consisted of vast amount of area. In fact, the Empire's presence in the continent had not meet any serious threat until the 19th century. It can be stated that Africa stayed distant from Europeans' attention until this period, was effective in the emergence of this situation. In this sense, the first incident had appeared when France tried to invade Egypt in 1798. Indeed, the French invasion of Egypt in 1798 was a direct the result of Napoleon Bonaparte's desire to protect the country's interests in the east against the British. Thus, it can be claimed that the rivalry which also reverberated in the Berlin West African Conference, began in this period. That French attempt also undermined the Ottoman hegemony in Egypt. From this time onward, the relations between the Empire and her province had never been like before.

The Ottoman Empire experienced territory losses during the 19th century. The first incident, in this sense, had occurred in 1830 when France invaded the Ottoman Algeria. Algeria was the first province of the Empire in Africa. It had been governed by the Ottomans for almost 300 years. As parallel to the general Ottoman administration understanding in these regions, Algeria experienced autonomy in some extent. Even, it had some commercial relations with foreign powers like Spain, Britain, France, and even the United States.

Once France had failed in its attempt to invade Egypt, it directed its attention to another Ottoman province, Algeria by starting from 1827. France wanted to have colony in the North Africa by occupying Algeria. By doing this, French administration aimed to have a higher hand against Britain in the Mediterranean as well as prevent internal conflict. In this context, the incident that happened between Hussein *Dey* and the French consul Deval gave the opportunity that France had looked for. France occupied Algeria in 1827 by using this incident as an excuse.¹⁹ At that time, the Ottoman Empire could not show an adequate reaction to the French

¹⁹ Fahir Armaoğlu, *19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (1789-1914)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basınevi, 1997), 190-191; Ercüment Kuran, *Cezayir'in Fransızlar Tarafından İşgali Karşısında Osmanlı Siyaseti*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayını No.731, (1957), p.12.

invasion because of the Greek Revolt and Russian War.²⁰ Although the Empire did not accept this fait accompli and made diplomatic efforts, nothing changed. In the end, the Ottoman capital renounced her rights in Algeria by not including the province in the state yearbook (*salname*) in 1850.²¹ Consequently, the Ottoman rule in Algeria ended. Here, it can be claimed that this incident might be considered as an early signal of the beginning of scramble for Africa.²² This is because after that event, invasions of European powers increasingly continued. Besides, it became an issue that seriously affected the Empire.

Increasing its colonial activities in Africa, France directed its attention towards Morocco and Tunisia after its achievements in Algeria. By the 19th century, it is known that Tunisia acted as a de facto independent state under the administration of its governor and its ties with the Ottoman central administration remain on paper. The province had economic and political contacts with foreign countries, mainly Europeans. It also had border disputes with Algeria, which was under the French rule at that time. On the other hand, Italy, which managed to ensure its political unity late, was in search of areas where it could expand its penetration. North Africa became prominent as a good option for Italian desires because of Italy's geographical proximity to the region. However, France was aware of the intentions of Italians, and did not would like any powerful state next to Algeria that could threaten it. Hence, France found a chance to get international support that it needed to invade Tunisia after the 1878 Berlin Congress.

Throughout the conference, the British and the Germans held several secret talks with the French delegates, which stated that if France attempt to invade Tunisia, their countries will not pose any opposition to it.²³ Two factors helped France in gaining the support of major European powers for this conquest. First, the dwindling

²⁰ Armaoğlu, *19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi*, p.193.

²¹ Kuran, *Cezayir'in Fransızlar Tarafından İşgali Karşısında Osmanlı Siyaseti*, p.60.

²² Numan Hazer, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti ve Afrika Siyaseti", p.196.

²³ Dwight L. Ling, "The French Invasion of Tunisia, 1881", *The Historian* 22, no.4 (1960), p.396-398.

importance of Tunisia in British policy caused British apathy towards a prospective invasion attempt. Secondly, German chancellor Bismarck aimed to gain ground to realize German goals in the Europe continent by redirecting French attention to other regions.

In this framework, France sent an army of 30.000 people to the region by pretexting a tension between Tunisia and Algeria in 1881.²⁴ France also informed the Ottoman capital that if the Empire sent an army to help Tunisia, this act would be regarded as *casus belli*. Then, Bey of Tunis, who was lack of Ottoman support and adequate force to resist the French occupation, had to sign the Treaty of Bardo on 12 May 1881 and accept the domination of France. Even though the *beys* of Tunisia kept their presence in the country for a while, the Ottoman influence in this province vanished.

While the French and Ottoman rivalry started over North Africa, Britain was trying to increase its influence in the east and south part of the Ottoman Africa. In this sense, it is seen that British activities increased in Egypt. Egypt had importance for the Ottoman Empire, basically in two ways. Firstly, the province had geopolitical importance for the Empire's advancement in the Africa continent. Egypt played the main base for the Ottoman expedition towards Africa. For this reason, Egypt province was of the essence in terms of military. Secondly, the province was in a strategic position where on the pilgrimage and the trade route between west and east. In addition to that, it had agricultural and mineral resources. These factors made the province economically important for the Empire.

By the beginning of the 19th century, it is seen that the Ottoman Empire's control diminished in Egypt. Muhammad Ali, one of its governors, raised as an important figure and maintained his control over the province. During his governorate, Egypt experienced military, financial and financial reforms. These developments strengthened the position of Muhammad Ali, and he began to struggle against the

²⁴ Kavas, *Osmanlı-Afrika İlişkileri*, p.50.

Ottoman central government. The Empire fell into a difficult position against her governor in the battles in 1832 and 1839.²⁵

At that time, Britain found Muhammad Ali's advance undesirable for her own interests. Therefore, she intervened in this conflict in favor of the Ottoman Empire. The British intervention ceased the progress of Muhammad Ali and forced him to conciliate with the Ottoman Empire. Yet, he managed to get a decree dated 1841 that confer the hereditary rule of Egypt and Sudan to the family of Muhammad Ali.²⁶ After Egypt question was resolved in this way, Muhammad Ali and his successors followed a policy that was loyal to the Ottoman Empire.

The relations between the Ottoman central administration and Ismail Pasha, who is one of the grandsons of Muhammad Ali, were on good terms. In this period, the tribute that was sent to the Ottoman capital from Egypt was enhanced. As a result of these good relations, the hereditary succession rule was modified in favor of Ismail Pasha and his family in 1866. A year later, the special title of khedive was given to Ismail Pasha. He also obtained the right to make a debt agreement with European powers in 1872.²⁷ Due to uncontrolled spending, the debt of the province increased constantly, and Egypt's economy broke into a major depression. When the province failed to pay its debt, the Commission of the Public Debt was established by foreign powers in 1876. Then, Britain found the measures that were taken, inadequate, and for this reason, the Dual Control administration was formed in Egypt. There was a group of officers within the army who were uncomfortable for foreign powers' intervention in domestic affairs. They rallied around Ahmad Urabi. This movement

²⁵ Goldschmidt et al., "Egypt-Muhammad Ali and his successors (1805-1882)", *Encyclopædia Britannica*, (Accessed Date: May 10, 2020).

²⁶ Khaled Fahmy, "The era of Muhammad Ali Pasha, 1805-1848", In *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol.2, ed. Martin W. Daly, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.139-179; 139.

²⁷ Hilal Görgün, "Mısır-Fransız İşgali Sonrası", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Accessed Date: May 10, 2020).

turned into a conflict against the British. In the end, Britain invaded Egypt in 1882.²⁸ Considering the importance of Egypt for the Ottoman Empire, British invasion of Egypt in 1882 was the heaviest blow to Ottoman Africa.

After the loss of Algeria in 1830, then Tunisia to France in 1881, and Egypt to Britain in 1882, the Ottoman Empire attached great importance to the protection of the Tripoli province. For this purpose, some wide-range reform regulations were put into action to ensure public order and safety of the province. In this context, some administrative arrangements were made in the time of the governorship of Mahmud Nedim Pasha. Then, with the promulgation of the provincial administration law of 1864, the province was reorganized.²⁹ Moreover, the first official newspaper began to publish in 1866. Also, hospitals and schools were established in Tripoli. In the time of Ahmed Rasim Pasha, who was the longest governor of the province, some efforts were spent on revitalizing the economy.³⁰

By the end of the 19th century, it is seen that Italy, which completed its political unity late like Germany, also attempted to be included in the colonial race. In this framework, Italy interested in Tunisia at first. However, the French invasion of Tunisia directed Italian attention to Tripoli, the last Ottoman land in North Africa. As a matter of fact, Italian ambitions towards that province were one of the reasons that stirred up the Ottoman participation in the conference. When the Berlin West African Conference was gathered, Tripoli was the only province that the Ottoman Empire had in Africa.

In terms of the Ottoman presence in Africa, Habesh province which was established in the 16th century, was one of the important ones. It can be counted mainly two reasons that draw the Ottoman attention to the region. Firstly, its geographical

²⁸ Donald Malcolm Reid, "The Urabi Revolution and the British Conquest, 1879-1882", In *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol.2, ed. Martin W. Daly, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.217-238.

²⁹ Ahmet Kavas, "Trablusgarp", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Accessed Date: July 8, 2020).

³⁰ Orhan Koloğlu, "Libya, From the Ottoman Perspective (1835-1918)", *Africa* 63, no.2 (2008), p.279.

location provides an opportunity to have lands along the Red Sea, which can be used to advance towards the inlands of Africa. This situation also gives a chance to establish hegemony over eastern trade routes. Secondly, the Muslims that were attacked by the Christians was another factor that led the Ottoman intervention to this area.³¹ The establishment of the province of Habesh also made the Empire an important actor in the area called the Horn of Africa today. The presence of the Empire in this region had political, economic, and religious impact.

By the 19th century, it is seen that the Ottoman Empire expanded her influence through Habesh province towards Massawa and Zeila, today part of Somalia, just before the beginning of the Berlin West African Conference. As a matter of fact, it is seen that the Ottoman province would be a target of the European Powers rivalry in Africa after the conference.

Despite the fact that the general attitude of the Ottoman Empire was to protect her territories in Africa, it is seen that she gained territory as an exceptional sample in the same period. In 1876, Egypt Khedive İsmail Pasha advanced towards the region located in the boundaries of today's Uganda and founded Equatoria (*Hatt-ı Üstüva*) province of Egypt³². The boundaries of this province were expanded almost 500 km. in the time of Mehmet Emin Pasha's³³ administration.³⁴ Thus, the Ottoman influence in the continent reached to the Equator even if it was temporary. Emin Pasha also signed concession agreements on behalf of the Ottoman Sultan with local chiefs in this region as European explorers did. It is interesting to note that the activities of

³¹ Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1996), p.32-33.

³² For detailed information about the foundation of this province please see, Iain R. Smith, *The Emin Pasha Relief Expedition 1886-1890*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

³³ His original name was Edward Schnitzer. German medical practitioner. He served under the Ottoman administration in Albania, Trabzon, and Yanya, as well. For detailed information please see Dr. H. Ahmed Schmiede, "Alman Asıllı Bir Osmanlı Devlet Adamı ve Alimi", *Türk Dünyası Tarih Dergisi* (Ocak 1991).

³⁴ İdris Bostan, "The Ottoman Empire and the Congo", In *Studies on Ottoman Diplomatic History*, Vol.5, ed. Sinan Kunalalp and Selim Deringil (İstanbul: ISIS Press, 1990), p.103-119; 104.

Emin Pasha coincided with the period that the European colonial powers increased their activities in this region just before the Berlin West African Conference. For this reason, Said Pasha, the Ottoman representative in the conference, objected to the extension of the free trade and navigation zone towards the Nile basin. From the Ottoman perspective, the Empire had established control in the area.

2.2. Ottoman Relations with Local Muslim Powers and Muslim Population in Africa

What has been mentioned in the previous section aimed to present a general framework regarding the Ottoman physical borders in Africa. The Empire secured control over extensive lands in the continent through her provinces in North and East Africa. However, it is a well-known fact that the Ottoman presence in Africa is not limited to these physical borders of the Empire. The Ottoman Empire managed to extend her influence towards the southernmost corner of Africa, particularly due to the Muslim identity of the Empire. The amicable relations that Ottomans established with local Muslim sultanates and collaboration between them contributed much to the occurrence of this situation. Also, the ties that the Empire had with the Muslim population living outside of the Ottoman borders in Africa were another important factor that enabled the Ottoman influence to spread throughout the continent.

Considering the content of bilateral relations between the Ottoman Empire and local powers, it is seen that these sultanates demand help from the Empire against the progress of the European colonial powers in Africa, and the Ottoman attempts to meet these demands within the limits of her capability. Additionally, another substantial motivation that prompt the Empire to collaborate with these local powers is that some of these sultanates were in presence on important points on pilgrimage and trade routes.

Among the local powers that Ottomans had contacted, the Sultanate of Kanem-Bornu, which was one of the longest dynasties in Africa, has been come into

prominence due to its close contact with the Empire. The Ottoman Empire contacted this sultanate immediately after taking Tripoli from the Spanish in 1555.³⁵ In this way, the pilgrimage and trade routes between the Mediterranean basin and local Muslim powers in Sub-Saharan Africa were connected. The relations between these states reached its peak point in the time of Sultan Suleiman I and Idris Alooma. It is seen that these rulers sent envoys and gifts to each other during this period.³⁶ In fact, the primary motivation that paves the way to establish a relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Sultanate of Kanem-Bornu was the Ottoman advancement in military technology at that time. It is known that Sultan Idris Alooma purchased firearms from the Empire.³⁷ This affiliation continued until the conquest of Fezzan by Murad III in 1577. Even the fact that ties between two states were deteriorated after this incident, the relations were thawed when Muhammed el-Kanimi, who was born and educated in the Ottoman lands, had come into power in the mid-19th century.³⁸ At the end of the 19th century, the Sultanate was conquered by another local Muslim power because of disorders in the region and the inadequateness of rulers. Then, France invaded this region in 1905. Even though the Ottoman Empire reacted to this invasion, her attempts failed because France and Britain had already reached a consensus over the partition of these lands.

Another local power that the Ottoman Empire had contacted in Africa was the Sultanate of Harar. The Sultanate, which reached its broadest borders in the first half of the 16th century, dominated the lands what is currently known as Ethiopia and Djibouti in East Africa. Harar had always been attractive for the dominant powers in the region due to its location that connected port cities like Masawa, Berbera, and Zaila to inlands of the Africa continent. Indeed, it can be said that the significance of Harar accelerated in the time of rivalry between the Ottoman Empire and the

³⁵ Kavas, *Osmanlı-Afrika İlişkileri*, p.528.

³⁶ Cengiz Orhonlu, "Osmanlı-Bornu Münasebetine Âid Belgeler", *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, No. 23 (1969), p.120-121.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

³⁸ Kavas, *Osmanlı-Afrika İlişkileri*, p.528.

Portuguese that had been witnessed over the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, mainly in the 16th century. The Ottomans supported the Harar during the reign of Ahmed bin Ibrahim, also known as Ahmed Gran, who was the ruler between 1506-1543, against the Christian Ethiopian Empire, which was supported by the Portuguese.³⁹ Also, the Ottoman Empire continued to assist the Muslim ruler of the Harar against the Christian Ethiopian counterparts. Especially, the establishment of the Ottoman Habesh province by Ozdemir Pasha in 1555 was a significant factor in terms of continuity of the Sultanate of Harar.

The relations between the Ottomans and the Harar continued after the death of Ahmed Gran. It is seen that the Ottoman Empire tried to increase her influence in East Africa through Egypt against the activities of European colonial powers towards the end of the 19th century. In this framework, the Sultanate of Harar was attached to the Egypt Khedivate between the years of 1875-1884.⁴⁰ However, Egyptian officials reported to the Ottoman capital that the administration of Harar from Egypt was a costly and challenging task in terms of providing provisions and military assistance. Thereupon, it was decided that the administration of Harar was left to Abdullah Ali bin Muhammed, who was the son of the last emir of Harar in 1885.⁴¹ Then, the Sultanate was conquered by the Christian Ethiopian Empire. However, it is seen that the Ottoman relations with Harar proceeded in this period. Especially, the Ottoman Empire continued to show her interest to the people of Harar during the period of close relations between Sultan Abdulhamid II and Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II.⁴²

Permanent diplomatic missions were instituted between the Ottoman Empire and Ethiopia Empire in 1911 and Ahmed Mazhar Bey was sent to this region as a chargé d'affaires in 1913.⁴³ During his period, a committee was established to arbitrate

³⁹ Ibid., p.132.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.137.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.138.

⁴² Ibid., p.139.

⁴³ Ibid., p.144.

between local people. Also, a branch office of the Ottoman Red Crescent Association was founded in Harar. Additionally, Ahmed Mazhar Bey made efforts to ensure that Muslim children in Harar received an adequate education.⁴⁴ Thanks to his efforts, he became popular among local people. The relations between the Ottomans and the people of Harar proceeded until the end of the Ottoman Empire.

Relations of the Ottoman Empire with the regions located in Sub-Saharan Africa, were in the form of that the Muslims were living in these regions delivered their commitment to the Ottoman Caliphate in Istanbul. On the other hand, considering the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Zanzibar Sultanate, it can be said that it was one of that most intense and had repercussions on the international level. This sultanate, which was centered on the island of Zanzibar, attempted to build close relations with the Ottomans against British, French, and German colonial activities that accelerated in the 19th century. In the same period, it is seen that the Empire, which lost great prestige due to the defeat in 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian wars, tended to establish strong relations with Muslim population all around the world. Hence, the Ottomans contacted the Zanzibar Sultanate that was a local Muslim power in East Africa.

Despite the fact that the Ottoman presence in East Africa dated back to the 16th century, the first formal relations between the Empire and the Zanzibar Sultanate occurred towards the end of the 19th century.⁴⁵ It was the time of Sultan Abdulhamid II in the Ottoman Empire and Sultan Berkash in Zanzibar. In this period, Sultan Berkash went to Egypt to perform his duty of pilgrimage after returning from his Europe visit. Received this information, Sultan Abdulhamid II ordered Halid Pasha, the governor of Hecaz, to welcome Sultan Berkash and pay special attention to him. At the end of his journey, a *Mecidi Nishan* was also given to sultan Berkash. Thus, the mutual relations between these two countries affably started. Thereafter, there

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.145.

⁴⁵ Hatice Babavatan, "Understanding Afrika-i Osmani in the Late Ottoman Period: The Case of Zanzibar" (Master Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2003), p.73.

were mutual correspondences, sending gifts, and exchanging envoys between Abdulhamid II and Sultan Berkash.⁴⁶ On the other hand, it is seen that European powers, who followed a colonial policy in the region, got annoyed with the visits of Ottoman envoys. It is known that these visits took place in the European press and caused European states' criticism toward the Ottoman Empire.

Relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Zanzibar Sultanate proceeded at a high level. This situation can be observed in the form of telegraphs which were sent by Zanzibar to the Ottoman capital to inform the latter about the ruler changes in the Sultanate. Another sign that shows the high-level relations between these states is that the Friday khutbah was read on the name of the Ottoman Caliph. Moreover, the Sultan of Zanzibar paid a visit to the Ottoman capital in 1907.⁴⁷ Additionally, an office of the Ottoman Red Crescent Association was founded in Zanzibar in 1913.⁴⁸

Zanzibar was included in the borders of British colonial administration through an agreement that was signed between Britain and Germany in 1890 in the scramble era occurred after the Berlin West African Conference.⁴⁹ Its colonization was completed in 1913. However, the Ottoman Empire, who was aware of the European colonial powers' activities and its dangers for all Muslim world, continued her relations with the Zanzibar Sultanate at a high-level and followed developments closely.

Due to the geographical proximity with the provinces of the Ottoman Empire in North Africa, Morocco took place among the local powers that the Empire had established relations. The relations between these countries started in the reign of Sultan Suleiman I.⁵⁰ On the other hand, the main factor that determines the intensity

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.74.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.85.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.87.

⁴⁹ Ahmet Kavas, "Zengibar", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Accessed Date: July 10, 2020).

⁵⁰ Gökhan Yeşilmen, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Fas Siyaseti Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme", *Medeniyet ve Toplum Dergisi* 2, No. 2 (2018), p.109.

of these states' relations was the province of Algeria's tie with Morocco. In the beginning, it can be said that the rulers of Morocco did not like the Ottoman presence in the region due to it created political pressure on Morocco. As a response to this attitude of Moroccan rulers, the Empire tried to penetrate Morocco through intervening in the internal affairs of the state in terms of a succession dispute. Also, the institution of the caliphate was another element that caused tension between these states. However, by the succession of Sultan Muhammad III to the Morocco throne, it is seen that there was a softening in relations between these states. It is worthy to note that Morocco supported the Ottomans against Russia during the reign of Muhammad III. The Sultan Muhammad III warned European states which his country had commercial relations, not to ally with Russia against the Ottoman Empire.⁵¹

By the 19th century, the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Morocco thawed again because of increasing activities of European colonial powers, particularly France's, in the region. In particular, Sultan Abdulhamid II spent great efforts to strengthen relations between the Empire and Morocco in the framework of his Pan-Islamist ideology. In this context, Abdulhamid II sent envoys to Morocco.⁵² On the other hand, France was troubled by the Ottoman initiatives towards Morocco and attempted to prevent these. It is seen that the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Morocco continued at a lower level after Abdulhamid II was deposed. Eventually, the relations ended in 1912 after France established military rule in Morocco.

Songhai Empire was another local administration located at the southern border of the Ottoman Empire's Algerian province. This local power, also known as the Gao Empire, was founded in place of the Mali Empire. It's relations with the Ottoman Empire started during the reign of Murad III. Songhai Empire appealed to the

⁵¹ Ibid., p.113.

⁵² Ibid., p.115.

Ottoman assistance in its regional rivalry with Morocco and Bornu. In the end, Morocco became the dominant side and invaded Songhai in 1591.⁵³

On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire also had contacted with Sultanate of Agadez through her provinces in North Africa. The Empire developed relations with this sultanate, which still exist as a part of Niger, at the beginning of the 16th century. The Sultanate demanded support from the Ottomans against the colonial policies that France had followed in West Africa in the 19th century. However, due to conditions of the period, the Empire could not deliver support to the Sultanate of Agadez.⁵⁴

Another dimension of the ties that the Ottomans established in Africa was the relations with sects and tribes. In this regard, one of the prominent groups was the Sanusiyya⁵⁵. The emergence of this sect in the 19th century coincided with the Ottoman attempts in Africa to extend her influence over the region by utilizing her Muslim identity. The impact of the Sanusiyya on the Muslim population of the region, particularly on bedouins, was one of the factors that pushed the Ottomans to collaborate with them. The Sanusiyya approached positively to such cooperation with the Empire bearing the mind that it would be useful in terms of the unity of Muslims. In particular, the increasing activities of the European powers in Africa were one of the elements that intensify this cooperation.

To elaborate the point that the mutual relations between the Empire and the Sanusiyya reached, the *firman* that was declared by Sultan Abdulmecid in 1856 was a notable example. With this *firman*, the sect obtained some concessions like being exempt from some particular taxes. In addition to that, the scope of these concessions

⁵³ Kavas, *Osmanlı-Afrika İlişkileri*, p.524.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.524-525.

⁵⁵ The relations with sects and tribes were significant elements of the Sultan Abdulhamid II policy in Africa. One of the important components of this policy was the relations with Sanussiyya tribe. For detailed information on this topic please see, Ahmet Hilmi Şehbenderzade, *Senusiler ve Sultan Abdülhamid* (İstanbul: Ses Yayınları, 1992).

was extended through another *firman* that was issued during the reign of Sultan Abdulaziz.⁵⁶

Most notably, the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II can be considered as a period that the Ottoman-Sanusiyya relations increased in parallel to an increase in the European powers' activities in North and East Africa. The Ottoman failure to deploying soldiers to the region and, relatedly to the first one, the necessity for local authorities' assistance to defend the area were two main factors that lead to accelerating the relations during the period of Abdulhamid II. In this framework, it was important to note that Sultan Abdulhamid II sent Azmzade Sadik al-Mouayad to the Sanusiyya Sheikh as an envoy.⁵⁷ Besides, Abdulhamid II sent 250 holy books to distribute these people who lived in Benghazi.⁵⁸ It also should be noted that due to the collaboration between the Ottomans and Sanusiyya, Italians could not establish domination in Tripoli for a time, and this was only possible after the end of World War I.

Considering the relations that the Ottoman Empire established with local tribes, the ones who lived in the Great Sahara Desert that determines the south borders of the Ottoman North African provinces, attract attention. Among these, Tuaregs become prominent in terms of relations that they established with Ottomans. This tribe that generally centered in the middle and west part of the Sahara Desert were mainly divided into two groups as inhabitants of north and south. Also, it should be noted that the tribe has many sub-branches. It is seen that Azjer, which is one of Tuareg branches, was the group that has closest relations with the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Michel Le Gall, "The Ottoman Government and the Sanusiyya: A Reappraisal", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 21, No. 1 (1989), p.92.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 94-95.

⁵⁸ Ahmet Kavas, "SENÛSÎ, Muhammed Mehdi", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Accessed Date: July 10, 2020).

⁵⁹ Ahmet Kavas, "Büyük Sahra'da Gat Kazasının Kurulması ve Osmanlı-Tevarık Münasebetleri", *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, No. 3 (1999), p.173.

In fact, the period when Azjers approached the Empire encountered the internal clash, which the Azjers had with Hoggars, who is another Tuareg branch. On the other hand, Hoggars, who lived in the south of Algeria, also declared their loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan after the French attacked their regions in 1880 and 1881.⁶⁰ By 1880, it is seen that all Tuaregs entered under Ottoman rule through the establishment of Azjer Tuareg district, which was centered on Canet. Also, a qaimaqam was appointed to the district with a salary.⁶¹ It was a significant development in terms of illustrating the Ottoman influence over Tuaregs.

The relations between Ottomans and Tuaregs had particular significance in terms of the rivalry that the Empire had with France regarding the Sub-Saharan domination. In this sense, the Ottoman-Tuareg collaboration showed significant resistance against the French colonial activities in the region.

The Ottoman Empire also established relations with the Muslim population in the southern part of the continent. The first contacts between the Empire and these people were realized in the 1850s. In the era of Sultan Abdülmecid, a vice-consular was sent to Cape Town. This vice-consular was promoted to consular on October 6, 1852.⁶² Thus, it aimed to strengthen the relations with these people. As a result of these developments, the Ottoman relevancy towards the region increased. After Great Britain seized control of this region from the Dutches, the Muslim population living in this region that number almost reached 3 million, also came under British influence. Since these Muslim people were living away from the Muslim world, their religious knowledge remained inadequate. This situation led to the emergence of factionalism among this population, and the British administration was troubled with these developments. In addition to this, Southern African Muslim pilgrims realized that there were big differences between them and other Muslims in practice. For

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.189.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.192.

⁶² Arif Celal Özdemir, "II.Abdülhamid'in Afrika Siyaseti" (MA Thesis, Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi, 2017), p.64-65.

these reasons, this Muslim population appealed to the British Governor-general to provide religious scholar for them in 1861. Upon this demand, Britain transmitted this issue to the Ottoman administration through the Ottoman Embassy in London. In 1862, Sultan Abdülaziz sent religious scholar Ebubekir Efendi to South Africa with an assistant.⁶³ After Ebubekir Efendi died in 1880 in Cape Town, his eldest son Ahmed Ataullah Efendi maintained his father's mission. In 1884, Ataullah Efendi went to Kimberley, one of the inner cities in South Africa. Here, he was appointed as headmaster to the Ottoman school in this city.⁶⁴

The activities of Ebubekir Efendi and Ataullah Efendi made a significant contribution to the relations between the Ottoman Empire and South African Muslims. Hence, these people donated to the Hicaz Railway Project. Besides, many of these people applied to the Ottoman administration to join the Ottoman army voluntarily when the Italians invaded Tripoli in 1911.⁶⁵

The relations between the Empire and the Muslim population in South Africa continued in the era of Abdulhamid II. In this period, it is seen that there were three prominent provinces in South Africa. These were Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban. What is important in terms of the Ottoman relations with this region was that the Empire had consulates in these three cities. Among these, consulates in Johannesburg and Durban were activated in the Abdulhamid II era. Besides, the number of these consulates were increased in the same period. Thanks to activities of these consulates, it was started to read khutbah in mosques in these regions on behalf of Abdulhamid II. Again, many Muslim people living in these regions applied to consulates to become the Ottoman citizen.⁶⁶

⁶³ Ahmet Uçar, *140 Yıllık Miras Güney Afrika'da Osmanlılar* (İstanbul: Tez Yayınları, 2000), p.333-334.

⁶⁴ Tandoğan, *Afrika'da Sömürgecilik ve Osmanlı Siyaseti (1800-1922)*, p.129.

⁶⁵ Uçar, *Ibid.*, p.284-288.

⁶⁶ Tandoğan, *Ibid.*, p.119-120.

It is seen that the Ottoman Empire maintained relations after the Berlin West African Conference with the Muslims in the Central Africa. In this sense, the relations with Muslim population in Lagos came to prominent. In this region, although there were many Muslims, there was no mosque. One of the wealthy Muslims of the region, Mohammed Shitta decided to construct one. The construction was completed in 1894. Mohammed Shitta requested the Empire to send a representative for the inauguration ceremony of the mosque. Upon this request, Abdulhamid II sent a representative with gifts to attend the ceremony. Sultan also entitled Mohammed Shitta as “*bey*”.⁶⁷

The relations between the Ottoman Empire and the African Muslim population were maintained until the end of World War I. While the Empire fade from the scene due to the war, it left a four-hundred-year legacy in Africa. Considering this legacy, it can be said that the Empire was able to make itself evident in most parts of the continent. Even today, there are many Ottoman descent people living in different parts of the continent. For this reason, as tried to be explained throughout this chapter, the Ottoman Empire can be considered as an African state at the same time.

⁶⁷ Hazar, *Küreselleşme Sürecinde Afrika ve Afrika Türkiye İlişkileri*, p.137.

CHAPTER 3

THE BERLIN WEST AFRICAN CONFERENCE 1884-1885

The Berlin West African Conference was significant turning point in terms of the African history. In fact, considering the consequences led by the conference, it can be said that the conference was also important for Europe, as well. The roots of the conference, on the other hand, depend on colonialism that transformed in the 19th century.

Even though the roots of colonialism are dated back thousands of years ago, in a contemporary context, it refers to activities of European states, particularly in Africa, America, and Asia between the 16th and 20th centuries. The increasing accumulation of knowledge about the outside world thanks to the Age of Discovery, and economic and technological developments that emerged in continental Europe pave the way for colonization attempts in Africa. It is seen that this process accelerated, especially in the second half of the 19th century. This period also known as “*new imperialism*”. To elaborate on this point, it should be stated that only one-tenth of Africa had been colonized by European states in the 1870s, whereas this percentage reached to 90% in the time of the World was going into World War I.

It can be said that Africa is the continent that most severely affected by colonization. The Berlin West African Conference is one of the most important events in this process. In the conference, the partition of Africa was formalized. In this context, this chapter will first try to draw a general framework regarding the period before the conference. Thereafter, the 1884-85 Berlin Conference will be discussed in detail. Finally, this chapter will deal with the period of plunder in Africa after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885.

3.1. An Assessment of General Situation Before the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885

3.1.1. New Imperialism

The classical colonialism, which emerged by the geographical discoveries, transformed into a new form by the 19th century. The common idea at those times was that having a colony is a prerequisite of being a great power. That common belief can be observed in Belgian King Leopold II's expression, which is stating that '*since that history tells us that colonies, in fact, are the fundamental component of states' wealth and prosperity, therefore, we must obtain colonies for our own sake*'.⁶⁸ However, the period, which is called as *New Imperialism* or *New Colonialism* between 1870-1914, differentiated from classical colonialism in various ways. Primarily, it draws the attention that while the first period of colonialism was active in America and Asia, *New Imperialism* concentrated mainly in Africa. It is mainly because of that only Africa remained as uncolonized in those times.

When the reasons that led to colonialism in Africa are reviewed, it is seen that the main motive lies behind it, are economic developments in the 19th century. These developments can be evaluated under four distinct but interrelated categories.⁶⁹ Firstly, because of the rapid industrialization that Europe experienced throughout the 19th century, there was urgent need to raw materials. Secondly, as a result of mass production, new markets were needed to direct this surplus. The third motivation was a search for new investment opportunities available for capital surplus which emerged in Europe. Moreover, due to technological improvements in medicine and relatedly decreasing in child mortality, Europe experienced an increase in population. Thus, a need emerged for new settlement areas for overpopulation, which existed in Europe.

⁶⁸ Armaoğlu, *19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (1789-1914)*, p.417.

⁶⁹ Oral Sander, *Siyasi Tarih; İlkçağlardan 1918'e*, 25th ed. (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2013), p.226.

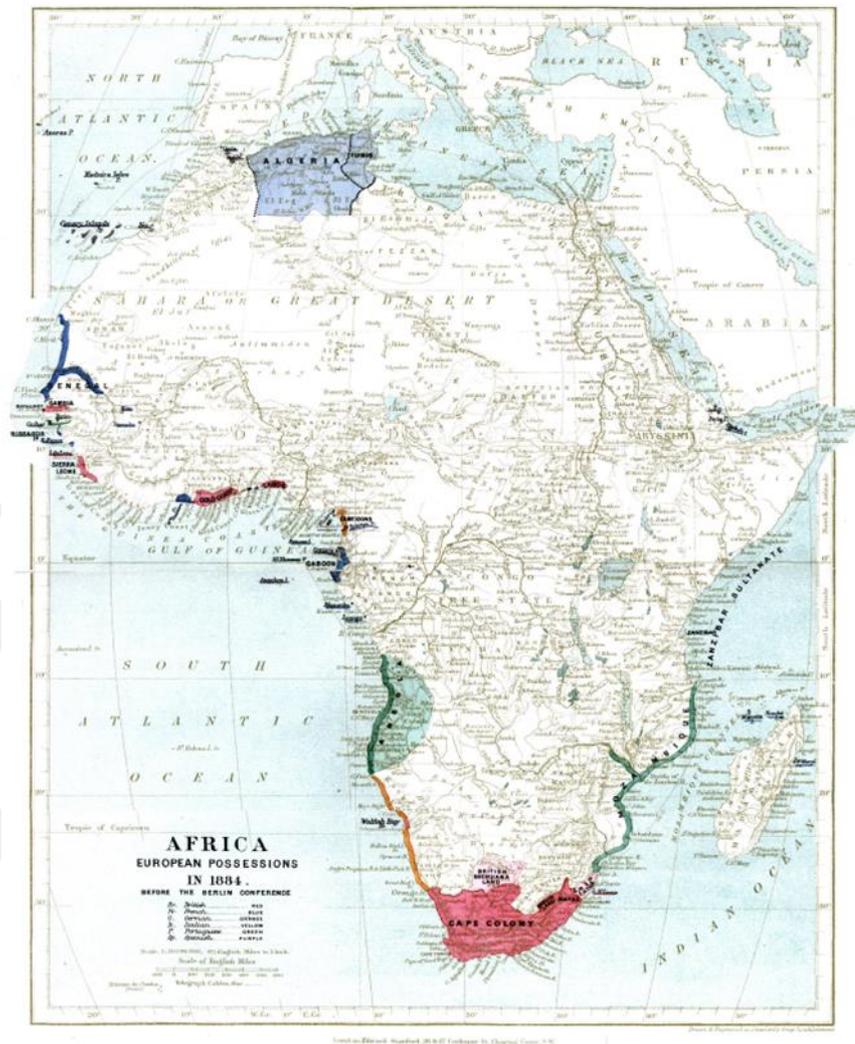


Figure 2. European Possessions in Africa before the 1884-1885 Berlin West African Conference
Source: J. Scott Keltie, *The Partition of Africa* (London: Edward Stanford, 1895), p.193.

The factors which have been mentioned above constitute economic motivations that explain the roots of colonialism, which is seen in Africa in the second half of the 19th century. On the other hand, it is a fact that these economic factors accompanied by political practices, as well. These political practices mainly based on the fact that due to the social and administrative systems were primitive in regions where economic investments were made, improvements need to be done in these areas. In addition to that, political practices also provided companies that had economic investments, a shield for protection from competition of other states' companies. Another

dimension is that the companies were able to operate appropriately in colonies thanks to these political practices.

Additionally, security concerns can be considered as another explanatory factor for colonialism in Africa. Especially, sabre rattling in Europe in the second half of the 19th century forced European states to obtain strategic advantages that colonies in Africa offered in terms of naval bases. In that period, security concern is a component that is particularly relevant for British colonialism. For Britain, it was a vital priority to protect its colonies rather than obtain new ones after the 1870s. In this sense, it can be argued that British settlements in Cyprus and Egypt in 1878 and 1882, respectively, aimed to protect British colonies in India.⁷⁰

New imperialism also distinguishes from classical colonialism in terms of its legitimization base. At this point, it is seen that the concept of “master race” was frequently used as a legitimization tool by European colonizers. From this perspective, Europeans had some responsibilities both in cultural and moral meaning to develop and educate these so-called primitive populations of Africa. This understanding can be observed in one of the prominent actors who pioneered European colonialism in Africa, David Livingstone⁷¹'s concept of 3c which stands for *Christianity, Commerce, and Civilization*. These three elements constituted the main legitimization point of European colonialism in Africa in the late 19th century.

It is seen that the race for colonies in Africa gained momentum towards the end of the 19th century by the emergence of the new imperialism. During this period, European states had been more active in this part of the world. For this reason, it will be useful to emphasize on policies of European states over Africa and circumstances of the period in the international area, in order to shed light on the long way to the halls of Berlin at the end of 1884.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.228.

⁷¹ David Livingstone was a Scottish missionary and European explorers of Africa, who opening up the interior of the continent through his expeditions between 1849 and 1864. For details please see, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/livingstone_david.shtml (Accessed Date: August 18, 2020)

3.1.2. Policies of Participant States Towards Africa

Due to the reasons which were mentioned in the previous section, many European states directed their routes to Africa in the 19th century. This competition between states on the African continent led to these actors to come together at the end of the century and hold a conference where the rules of the race in Africa would be determined. Nevertheless, in order to understand the Berlin Conference process and its results accurately, it is important to have a comprehensive overview of the situation of the actors, which participated to the conference, in the 19th century.

One of the prominent actors who took part in the conference was Great Britain. It is seen that the domination over seas that Spain, Portugal, and Dutch had in the 15th and 16th centuries, passed to Britain towards the end of the 18th century. Due to its geographical position, Britain did not need to invest in land armies heavily. Instead, it directed this amount to the navy, and this situation made Britain a dominant power in seas. Through its powerful navy, Britain defeated Spain in the War of the Spanish Succession, 1701-1714. Consequently, it managed to possess some strategic points and became effective power in the Mediterranean. In addition to that, Britain vanquished France, which was another rival in continental Europe. Britain captured French colonies in India in virtue of this triumph.

On the other hand, the emergence of the industrial revolution in Britain raised it to a pioneering position in the profound transformation that Europe had gone through. Also, it should be noted that Britain was in a powerful position economically, as well, and had economic ties with the large part of the world.

Considering the British expansion in Africa, it is seen that it headed to the south of the continent in the early years of the 19th century. In this direction, it took Cape Colony in the south end of Africa from Dutch in 1815. Then, it banished the Boer population to the north and annexed Orange lands in 1848. Britain continued to advance and subjugated the Transvaal region in 1877.

Another event that attracted British attention to Africa was the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. In fact, this event increased the significance of the Mediterranean and Northeast Africa in British politics. Therefore, with the purpose of protecting its Indian colonies, Britain occupied Egypt, which had strategic importance in this sense, in 1882. After that, the capture of lands that remained between the Suez Canal and Cape of Good Hope by proceeding towards the south became one of the main priorities of British politics in terms of the security of its colonies.

Britain, which had vital interests in Africa, closely followed developments in this continent in both to protect its interests, and hope of gaining new advantages. The leading position that Britain had in world politics was also an important factor that pushes the country to participate in every international convention and get involved in every international issue. Hence, it was not an unexpected situation that Great Britain took place among the countries which participated in the Berlin Conference.

France was another effective actor in the colonial race in Africa. The country which had to struggle with internal issues that erupted after the French Revolution in 1789, reached a relatively stable period in the time of Napoleon. Apart from the 1789 Revolution, the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848, which emerged in the first half of the 19th century, severely affected France as much as it did in Europe. Because of the series of events, also known as the February Revolution, King Louis Philippe abdicated the throne in favor of his son in 1848. Subsequently, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte became the president as a result of elections, and the Third Republic started in France.⁷²

It is seen that France participated in a series of wars during the 19th century. For instance, it sided with the Ottoman Empire, in addition to Britain, in the Crimean War and defeated the Russian army. Afterwards, the French army defeated the Austria-Hungary Empire in 1859. However, it lost the struggle against Prussia in

⁷² Armaoğlu, *19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (1789-1914)*, p.136-138.

1870. Then, France directed its attention towards Africa and attempted to increase the number of its colonies in this region.

Considering the reasons that turned French eyes on Africa, it is seen that these were mainly divided into two categories. As applicable for other countries, economic developments that occurred in Europe after the Industrial Revolution played an immense role for the development of French colonialism in Africa. Additionally, there were also political motivations. By the 19th century, it can be said that there was no room for further French expansion in Europe. Therefore, Africa, particularly North Africa, became the next station for France. Furthermore, it can be argued that one of the motivations that lie behind the French colonialism in Africa was related to domestic politics. In this sense, it is seen that France used colonial expansion in Africa as a tool for distracting public opinion.

France arrived in Africa by sending troops to Algiers in 1830. However, it should be noted that the French army, which confronted heavy resistance, could maintain order only after 17 years. In this way, French expansion started in the coasts of North Africa. Then, it is seen that French enlargement advanced throughout the west sides of Africa. In this direction, France occupied Gaboon in 1839. It was followed by the annexation of Mauritania and Senegal in 1854. After a year, Guinea and Ivory Coast were included into the French colonies in Africa.⁷³ By 1881, France raised its effectiveness in North Africa by conquering Tunisia. Considering the French advancement in Africa, it can be claimed that the French expansion in Africa was realized in two directions. This expansion accelerated after the Berlin Conference of 1884-85.

It is known that among the participants of the Berlin Conference, Portugal was the earliest colonial power in Africa. Portugal set foot in Africa with the capture of

⁷³ Norman Dwight Harris, "French Colonial Expansion in West Africa, The Sudan, and the Sahara", *The American Political Science Review* 5, No.3 (1911), p.353-354.

Ceuta on the coast of Morocco in 1415.⁷⁴ Then, Bartolomeu Dias reached to coasts of Cape of Good Hope in 1486-87 through coasts of West Africa. Thanks to Dias' initiatives, Portugal was able to settle in West Africa and colonize Angola. Later, Vasco Da Gama took this one step further, passed over Good Hope, and arrived in India. This also brought new colonies to Portugal in eastern coasts of Africa.

Beginning from the 16th century, it is seen that Portugal lost its strength both in economically and politically. By the 19th century, Portugal was far from its prosperous days in a situation of complete economic stagnation. However, increasing the activities of Britain, France, and Germany in Africa resurrected Portugal, which was paralyzed. It, as the earliest colonial power of the continent, decided to involve in this race to get its piece of the pie. For this reason, Portugal, which accelerated its activities in Africa, attracted attention as one of the most active participants in the Berlin Conference.

Another state that participated in the conference was Belgium, one of the adolescent states of Europe. Even though Belgium was not an influential actor in European politics, it was the state which was most active and consequently most profitable at the conference. Until the 19th century, Belgium had remained under the rule of various major states. In the Vienna Congress of 1815, it was decided that Belgium and Dutch were united.⁷⁵ However, this unification did not last long. The 1830 Revolution, which acutely affected Europe, had profound effects in Belgium, as well. In Belgium, this revolution paved the way for the independence of the country through transformation into a national movement. As a result, Belgium became an independent state in 1831.

Belgium experienced many development attempts during the King Leopold II reign (1835-1909). Following the activities of European states in Africa carefully, Leopold II thought that Belgium should be in this race for its wealth and prosperity. In this

⁷⁴ Thomas Henriksen, "Portugal in Africa: A Noneconomic Interpretation", *African Studies Review* 16, No.3 (1973), p.406.

⁷⁵ Armaoğlu, *19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (1789-1914)*, p.118.

sense, he organized an international geographical conference in Brussel in 1876. However, the main purpose of this conference was to include Belgium in colonial activities in Africa.⁷⁶ The conference resulted with the establishment of International African Association, with Leopold II as its chairman.⁷⁷ It is seen that the Association then became vital for the Belgian colonial empire in Africa.

Besides the International African Association, Leopold II also established the International Association of the Congo (Comité d'Études du Haut-Congo) in 1879. Leopold II hired Henry Morton Stanley, whose expeditions in Africa attracted the attention of the king, to explore the Congo River basin through this association. King also directed him to make treaties with chiefs of indigenous tribes that effectively ceded their land to the Belgian Empire.⁷⁸ In this way, Belgium gained a vast amount of land through Stanley's initiatives in the region. As a matter of fact, at the end of the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, Belgium's lands in Africa would be 80 times bigger than the size of its territory.⁷⁹

It is interesting to note that Germany that led to the establishment of the Conference and hosted it could not provide its political unity until the mid of the 19th century. Before unification, Germany consisted of a group of smaller states and two major power, Austria and Prussia. In 1815, these smaller states in which their numbers exceeded over 200, were incorporated into the German Confederation by Congress of Vienna.⁸⁰ Then, the transformative forces which were brought by the 1848 revolutions, also affected these small states. While the 1848 revolutions had liberal characteristics in general, it led to the eruption of national unity movement all over

⁷⁶ Kevin C. Dunn, *Imagining the Congo*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.21.

⁷⁷ Sanford H. Bederman, "The 1876 Brussel Geographical Conference and the Charade of European Cooperation in African Exploration", *Terrae Incognitae* 21, No.1 (1989), p.71.

⁷⁸ Kevin C. Dunn, *Imagining the Congo*, p.21-22.

⁷⁹ Türkkaya Ataöv, *Afrika Ulusal Kurtuluş Mücadeleleri* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 1977), p.416.

⁸⁰ Stephen J. Lee, *Aspects of European History, 1789-1980*, Reprinted ed. (London: Routledge, 2001), p.56.

Germany. Besides, another historic moment on the road to unity of Germany is that Bismarck became Prussian prime minister in 1861.

It is an undeniable fact that Bismarck occupied an important place for the unification of Germany. Embracing conditions of the period, Bismarck brought Germany in unification by adopting well planned, artfully policies. Bismarck, who was determined about the unity of Germany, did not refrain to appeal to every means to achieve this goal. This determination can be observed in his speech in 1862, which stated that “*Germany looks not to Prussia’s Liberalism, but to her power... The questions of the day will not be decided by speeches and majority decisions... but by blood and iron.*”⁸¹ In the same line, during the 1860s, Prussia fought with France, Austria, and Denmark. By 1871, defeating Napoleon III, Germany had been officially established by the Treaty of Frankfurt.⁸²

Considering the Germany’s policy regarding Africa, it is seen that Bismarck was not in favor of having colonies in Africa at the beginning. He expressed this situation in his speech in Reichstag in 1882 by stating that “*As long as I am Chancellor, we shan’t pursue a colonial policy*”.⁸³ However, Bismarck changed his mind about colonial policy in Africa later. It can be argued that three factors had been effective in this shift. These were mainly foreign policy, internal dynamics, and economic developments. In the sense of foreign policy, Bismarck used the colonial ambitions of his European rivals to adjust the balance of power in Europe in favor of Germany. This situation was supported by his well-known statement that “*my map of Africa lies in Europe*”.⁸⁴ In terms of internal dynamics, it can be said that while Bismarck did not support colonial policy, it was considerably popular among the public. In

⁸¹ Ibid., p.56.

⁸² Sander, *Siyasi Tarih; İlkçağlardan 1918’e*, p.221.

⁸³ Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, “Domestic Origins of Germany’s Colonial Expansion under Bismarck”, *The Past and Present Society*, No.42 (1969), p.146.

⁸⁴ William Osgood Aydolette, *Bismarck and British Colonial Policy: The Problem of South West Africa, 1883-1885*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974), p.21.

order to gain public support, Bismarck had to shift in his view on African politics. Once, he said “*all this colonial business is a sham, but we need it for the elections*”.⁸⁵

The last factor that forced Bismarck to shift his view on Africa was related to economic developments. Germany experienced industrial growth at an unexpected rate during the 1880s, and consequently, a market need emerged for its production surplus.⁸⁶ In addition to this, German merchants, like Lüderitz, who had business in Africa, pressured Bismarck to obtain official support in terms of their activities in Africa. There was also another pressure point, which aroused from explorers. In this sense, it is seen that various colonial societies were organized to make pressure over Bismarck to adopt a colonial policy. The *Kolonialverein* and the *Gesellschaft für Deutsche Kolonisation* which were established in 1882 and 1884 respectively, were two of the most important ones.⁸⁷ As it tried to be explained, Bismarck’s shift to a colonial policy arose from a mixture of various factors. After 1883, Germany first attempted to have colonies in East Africa. However, the weight of Germany in Africa would be felt particularly after the Berlin Conference of 1884-85.

Italy, another participant of the conference, was a country like Germany which could not establish its political unity by the time of the mid-19th century. Consisting of city-states, Italy had geographical meaning rather than referring to a political unit at that time. It is seen that these city-states change hands between Spain, the Austria-Hungary Empire, and France during the 17th and 18th centuries. In addition to providing united Germany, French defeat against Prussia in 1870 was the process that accelerates the unification of Italy, as well.

⁸⁵ Von Strandmann, “Domestic Origins of Germany’s Colonial Expansion under Bismarck”, p.146.

⁸⁶ William Osgood Aydolette, *Ibid.*, p.21.

⁸⁷ H. P. Meritt, “Bismarck and the German Interest in East Africa, 1884-1885”, *The Historical Journal* 21, No.1 (1978), p.97.

Piedmont Prime Minister Cavour, Mazzini, and Garibaldi were prominent actors in this process that led to the political unity of Italy.⁸⁸ In fact, Italy had established its political unity in 1861 except Venice and Rome. When Prussia defeated Austrian Empire in 1866, Italy took advantage of this opportunity and annexed Venice. Then, Italy became able to include Rome to its territory with the defeat of France against Prussia in 1870.⁸⁹ Thus, Italian political unity has been reached.

It can be mentioned about several elements that provoked Italian colonial policy in Africa. Firstly, as previously mentioned, having colonies was considered as a sign of being a major country in European politics. In this sense, Italy should follow colonial policy to join this league. Also, colonial policy was a factor that provides national unity, and newly created Italy desperately needed it. As a matter of fact, an Italian statesman, Massimo d'Azeglio stressed this in his famously known statement "*We have made Italy. Now we must make Italians*". Another factor that shaped Italian colonial policy was that there, in fact, was no suitable area for Italian expansion in Europe. Consequently, this situation directed Italian colonialism to Africa.

Due to reasons which were mentioned above and geographical proximity, North Africa came forward as the best suitable region for Italian expansionist ambitions. Here, Italy firstly targeted Tunisia, but France occupied this place in 1881. Although Italy went to other European states to convince them to support its claims, it failed. This situation pushed Italy to make alliances. Considering that period's conditions, Germany was the best option. This alliance, later, would become important in terms of Italian participation in the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885.

The only participant out of Europe in the conference was the United States. Until that period, it is seen that this country did not get involved in issues related to the part of the world which beyond outside the American continent, which was called the "Old World". Despite this fact that, the United States took its part in the conference. At

⁸⁸ Lee, *Aspects of European History, 1789-1980*, p.49.

⁸⁹ Armaoğlu, *19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (1789-1914)*, p.297.

this point, it would be useful to look at the reasons that led to the US presence in Berlin. Firstly, the United States was the first country to recognize the International Association of the Congo. In this recognition, the relation between Belgian King Leopold II and Henry S. Sanford⁹⁰ was significant. While Sanford was serving in Brussels, he was well aware of the Leopold's interests in Central Africa. On the other hand, Leopold II considered to utilize from Sanford's connections in the United States to provide necessary support for the former's claim in Africa. Thanks to this web of relations, Leopold II appointed Sanford as one of the four committee members of the African International Association was formed in 1877.⁹¹ Secondly, from the American perspective, the administration considered the involvement in African affairs as a tool to promote commerce which was seen as necessary to provide social and political stability in the country. For this reason, the main concern of the American delegation at the Berlin Conference was the protection of commerce. Correspondingly, one of the strongest reactions to the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1884 came from the United States. The third point that pushed America to participate in the Berlin Conference was that there were approximately 7,000,000 people of African descent living within the borders of the United States. In this context, it is important to note that the American people helped much to the establishment of the Free State of Liberia in West Africa by donating 3 million dollars to create homes for the 18,000 African descent people living in America, dispatched to settle there.⁹²

It can be said that among participants, two states attracted attention because they joined the conference although they had not colonial ambitions in Africa. Russia was one of these countries. Considering the Russian expansionism, it is seen that the

⁹⁰ Henry Shelton Sanford was American diplomat and businesspeople. Served as United States Minister to Belgium under the presidency of Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson. For detailed information please see Edward Meyer Lysle, "Henry Shelton Sanford and the Congo", (PhD dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1967).

⁹¹ G. Macharia Munene, "The United States and the Berlin Conference on the Partition of Africa, 1884-1885", *Transafrican Journal of History* 19, (1990), p.73-79;74.

⁹² Henry M. Stanley, *The Congo and the Founding of Its Free State*, p.382-383.

country had been active, especially in the 19th century, in Caucasia, the Balkans, and Asia. Most notably, it is a well-known fact that the ultimate goal of Russia was the Straits. In this framework, Russia assumed control in Caucasia in the mid-19th century first. Then, it tended towards the Central Asia. Also, Russia increased its effectiveness in the Balkans through the countries like Romania and Serbia that Russia contributed them to achieve their independence after the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War. It also should be noted that the Orthodox identity of Russia had an immense impact upon the emergence of Russian influence in the Balkans. Additionally, it should be stated that Russia had competed against Britain and Japan in the Far East through the end of the 19th century. In this context, it can be said that the main reason for the Russian participation in the Berlin Conference, despite it had no colonial policy regarding Africa, as mentioned previously, was that Russia had been considered among the great powers of the period.

Similar to Russia, another country that had been invited to the conference although it did not take place in the colonial race in Africa was the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During the 19th century, the Empire had to struggle with internal conflicts that were caused by nationalist movements originated from the French Revolution. 1848 Revolutions had also escalated uprisings in the Empire. Consequently, these incidents led Ferdinand I to abdicate the throne in favor of his nephew Franz Joseph. In the reign of Franz Joseph, who ruled between 1848-1916, protection of the Empire's integrity and expansion towards the Ottoman lands in the Balkans had been two main goals of the Empire. Indeed, the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War gave the opportunity that Austria-Hungary had looked for. On the other hand, it can be said that the Empire which had not any kind of colonial relation in Africa, was invited to the Berlin Conference just because of that it also had been accepted as one of great powers of the period, like Russia.

Among the participants, Norway-Sweden Kingdom was the most surprising one since it had never had colonial possessions or ambitions in Africa. There are mainly

three motives to explain that small Scandinavian country's participation.⁹³ First thing is about attempts to build close links of King Oscar, then-ruler of the Kingdom of Norway-Sweden, with Germany. When Bismarck sent invitation to him, he wired back his acceptance without delay. It also can be explained in a way that for a small Scandinavian kingdom, to being represented in such a high-level conference, almost all major powers of Europe participated, was an excellent opportunity to increase its prestige. Secondly, despite there were no major Swedish investments or commercial interests in the Congo at that time, South Africa had negligible importance to Swedish traders and shipping companies in the 1880s. In this sense, any international agreement that could affect the interests of Swedish merchants could not be overlooked by the kingdom. Lastly, Swedish ruling elite considered the Swedish participation to the conference as a moral obligation to contribute in the "noble mission" to spread Christianity and "civilization" in Africa.

Holland was another country that attended the conference. It had commercial relations in Africa and, up to the 1880s, successfully resisted the Portuguese claims relating the African coast at the mouth of the River Congo, collaboration with Britain. However, when Britain changed its position because of the French activities in Congo and inked the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1884, Dutch raised its voice against that treaty.⁹⁴ Its opposition to the treaty inherently made Holland one of the participants in the Berlin West African Conference. Therefore, it can be said that the Dutch presence in the conference arose from purely economic motivations.

⁹³ David Nilsson, "Sweden-Norway at the Berlin Conference 1884-1885", *Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Current African Issues* 53 (2013), p.33-36.

⁹⁴ H. L. Wesseling, "The Netherlands and the Partition of Africa", *The Journal of African History* 22, No. 4 (1981), p.495-509; 502.

3.1.3. Circumstances that Give a Path to the Conference

Despite the fact that the main reason on paper for the establishment of the Berlin Conference seems to be the opening of the Congo River to free trade when the developments before and after the conference are carefully examined from a broader perspective, it can be argued that the first cause was the dramatic increase in the race of European states to have colonies in Africa in the 19th century. During this period, two fundamental factors that spearheaded to colonization of Africa were expeditions made by Europeans to mapping the continent in detail, and concession agreements obtained from indigenous chiefs by companies of European states.

Before the 19th century, it is seen that the European states' settlements in Africa generally gathered on the coastline and could not advance into the interior of the continent. There are several factors to explain this situation. First of all, the dense vegetation of the continent made it difficult to move across through land towards the inlands of Africa. Besides, the structure of contemporary ships did not allow to advance by way of rivers, as well. Additionally, a common disease, malaria, which arouses from anopheles, had kept European explorers away from the inlands of the interior of the continent for a long time. However, through time, with developments in science and medicine, European explorers became able to cope with these problems and then had the opportunity to advance towards the inlands of the continent.

Also, it has been known that the primary factor that draws explorers' attention was to discover the resource of the Nile River. In line with this purpose, an Englishman, John Speke discovered Lake Victoria, also known as Lake Nyanza, in 1858 by following the Nile River towards the south. Another British Samuel Baker found Lake Albert in 1864 on the way that he set out for the same purpose. Yet, one of the most important figures for the discovery of the interior of Africa is David Livingstone. He discovered the Zambezi River in 1851 on the series of expeditions that he started in 1842 from East Africa. He proceeded his expeditions and reached to the Victoria Falls in 1855. Thus, these surveys of Livingstone in Africa brought an

unknown large part of the continent to the European public attention. Another important actor like Livingstone is Henry Morton Stanley. Like Livingstone, he discovered a mysterious part of Africa through his expeditions that he made between 1874-77. His missions attracted King Leopold II's attention, and the King induced him to work on behalf of Belgium in Africa.⁹⁵

In this framework, it is seen that European states' activities in Africa experienced an impressive increase in the 19th century. Indeed, while there had been only around 20 expeditions until 1850, 27 trips were made between 1851-1860. This number increased to 29 between 1861-1870. After, next decade witnessed 47 expeditions. The number of expeditions rose to 84 between 1881-1890.⁹⁶ By virtue of these expeditions, it has been possible to draw detailed maps of the interior of the African continent. Throughout these expeditions, it is seen that the most active countries were Great Britain, France, German, and Belgium.

Apart from these, it can be claimed that the most influential trigger that led to the establishment of the Berlin West African Conference was the antagonism between France and Great Britain. In fact, this antagonism dated back to the British invasion of Egypt in 1882. However, it stretched to Africa, as well. Italian origin French explorer De Brazza made many explorations, and signed concession treaties with local chiefs on behalf of France. In this way, France gained control over a large territory.⁹⁷ However, De Brazza was not the only men who were active in Africa. Henry Morton Stanley was another official who worked for King Leopold II of Belgium under king's agency in Africa, International Association of the Congo. Even it is doubtful, it is claimed that Stanley signed over 400 treaties with local chiefs.⁹⁸ This situation alarmed both Great Britain and Portugal.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.418-419.

⁹⁶ Ataöv, *Afrika Ulusal Kurtuluş Mücadeleri*, p.15.

⁹⁷ Sir Charles Lucas, *The Partition & Colonization of Africa* (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1922), p.80.

⁹⁸ Arthur Berriedale Keith, *The Belgian Congo and the Berlin Act* (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1919), p.49.

As mentioned before, Portugal is one of the oldest European colonial power in Africa. The Portuguese explorers discovered the mouth of the Congo River, and they had been active for a long time in this region. They even built a fort at Cabinda where was north of the mouth of the Congo, and had claims over this region. However, these claims were not accepted by France. This dispute was one of the protracted discussions between these two countries.⁹⁹ Failing to make France recognize its rights on the Congo, Portugal turned its face to Great Britain since there was always an intimacy between them. Britain also had some disputes with France over Africa. This dispute mainly arose from the dissolution of the Dutch hegemony over Atlantic trade. With it, France and Britain competed to inherit the remnants of the Dutch trade. Additionally, the emergence of the slave trade with Africa for their colonies in America was another point of contention between them. These circumstances brought Great Britain and Portugal closer. Between 1807-1810, these two states signed five treaties of alliances.¹⁰⁰ These treaties provided the recognition that Portugal had looked for in terms of its claims over the western littoral of Africa.

Among the treaties made between Great Britain and Portugal, the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty signed on February 26, 1884, is directly related to the establishment of the Berlin West African Conference. It can be said that this treaty was a direct consequence of the territorial acquisitions of Stanley and De Brazza. By this, Great Britain recognized to controversial Portuguese claims over the territories located between 5°12' and 8° south latitude. In return, Great Britain gained the most-favored-nation treatment, and British subjects benefited from low tariffs on imported goods.¹⁰¹ However, this treaty caused strong opposition not only internationally but also domestically. It was denounced by the boards of commerce of Manchester,

⁹⁹ Daniel De Leon, "The Conference at Berlin on the West-African Question", *Political Science Quarterly* 1, No.1 (March, 1886), p.103-139; 103.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.109.

¹⁰¹ Sybil Eyre Crowe, "The Scramble and the Berlin West African Conference" In *The Scramble for Africa: Causes and Dimensions of Empire*, ed. Raymond F. Betts (Massachusetts; D.C. Heath and Company, 1966), p.23-29;27.

Glasgow, Birmingham on the ground that the treaty harmed British trade.¹⁰² At the international level, France, Belgium, and Germany objected to the treaty. The French Government informed the Portuguese that they refused to accept the treaty on March 13. International Association of the Congo also considered it as a threat for its claims over the Congo region. Besides, German merchants objected to the treaty, as well. On June 7, 1884, Prince Bismarck wrote to his ambassador in Paris, Count Munster, about his objection to the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty as follows;

I do not think the Treaty has any chance of being universally recognized, even with the modifications which are therein proposed by Her Majesty's Government. We are not prepared to admit the previous rights of any of the Powers who are interested in the Congo trade as a basis for the negotiations. Trade and commerce have hitherto been free to all alike, without restriction. We cannot take part in any scheme for handing over the administration, or even the direction of their arrangement, to Portuguese officials. In the interests of German commerce, therefore, I cannot consent that a coast of such importance, which has hitherto been free land, should be subjected to the Portuguese colonial system.¹⁰³

This note of Bismarck is quite important in terms of comprehending the mentality of the Chancellor. Eventually, Prince Bismarck informed both Portugal and Great Britain of his refusal to accept the treaty.¹⁰⁴ Thus, the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1884 was not ratified.

On the other hand, as mentioned before, Bismarck had changed his mind about German colonial policy over Africa in 1883. Then, Germany started to search for colonies in some parts of the continent. In 1884, German colonies in Togoland and Cameroons were founded. However, the annexation of Angra Pequena, a small harbour located on the South-West coast of Africa, was a turning point in terms of the Anglo-German relations. At this point, the German and British interests over

¹⁰²; De Leon, "The Conference at Berlin on the West-African Question", p.125; Keith, *The Belgian Congo and the Berlin Act*, p.53; Henry Morton Stanley, *The Congo and the Founding of Its Free State*, Vol.1 (New York; Harper & Brothers, 1885), p.383.

¹⁰³ Stanley, *Ibid.*, p.384-385.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.53.

South-West Africa pitched against each other.¹⁰⁵ This anti-English policy is another explanatory force that shed light upon Bismarck's refusal of the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty.¹⁰⁶ Bismarck considered the dispute over West Africa as an opportunity to ensure German interests. After the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty was abandoned, Portugal presented a proposal for an international conference. However, it did not find much approval. Then, Prince Bismarck had taken this opportunity and appealed to France to establish such a conference.¹⁰⁷

It is evaluated that Bismarck had two primary goals by leading to the establishment of such a conference. Firstly, the German chancellor aimed to direct his European rivals' attention out of Europe by conducting such a conference. Thus, he would find a suitable atmosphere to implement his policies for German interests in this region. Secondly, by virtue of this conference, Bismarck would ensure the establishment of a system that fits his interests in West Africa. In this context, Germany arranged a program for an international conference in concert with France and issued formal invitations to governments of European states and the United States of America.

3.2. Process of the Berlin West African Conference

The first meeting of the Berlin West Africa Conference, which is the subject of the study, was held on November 15, 1884 upon the invitation of Germany. The place of the meeting is remarkable for the reason that it was the Chancellor Bismarck's residence on Wilhelmstrasse, where the famous Berlin Congress was held in 1878. Fourteen Powers sent representatives to the conference. The list of the representatives at the conference as follows: Germany; Otto von Bismarck, Count Paul Hatzfeldt, Dr. Auguste Busch, Herr de Kusserow, Austria-Hungary; Count

¹⁰⁵ John MacKenzie, *The Partition of Africa 1880-1900 and European Imperialism in the 19th Century* (London and New York; Methuen, 1983), p.22.

¹⁰⁶ Crowe, "The Scramble and the Berlin West African Conference", p.28.

¹⁰⁷ J. Scott Keltie, *The Partition of Africa* (London: Edward Stanford, 1895), p.146-147.

Emeric Szechenyi de Sarvari Felso-Videk, Belgium; Count Gabrel von der Straten Ponthos, Baron August Lambermont, Denmark; Emile de Vind, Spain; Count de Benomar, United States of America; John A. Kasson, Henry S. Sanford, France; Baron Alphonse de Courcel, Great Britain; Sir Edward Baldwin Malet, Italy; Count Edward de Launay, Holland; Philippe Frederic, Jonkheer Van der Hoeven, Portugal; Senhor da Serra Gomes, Marquis de Penafiel, Russia; Count Pierre Kapnist, Sweden-Norway; Baron Gillis Bildt, and the Ottoman Empire; Mehmed Said Pacha, Ohan Efendi.¹⁰⁸ When the conference protocols were examined, it is seen that Germany, France, Britain, United States, Portugal, and Italy, to some extent, were prominent figures who actively participated in the discussion during the conference sessions. On the other hand, it can be said that Russia, Austria-Hungary, Denmark, Sweden-Norway remained passive during the conference. Among them, Sweden-Norway and Denmark mostly were on Germany's trail. Besides, from the Ottoman perspective, which will be discussed in detail in the further part of the study as well, it can be said that the Empire actively participated in discussions that directly relevant to her interests.

Prince Bismarck rose to inaugurate the sitting of the conference and made a speech that delivers Kaiser Wilhelm's appreciation to the representatives for their participation.¹⁰⁹ In his speech, he alluded in general terms to the "high, beneficent, and pacific aims" of the conference and declared the three main goals of the conference. Firstly, the free navigation, with freedom of trade, on the River Congo; secondly, the free navigation of the River Niger, and thirdly the formalities to be observed for valid annexation of territory in future on the African continent. These three constituted the positive aims of the conference. As negatively, Bismarck declared that the conference would not engage in any discussion related to the

¹⁰⁸ Stanley, *The Congo and the founding of Its Free State*, p.391-392; *Afrika-i Garbi işlerine Dair Berlin'de Münakid Konferansın Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, (İstanbul: Matba'a-i Osmaniye, 1302), p.2-3.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.3.

present questions of sovereignty.¹¹⁰ Taking the floor after Prince Bismarck's speech, the Italian representative offered Bismarck to be elected as the chairman of the conference. This proposal of the Italian representative was unanimously accepted.¹¹¹

The British representative Sir Edward Malet expressed his satisfaction to see that the points declared by Prince Bismarck match his government's will.¹¹² Sir Malet stated that he accepts those points with one reservation. According to this, Britain accepted to extend the principles of free trade and navigation towards the Niger but stipulated that the surveillance over the execution of these principles not to be conceded to any international body. To his opinion, this privilege and duty should belong to his government, as one of the prominent powers on the Lower Niger.¹¹³ This reservation arose from the British interests over the region. British presence in this region had started long before the Congo Conference established. While Britain tried to preserve its dominance on the Lower Niger, it also would like to benefit from the extension of free trade and navigation towards this region. While the discussions regarding the implementation of the free trade and navigation principle to the River Niger were going in the conference plenary sittings, it is seen that Germany supported the British claims over the Niger to ensure free trade in the Congo in accordance with its design over this region.

Portugal was another country which tries to protect its right over the region like Britain. The Portuguese representative took the floor in the second session on November 19 and stated that his country had been spilling both money and blood for a long time in order to establish an order that would be in the interest of all nations in the region in question and stated that he accepted the 3 points targeted by the

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.9-12-13; Stanley, *The Congo and the founding of Its Free State*, p.393; "The Congo Conference", *New York Times*, 18 November 1884.

¹¹¹ The Conference at Berlin", *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 16 November 1884; *Afrika-i Garbi işlerine Dair Berlin'de Münakid Konferansın Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.3.

¹¹² Ibid., p.9.

¹¹³ Stanley, Ibid., p.393-394.

conference like Great Britain. Nonetheless, he expressed that his government does not have any intention to exact taxes, applied in other dominions in Africa, from Congo. However, he also stated that a convenient tax would be implemented to defray the required expenditures to ensure the security and freedom of people and imported goods.¹¹⁴

It can be understood from this Portuguese pleading that Portugal strove not to lose its dominance in Congo. The ultimate aim of Portugal was to control the River Congo alone as Britain desired in the River Niger. On the other hand, Portugal notified its acceptance of the free navigation principle as this principle fits the Portuguese interests. However, considering the final act of the conference, it is seen that the Portuguese desire to implement taxes over this region was not recognized by the participant states. As it is seen that both Britain and Portugal tried to protect their rights over the region by securing recognition for them in an international conference and ensure that the decisions taken at the conference were in their own interests.

Count Hatzfeld chaired the second session of the conference, as Prince Bismarck was unable to attend due to his illness.¹¹⁵ A pleading was presented by Germany in this session. In this pleading, it was stated that the boundaries of the Congo basin are not determined, and these boundaries should be determined for the labors of the conference to function properly. For this reason, it was proposed to establish a commission to determine the limits of the Congo basin. This offer was accepted, and the commission composed of representatives of Germany, Belgium, Spain, the United States of America, France, Great Britain, Holland, and Portugal was established. French delegate Baron de Courcel was elected to preside the commission.¹¹⁶ At first, the commission determined the boundaries of the Congo basin to cover the basins of the Niari, Ogowe, Shari, and Nile systems in the north,

¹¹⁴ *Afrika-i Garbi işlerine Dair Berlin'de Münakid Konferansın Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.19-21; "The Congo Conference", *New York Times*, 18 November 1884.

¹¹⁵ *Afrika-i Garbi işlerine Dair Berlin'de Münakid Konferansın Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.18.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.28; Stanley, *The Congo and the founding of Its Free State*, p.394; "Events Beyond the Sea", *New York Times*, 20 November 1884.

the area up to the Lake Tanganyika basin in the east, and the Zambezi River and Loge basins in the south. But then, the US, German, French and Dutch representatives delivered their wish regarding to extending the free trade area.¹¹⁷ After long negotiations, the commission reached an agreement on the final form of the Congo basin. As indicated in the figure¹¹⁸ below, it was from the mouth of the River Loge to 2° 30' South Latitude along the Atlantic coast to the mouth of the Loge, and from the seacoast from 5° Northern Latitude to and inclusive of the Lower Zambezi.

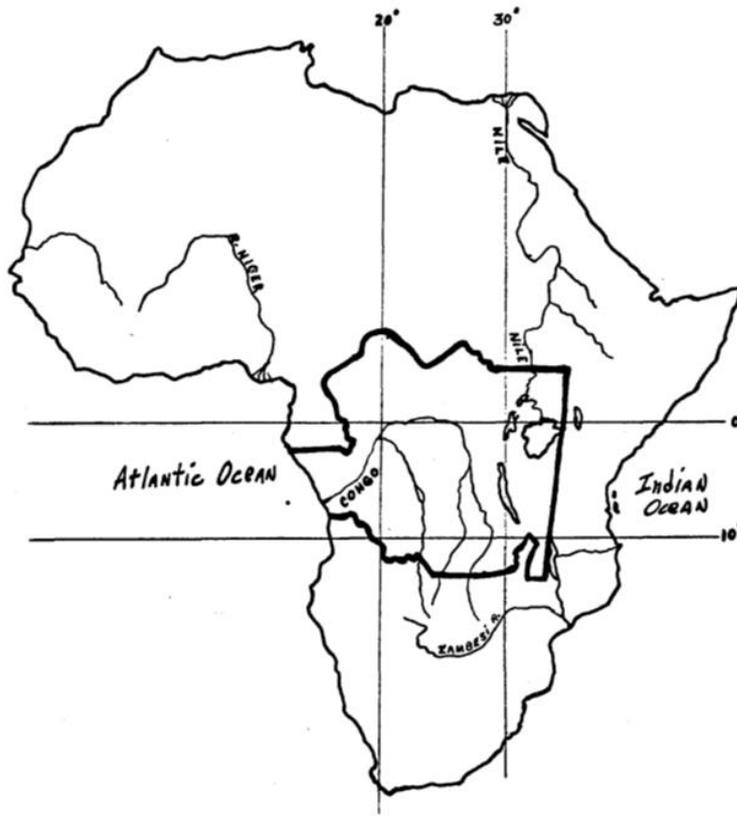


Figure 3. *The Conventional Basin of the Congo as Defined by the Berlin Conference*
Source: Edward Meyer Lysle, "Henry Shelton Sanford and the Congo" (PhD dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1967), p.133.

¹¹⁷ *Afrika-i Garbi işlerine Dair Berlin'de Münakid Konferansın Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.55-57.

¹¹⁸ Edward Meyer Lysle, "Henry Shelton Sanford and the Congo", p.133.

Consequently, a report prepared as a result of the commission's work proposed that the freedom of trade be extended towards the Indian Ocean in a way that protecting the existing sovereignty rights.¹¹⁹ This report was brought up for discussion in the third session of the conference on November 27. As a result of the negotiations, all others except the Ottoman and Dutch representatives accepted the borders of the Congo Basin as presented in the report of the commission.¹²⁰

Along with the determination of the limits of the Congo basin, it was also decided that an International Navigation Commission was established to ensure facilities of navigation on the Congo. Besides, it was regulated that only certain and sufficient amount of fixed navigation dues were to be charged and the amount of that due could be revised at the end of five years.¹²¹ Here, it should be stated that the Congo basin determined in the conference covers a wider region than the geographical basin of the Congo. It can be said that the initiatives of the US delegation were effective in emergence of this situation. One of the American representative John Kasson reported this as '*we have vastly increased the territory to be included, embracing all equatorial Africa, from ocean to ocean.*'¹²² Given the fact that the main motivation of the United States participation in the conference was to protect its commercial rights, it can be evaluated that this country realized its desire. Apart from the United States, it can be stated that Germany, France, and Britain would like to exploit the conference as a tool to maximize their earnings in Africa by extending the limits of the Congo basin.

Another issue discussed in the conference was the formalities to be observed for valid annexation of territory in the future on the coasts of Africa. Formerly, any form

¹¹⁹ Stanley, *The Congo and the founding of Its Free State*, p.395; "Trade of the Congo Country," *New York Times*, 25 Kasım 1884.

¹²⁰ *Afrika-i Garbi işlerine Dair Berlin'de Münakid Konferansın Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.38.

¹²¹ J. Scott Keltie, *The Partition of Africa*, p.209-210.

¹²² G. Macharia Munene, "The United States and the Berlin Conference on the Partition of Africa, 1884-1885", *Transafrican Journal of History* 19, (1990), p.73-79;74.

of symbolic occupation such as raising flag can be considered enough for claim of territory. With the adoption of this principle, it was recognized that the establishment of control and the continued maintenance of law and order be required for any future occupation of African territory to be valid. This issue firstly was handled in the seventh session of the conference on January 5, 1885 and decided to refer a commission to specify the details.¹²³ In this commission, German representative proposed a draft in terms of future annexations. To this, when one of the signatory powers occupies a new land on the African coast, it will be responsible for simultaneously notifying all other states participating in the conference; and the state receiving the notification will have the right to recognize or make counterclaims for this action. Besides, it was stated that states have to establish an adequate judicial system to maintain peace in the regions they occupied or took under their protection, and respect the conditions regarding the vested rights and freedom of trade, and transit guaranteed.¹²⁴

Britain requested that the conditions determined in the German proposal to be valid for the annexation of inland territory.¹²⁵ By this, it can be said that Britain aimed to increase its effectiveness in the inner part of the continent. However, the British offer was not accepted, and “*the effective occupation*” principle remained limited with the African coasts. After negotiations were completed, “*the effective occupation*” principle was adopted in the eighth session of the conference gathered on January 31, 1885.¹²⁶ With that principle, it was also adopted “*spheres of influence*” which would be a vital for the partition of Africa later. In fact, such regulation was made for the first time in any International Act. To this, any power, which had dominated a land on the coasts of Africa, had a priority in the interior of that land.

¹²³ Ibid., p.139.

¹²⁴ Stanley, *The Congo and the founding of Its Free State*, p.398; *Afrika-i Garbi işlerine Dair Berlin’de Münakid Konferansın Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.140.

¹²⁵ “West African Projects”, *New York Times*, 19 January 1885.

¹²⁶ *Afrika-i Garbi işlerine Dair Berlin’de Münakid Konferansın Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.144.

During the conference, there were also efforts to provide neutrality in the Congo basin in the time of warfare. It was because of that participant states were afraid that prospective disagreements between states in terms of the partitioning of unoccupied territories in Africa would turn into a war. In this context, the British representative Edward Malet proposed a neutrality plan. To this plan, the River Congo and Niger and its tributaries and their 5 km inner parts would be accessible to merchant ships except for the ones loaded with ammunition in the time of warfare.¹²⁷ Besides, it would also be forbidden to provide coal to warships.¹²⁸ France made an offer in this way, as well. Here, it can be claimed that the British and French proposals aim to protect these countries' possessions in Africa in wartime.

On the other hand, it was the American proposal which received broad acceptance. This plan suggested that participating states would treat their possessions as non-belligerent states, and commerce in this region would not be interrupted in times of war.¹²⁹ That neutrality draft prioritized to maintain commerce in Africa under any circumstances. As mentioned before, the main motivation of the United States to be in the conference was purely commercial interests. In this sense, it can be said that the American plan proved it once again. Besides, Germany supported the American plan, as well. In this context, it can be speculated that there was a cooperation between Germany and the United States since their interests were overlapped. In the neutrality discussion, it is seen that although they were rivals throughout the conference, Britain, and France were on the same side.

Along with the points declared by Prince Bismarck at the first session, there were also other issues discussed in the conference. One of these was the proposal offered by the delegation of the United States of America to construct a railway. According

¹²⁷ "The Control of the Congo," *New York Times*, 10 Aralık 1884.

¹²⁸ *Afrika-i Garbi işlerine Dair Berlin'de Münakid Konferansın Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.104.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.132; G. Macharia Munene, "The United States and the Berlin Conference on the Partition of Africa, 1884-1885", p.77.

to this offer made by Henry Sanford and John Kasson¹³⁰, it was thought that construction of a railway from Vivi to Stanley Pool to ensure the safe and cheaper transportation of people and imported goods.¹³¹ This proposal was also another reflection of the United States' aim to secure commercial interests through the conference. However, since the cost of such a project was too high, and no state would like to cover expenses, that offer did not attract enough attention, and the American representative Sanford withdrew his proposal in the ninth session on February 23, 1885.¹³²

During the negotiations, the prohibition of alcohol imports to the Congo basin was another topic discussed by the conference. British representative Sir Edward Malet proposed to ban the alcohol trade in this region in the fifth session.¹³³ Although the representatives of Holland, France, and Germany initially opposed this offer of the British representative, all the countries participating in the conference reached an agreement to restrict the alcohol trade in this region.¹³⁴

The abolishment of slavery and slave trade was another issue that the conference dealt with. In fact, this issue was discussed in the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and although some decisions were taken, an effective solution could not be reached. The issue was once again brought to the agenda of the Berlin West African Conference with the British representative Sir Edward Malet's proposal for the complete abolition of the slave trade. All representatives at the conference participated in this

¹³⁰ An American politician from Iowa region who served as minister to Vienna and Berlin under the presidency of Hayes and Chester Arthur. He is best known as supporter of White supremacy United States of America. Also, he actively involved in African affairs in the politics of the United States. For a detailed information please see John A. Kasson, "An Autobiography", *The Annals of Iowa* 12, No.5 (1920), p.346-358.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p.46.

¹³² "The Congo Acte Ready", *New York Times*, 24 February 1885.

¹³³ *Afrika-i Garbi işlerine Dair Berlin'de Münakid Konferansın Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.107.

¹³⁴ "The Congo Conference", *New York Times*, 20 December 1884.

proposal without any reservation, and the declaration was adopted. The declaration stated that

Each of the Powers exercising sovereign rights of influence in the regions forming the conventionally established Congo basin declare that these regions shall not be used as markets or routes of transit for the trade in slaves, no matter of what race. Each of these Powers binds itself to use all the means at its disposal to put an end to this trade and to punish those engaged in it.¹³⁵

The recognition of the International Association of the Congo was an issue that did not reflect in the conference sessions but is one of the most important results of the Berlin West African Conference in terms of the future of the African continent. The Association was firstly recognized by the United States of America in April 1884 before starting the Berlin West African Conference. On November 8, 1884, a week before the conference, Germany was the second state which recognizes the Congo Association.¹³⁶ However, it can be said that the Berlin West African Conference was a landmark in terms of the future of the Association. By virtue of this conference, the International Association of the Congo was recognized by all powers. It is seen that Prince Bismarck was very effective in the recognition process. The United States also supported this recognition. In this, it can be said that both Germany and United States had similar motivations to support this recognition process. From the German perspective, the recognition of the Association as an independent body over Congo was much preferable rather than prospective British or French hegemony in this region. On the other hand, United States favored the Association in terms of securing free commercial activities in the region. By recognizing the Association as a sovereign body, it was thought that commercial activities would be secured without any interruption.

On the other hand, the French administration was not comfortable with the emerging position of the Association and opposed to recognize it. Portugal thought the same, as well. Particularly in terms of the Portuguese interests, the emergence of the

¹³⁵ Stanley, *The Congo and the founding of Its Free State*, p.398.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.396.

Association as an independent body was completely against the Portuguese claims over the region. Britain was another state resisted to reach any agreement with the Association. However, as a result of Bismarck's attempts, first Britain on December 1884, and then France on February 1885 signed a treaty with the International Association.¹³⁷ Even though Portugal resisted not concluding any treaty with the Association, it eventually recognized the Association through the mediation of Britain, France, and Germany. By virtue of these agreements, The Association renounced to France 60,366 square miles, and to Portugal 45,400 square miles of soil, but in return, it acquired these countries' goodwill and 600 miles of territory located on the north bank of the Congo, which meant that the Association had obtained an outlet by sea.¹³⁸

Among the countries participating in the conference, the Ottoman State was the only country that did not sign an agreement with the International Congo Association while the Berlin Conference was ongoing.¹³⁹ The Ottoman representative Said Pasha stated in the ninth session of the conference on February 23, 1885 that he could not sign an agreement with the Congo Association without obtaining instruction from the Ottoman administration on this issue.¹⁴⁰ However, it should be noted that the Empire concluded recognition treaty with the Association after the conference. To this agreement, the Empire was granted most favored nation principle as in agreements that the Association concluded with other states.¹⁴¹ In practice, the only matter that the Empire gained with this agreement was to right to establish consulates in Congo soils and ensure the protection of the rights of Muslim population living in this region.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p.400.

¹³⁸ Arthur Berriedale Keith, *The Belgian Congo and the Berlin Act*, p.64.

¹³⁹ "The Congo Acte Ready", *New York Times*, 24 February 1885; Keith, *The Belgian Congo and the Berlin Act*, p.62.

¹⁴⁰ *Afrika-i Garbi işlerine Dair Berlin'de Münakid Konferansın Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.161.

¹⁴¹ Gücüm, *1884-1885 Berlin Konferansı ve Kongo Örneği*, p.82.

The last session of the conference gathered on February 26, 1885, under the presidency of Chancellor Bismarck. He gave a closing speech. In his speech, he expressed his appreciation for the representatives of the conference to reach an agreement on the determined issues, and conveyed his thanks to the participants.¹⁴² Bismarck also announced that the International Congo Association agrees to adhere to the conference's decisions.¹⁴³ Afterward, the conference ended with the signing of The General Act of the Berlin West African Conference by the delegations. It comprised of six main sections. First one focused on liberty of commerce in the Congo basin. Second session was about suppression of slavery and slave trade. Third part covers neutrality of the Congo. Fourth and fifth sections dealt with navigation on the Congo and Niger rivers respectively and finally sixth regulated the rules of effective occupation. The General Act had to be ratified by the participating states for it to take effect. That ratification procedures were completed in a year and all power gave their adhesion to the act with one exception. Despite the fact that the United States delegation signed the General Act at the last session of the conference, because of changing circumstances in internal politics and its impacts on the US' foreign policy, the United States did not ratify it.¹⁴⁴

Another thing that can be said about the conference is that although the conference gathered to discuss issues related to African affairs, any African representative did not take part in the sessions. This is quite important to show Europeans' approach to the continent and its inhabitants. African kingdoms and sultanates, and local people were considered null and void (*res nullius*) by European powers. Their soils, on the other hand, were accepted as no man's land. However, the Berlin West African Conference caused some reactions among African people, as well.¹⁴⁵ Broadly, while

¹⁴² Ibid., p.179-180.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.183; "The Congo Conference Closed," *New York Times*, 27 Şubat 1885.

¹⁴⁴ For detailed information please see John A. Kasson, "The Congo Conference and the President's Message", *The North American Review* 142, No. 351 (February 1886), p.119-133.

¹⁴⁵ For detailed information about the reactions of African people regarding the conference please see Gürsoy Şahin, "Afrika'nın Sömürgeleştirilme Sürecinde Berlin Konferansı (1884-1885) ve Afrika

there were people who support the conference and its consequences, some others heavily criticized it. The first group found the conference favourable mainly because the conference agreed to abandon slave trade. Besides, it was thought that the outcomes of the conference would contribute to improving prosperity in the region. The second group, on the other hand, strongly opposed the conference because they thought that the conference promoted colonialism in the continent. This is quite important in terms of seeing that anti-colonial approaches started to emerge within African public opinion.

3.3. The Plunder of Africa After the Berlin West African Conference

After the Berlin West African Conference, European states' activities in Africa gained tremendous momentum, and almost the whole continent was colonized in about 20 years. Once the General Act of the Berlin West African Conference was examined, it is seen 34th, and 35th articles became prominent in terms of the partition of Africa. In those articles, it was agreed that any power that takes possession of territory on the coasts of Africa would have precedence for the inner parts of these possessions. However, to become sovereign in those inner parts, the effective occupation must be implemented, and signatory states must be informed through diplomatic correspondence.¹⁴⁶

Basımına Yansımaları”, *History Studies* 10, No.1 (February 2018), p.247-268. In this article, Şahin focuses on the African press to examine the conference’s reflection within the African community.

¹⁴⁶ *Afrika-i Garbi işlerine Dair Berlin’de Münakid Konferansın Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.206-207.

Despite the fact that the coasts of Africa were under occupation in general, hinterland regions had not been seized yet. For this reason, European states immediately attempted to penetrate the inner parts of the continent. In terms of the African partition after the Berlin West African Conference, Great Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, and Belgium were prominent actors. After the conference, these states signed various agreements with each other in order to prevent possible conflicts that could be caused by the colonial race in Africa. For instance, Great Britain signed 30 of these border agreements with Portugal, 25 with Germany, and 149 with France.¹⁴⁷



Figure 4. Map illustrating the participation of Africa after the Berlin West African Conference
Source: Ward, Prothero, and Leathes, *The Cambridge Modern History Atlas* (New York: The Macmillian Company), downloaded from *Maps ETC*, on the web at <http://etc.usf.edu/maps> [map

¹⁴⁷ Marc Ferro, *Colonization: A Global History* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.72.

The first of these agreements was signed between Great Britain and Germany in 1886 to resolve the issue over Zanzibar's dominance. By this agreement, it was agreed that the Sultan of Zanzibar's claims over the mainland were limited to a 10-mile-wide coastal strip, and Britain and Germany divided the hinterland of Zanzibar between them as spheres of influence. South of this region, later, became known as German East Africa.¹⁴⁸ Another treaty was inked between these two countries in 1890. Based on that treaty, the German dominions in Uganda and Zanzibar were left to the British control. It can be possible to say that Britain made a profit by this agreement. However, the aim of Bismarck was to gain the support of the British for their European interests rather than making a profitable deal.¹⁴⁹

The Anglo-German Treaty of 1890 disturbed France. In the pretext of this agreement, France searched for ways to make a new deal with Britain. Britain, on the other hand, aimed to guarantee its rights, which gained through the German agreement of 1890 by signing an agreement with France. For this reason, Britain did not resist the French demands to enter into negotiations. During the negotiations, the delimitation of Algeria's hinterland became the primary issue. Eventually, France and Britain came to an agreement on August 4, 1890.

By this agreement, France realized its ambitions regarding Algeria's hinterland. Thus, a wide-range sphere of influence was given to this country. That Anglo-French agreement led to negative consequences for the Ottoman interests in the region. In the ongoing process, the issue between France and the Ottoman Empire regarding the Sahara region became prominent.¹⁵⁰ Also, France acquired freedom of action over Madagascar. Here it should be stated that although France did not have any territorial interests on the eastern side of Africa, it was always interested in Madagascar. By this agreement, French claims over this place were recognized by Great Britain. In

¹⁴⁸ John Mackenzie, *The Partition of Africa 1880-1900 and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*, p.29.

¹⁴⁹ Ferro, *Ibid.*, p.73.

¹⁵⁰ Abdurrahman Çaycı, *Büyük Sahra'da Türk-Fransız Rekabeti (1858-1911)*, p.83.

this case, it is seen that hinterland principle was implemented in its widest sense in favor of France.¹⁵¹

As indicated previously, before the Berlin West African Conference, France had already occupied Algeria, Tunisia, and Gabon in 1830, 1881, and 1882, respectively. Once the conference ended, France directed its attention towards Sudan and occupied this region in 1890. Then, it captured Cenne and Timbuktu – located in today’s Mali – in 1893. France also colonized the Lake Chad basin in 1900. In the ongoing process, France managed to unite all its colonies under the name of French West Africa.¹⁵² Thus, this state was able to maintain control over a large piece of territory in Africa.

The effective occupation principle, determined by the General Act of the Berlin West African Conference, accelerated the British activities in Africa, as well. As mentioned previously, Britain had pursued a policy regarding connecting its colonies in different parts of the continent after the conference. In this sense, it primarily took action to capture the coasts of Africa. Britain first started to expand its territories in South Africa towards the north and center of the continent. Between 1885-1895, Britain occupied Zimbabwe, Malawi, Kenya, and Uganda. Then, South Sudan was included in the British possessions in 1896.¹⁵³ Also, Zambia was taken under British rule between 1888 and 1889 through the British South Africa Company, which was founded by Cecil Rhodes.¹⁵⁴ By these occupations, Britain had reached its ambition of linking its possessions in the continent. On the other hand, it should be noted that the partition of Africa did not always happen peacefully. In this sense, it is seen that European powers came face to face in Africa occasionally. In such an event, Britain

¹⁵¹ Sir Charles Lucas, *The Partition & Colonization of Africa*, p.92.

¹⁵² Ataöv, *Afrika Ulusal Kurtuluş Mücadeleleri*, p.20.

¹⁵³ Ataöv, *Afrika Ulusal Kurtuluş Mücadeleleri*, p.16-19.

¹⁵⁴ Cecil Rhodes was a British businessman, founder of British South Africa. His activities contributed a lot to colonize South Africa by Britain. Therefore, he became prime minister of the British Cape Colony between 1890-96. <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofEngland/Cecil-Rhodes/> (Accessed Date: December 20, 2020).

and France came on the brink of conflict. During both countries' advancement in Africa, it is seen that France planned to reach Djibouti through the Upper Nile Valley. On the other hand, Britain was calculating to link Cape with Cairo. At this point, both states' troops coincided in Fashoda¹⁵⁵ in 1898. Both commanders planted their states' flags in the city. As a result of intensive diplomatic efforts exchanged between France and Great Britain, a presumptive armed conflict was prevented.¹⁵⁶

As the main organizer and active participant of the Berlin West African Conference, Germany attempted to increase the number of its colonies after the conference. Starting in having colonies by occupying Togo and Cameroon just before the conference. Thus, the German South-West Africa Protectorate was established.¹⁵⁷ Then, Germany took Tanganyika, Ruanda, and Burundi. Then, these territories were merged under the name of German East Africa.¹⁵⁸ By the Anglo-German Treaty of 1890, German East Africa took control of small land, known as the Caprivi Strip, which had great importance for Germany as giving them access to the Zambezi.¹⁵⁹ Thus, Germany became the holder of vast land in Africa in a short time after its unity.

It can be undoubtedly said that Belgium got the best of the Berlin West African Conference. During the conference, the International Association of the Congo, founded by Belgian King Leopold II, obtained recognition agreements from participant states. Thus, The Association's control over the Congo basin was internationally recognized. After the conference, the Association turned into the Congo Free State, as Leopold II its president in 1885.¹⁶⁰ Between 1885-1908, it was

¹⁵⁵ It was a city which known as Kodok in South Sudan.

¹⁵⁶ Robin Brooke-Smith, *The Scramble for Africa* (London: Macmillian Education, 1987), p.87; Fahir Armaoğlu, *19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi*, p.423-426.

¹⁵⁷ J. Scott Keltie, *The Partition of Africa*, p.314-315.

¹⁵⁸ Ataöv, *Afrika Ulusal Kurtuluş Mücadeleleri.*, p.22.

¹⁵⁹ Sir Charles Lucas, *Ibid.*, p.93.

¹⁶⁰ Arthur Berriedale Keith, *The Belgian Congo and the Berlin Act*, p.65.

witnessed one of the cruelest histories of humanity in Congo. This region was a repository in terms of natural resources such as rubber. Because of the increasing demand of tire in parallel to increasing automobile sales, rubber became significant trade asset. Therefore, Congolese farmers were forced to work for long hours at plantation sites. They were tortured and killed if they refused to work. It has been estimated that approximately 10 million people were killed during this period.¹⁶¹ Then, Belgium annexed the Congo Free State in 1908 under the name of Belgian Congo.

It is seen that Italy was the state that could not achieve its objectives at the conference. As mentioned before, when Italy came to the conference, it was planning to rupture Tripoli from the Ottoman Empire by subjecting it to negotiations in the conference. In this direction, the Italian delegation exerted intensive efforts during the conference. However, because of Said Pasha's effective opposition, and apathy of other participant states towards the Italian initiatives, Italy failed. Yet, it is seen that Italy involved in competition over colonial expansion in Africa. Then, Italy directed its attention towards the eastern part of the continent. In this direction, Italy occupied Massawa and Zeila in East Africa in 1885 by British incentives. By 1890, Italy united its colonies under the name of Italian Eritrea. In 1895, Italy targeted Ethiopia within the context of its colonial ambitions. However, Italians were defeated.¹⁶²

Portugal was another state that participated in the conference with great expectations. During the conference, Portugal tried to ensure acceptance from the participant states for previous Portuguese achievements in Africa.¹⁶³ After the conference, it is seen that although Portugal did not effectively participate in colonization competition over Africa, it made omnibus treaties with Germany and France. Both treaties recognized

¹⁶¹ Ali Demir, "Sömürge Devletlerinin Kullandığı Sömürgecilik Araç ve Metotları Vaka Analizi: Belçika Krallığı'nın Kongo'daki Sömürge Dönemi", *Güvenlik Stratejileri Dergisi* 7, No. 14 (2011): p.117-141; 121-122.

¹⁶² Ataöv, *Ibid.*, p.22.

¹⁶³ Ferro, *Colonization: A Global History*, p.134.

the Portuguese claims over territory between Portuguese East and Portuguese West Africa. Thus, a vast amount of land across the North and South of the Zambezi, including Mashonaland and Nyasaland were given to Portugal.¹⁶⁴



¹⁶⁴ Sir Charles Lucas, *The Partition & Colonization of Africa*, p.92.

CHAPTER 4

OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE BERLIN WEST AFRICAN CONFERENCE

4.1. Situation of the Empire in the 19th Century

It was Sultan Abdulhamid II who had been sitting on the Ottoman throne when the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 gathered. Therefore, it is important to understand Abdulhamid II, who was one of the most important figures of the late Ottoman history, and his politics to absorb the process of Ottoman participation to the Conference and the Empire's perspective in the Conference. In addition to that, comprehending the international circumstances at the time of the conference and how the Ottoman Empire positioned herself under these circumstances is a matter that will help to make sense of the Ottoman attitude in the conference in question.

Through the attempts of a group which is called as Young Ottomans who thought that salvation of the Empire was dependent on a system of parliamentary monarchy, and an uprising that forced to Sultan Abdulaziz to abdicate the throne, Abdulhamid II became the 34th padishah of the Ottoman Empire by promising to declare the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 (*Kanun-i Esasi*). In the time that Abdulhamid II succeeded to the throne, he had to struggle with many problems both in internal and external. Among these issues, the one relating to Balkans was the leading.

It is an undeniable fact that nationalist movements that occurred after the French Revolution of 1789 had profound impacts on the Ottoman Empire which had a multinational structure. The main issue that led to upheavals in Balkans against the Ottoman administration aroused from these nationalist movements. Furthermore, the

intents of European states that aim to gain lands from the Empire by abusing these different ethnic groups within the Empire led to deepening the crisis in Balkans.

Another incident that weakened the dominance of the Ottoman Empire and caused territory losses in Balkans along with the policy of Pan-Slavism, which Russia had followed with the purpose of becoming influential, especially in Balkans, was the Otto-Russo War of 1877-78. The San Stefano Treaty, signed by the Ottoman Empire after the great defeat against the Russian army in this war, provided great advantages to Russia in Balkans. However, distinguishing the fact that these Russian gains contradict its interests, Great Britain, with the support of other European states, forced Russia to revise the San Stefano Treaty. Thereupon, a conference gathered with the participation of the Ottoman Empire, Russia, Great Britain, Austria-Hungary Empire, German Empire, Italy, and France in Berlin in 1878. After a month-long meeting, participants signed the Berlin Treaty.¹⁶⁵

Considering the impacts of the Treaty of Berlin, it can be said that it represents one of the most critical milestones in terms of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Through this treaty, the Empire lost a massive land of 287.510 km square, and the Ottoman presence in Balkans was limited to Macedonia and Albania.¹⁶⁶ Besides, the treaty had another meaning in terms of British-Ottoman relations. It is seen that Britain changed its policy regarding to protect the integrity of the Ottoman Empire after the Berlin Treaty. After this point, Britain spent efforts to split the Empire, as well. Especially, after the Liberal Party, with the leadership of Gladstone, had become the ruling party in the British Parliament, this policy accelerated. In the same line with this policy change, Britain occupied Cyprus and Egypt in 1878 and 1882, respectively.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Oral Sander, *Anka'nın Yükselişi ve Düşüşü* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2012), p.251.

¹⁶⁶ Armaoğlu, *19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi*, p.529.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p.530.

It can be said that the Concert of Europe that emerged in the Vienna Congress of 1815 and led by Metternich came to an end through the emerging developments after the appearance of two actors like Italy and Germany into the European scene in the 1870s, and eventually the Berlin Congress of 1878. Indeed, these changes that occurred in international balances severely affected the policies of Abdulhamid II, as well. In this context, it is seen that the German Empire came into prominence to fill the lacuna, which emerged through the British renounce to its policy regarding protecting the Ottoman territorial integrity.

Considering the foreign policy of the Abdulhamid II period, it can be said that the ultimate goal was protecting the Ottoman territorial integrity. In this sense, utilizing the existing means towards the achieving this aim had always manifested itself in the political approaches of Abdulhamid II. On the other hand, economic and financial difficulties, internal pressures that especially arose from independence demands of various ethnic minorities, and external pressures come from foreign powers who would like to exploit this minority issue constituted major obstacles to the implementation of the Abdulhamid II policies. For this reason, it is seen that balance policy became prominent in the foreign policy implementations of Abdulhamid II. In this sense, Abdulhamid II pursued a policy that intended to set the Balkan nations at loggerheads against the separatist movements of these nations. Again, as part of this balance policy, he tried to use European states against each other when the Empire was confronted with the intervention of these states.¹⁶⁸

Another feature of the policy of Abdulhamid II was its usage of Islam as a unifying element. In fact, this situation was applicable for both domestic and foreign politics. Through the impacts of nationalist movements and attempts of European states to weaken the Ottoman Empire by exploiting ethnic minorities, the latter experienced territory losses. Thus, this situation had two vital reflections on the Empire. As a result of these territory losses in the Balkans, it is seen that the Muslim population heavily migrated from these regions to Anatolia. Consequently, there had been a

¹⁶⁸ Numan Hazar, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti ve Afrika Siyaseti", p.191.

dramatic increase in the rate of the Muslim population in Anatolia. Evaluated together with the Arab provinces of the Empire, it eventually caused the Ottoman Empire to seem more like a Muslim state. This situation became effective to Abdulhamid II adoption of policy which later would be called as Pan-Islamism. That policy, then, became vital in terms of the Empire's presence in Africa.

It should be stated that there are various evaluations regarding the Pan-Islamist policy, which has been frequently attributed to the Abdulhamid II era. According to one of these opinions, Abdulhamid II, who sincerely embraced this ideology, had a great ideal which aims to unite the whole Muslims in the world under the Ottoman Caliphate. In this sense, it can be stressed that close relations that the Sultan had established with leaders of various sects and religious orders contributed to the emergence of this view. On the other side of the coin, there are other views which claim that Abdulhamid II was not a rigorously religious man but was aware of the fact that pursuing Pan-Islamist policies was essential in prevailing circumstances in terms of survival of the state.¹⁶⁹ Indeed, the institution of caliphate was a fact that strengthens the Empire's hand in a negotiation with Great Powers, who had colonies where Muslim population were concentrated. Thus, it can be said that Abdulhamid II preferred Pan-Islamist policies due to its pragmatic aspect.

When Abdulhamid II's policies towards Africa has been examined, it is seen that these policies share similarity with the ones followed in general. Although France had occupied Algiers, which was one of the Ottoman provinces in Africa, in 1830, the Ottoman lands in Africa still covered an extensive area when Abdulhamid II ascended to the throne in 1876. In this period, Tunisia, Tripoli, Egypt, Habesh provinces, and Sudan principality were under the Ottoman rule. It also should be stated that among these provinces, Habesh and Tripoli were used to define a much wider geography than the borders of contemporary Libya and Ethiopia.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Orhan Kolođlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeđi* (İstanbul: Pozitif Yayınları, 2005), p.122-132.

¹⁷⁰ Numan Hazar, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Osmanlı Devleti ve Afrika Siyaseti", p.186-187.

As mentioned before, the Ottoman Empire had internal and external troubles when Abdulhamid II took the power. For this reason, the Empire could not pay enough attention to her African provinces and the ties between the provinces and the Ottoman center weakened. Again, in this period, it is seen that Europeans' activities in Africa enormously increased. In this sense, the main priority of Abdulhamid II's African policy became protecting the Empire's lands in Africa against expansionist policies of the European states. However, the Empire could not show effective resistance to European advancement due to economic woes and military incapability. At this point, it is seen that two methods became prominent. First, it was tried to cement ties between the Empire and her African provinces through various legal regulations and making investments. Secondly, it was attempted to increase sense of belonging by bringing Muslim identity to forefront.

On the other hand, Abdulhamid II also took care of establishing close ties with the Muslim population who lived beyond the borders of Ottoman lands in Africa. Actually, this was a characteristic of the policy that Abdulhamid II pursued in Africa. As the core part of this policy, it is seen that the unifying power of Islam and the caliphate was tried to be utilized at the maximum level. In this context, the Ottoman Empire attempted to bolster up the African Muslims within the bounds of possibility against the European colonialist powers. However, it was a fact that the Ottoman Empire was deprived of necessary economic and military resources to implement this policy effectively. Therefore, a common resistance against the European powers could not be put forward.

4.2. Participation of the Ottoman Empire in the Berlin West African Conference

Despite the fact that it is normal to expect that the Ottoman Empire would participate in the Berlin West African Conference as an African power, it is seen that she was not among the countries which were invited to Berlin when the first ideas regard

establishing such a conference had started to appear. In a newspaper translation, which is reflected in archival documents, it is stated that the Empire was grieved of not being invited to the conference and planned to protest it.¹⁷¹ However, the Ottoman Empire did not prefer to appeal in such a way and took her place among the countries that participated in the conference thanks to her efforts, which were made through her diplomatic missions abroad by pleading her reasons to the international community.

As understood from the archival documents, the intelligence that conducting a conference relating to the West African issue is planned, firstly reported to the Ottoman capital through a report sent by the Ottoman Embassy in Madrid on October 11, 1884. According to this report, the idea of such a conference was supported by Germany, France, Great Britain, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Portugal, and the United States of America.¹⁷² Another telegram, dated October 15, 1884, which was dispatched by the Ottoman Embassy in Germany, stated that Germany would host a conference with France to discuss the West African issues in Berlin. In the same telegram, it is said that Germany sent invitations to Great Britain, Portugal, Spain, Holland, Belgium, the United States, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Russia, Sweden, and Norway, and these states pronounced that they would participate in the conference.¹⁷³

The Ottoman Empire approached with suspicion why she was not invited to the conference while countries that irrelevant to Africa, like Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Sweden-Norway, were being done. Hereupon, the Empire inquired this issue to Germany through the Berlin Embassy. In response, German Chancellor Prince Bismarck indicated that the Empire was deliberately not invited to the conference, not because she was forgotten. According to Bismarck, the reason why the Ottoman State was not invited to the conference is that the meeting was

¹⁷¹ BOA. Y. PRK. TKM. 8/77 Document No:1

¹⁷² BOA. İ. MMS. 79/3438 Document No:26; BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:1

¹⁷³ BOA. İ. MMS. 79/3441 Document No:7

related to West Africa, whereas the lands of the Ottoman Empire in Africa located in the north. He also stated that if the Ottoman Empire is represented in the meeting, other states might bring the Ottoman lands in Africa up for discussion, and such a situation may result in against the Empire.¹⁷⁴

Upon this reply from the Chancellor Bismarck, the Ottoman Empire instructed the legal counsel to conduct research on the subject in order to show that the Ottomans' participation in the conference is also a right arising from international agreements. Then, the legal counsel presented a report dated October 28, 1884. Having looked at the content of this report, the following statements are included:

Germany offered to conduct a conference to negotiate issues relating to West Africa. Although the countries that irrelevant to the issue like Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire were invited to this conference alongside relevant ones, any invitation was not sent to the Ottoman Empire. This issue had been discussed in the Meclis-i Hass-ı Vükela, and before making a decision, some questions were raised. Firstly, did the Ottoman Empire adequately participate in conferences in Europe that were held after the Paris Treaty of 1856? Secondly, notwithstanding that it is written in Article 20 of the Treaty of Paris that the Ottoman Empire is included in the European states system, does this title not require the Ottoman State to participate in the meetings of European states? If so, wouldn't the Paris Treaty be violated if Germany, which organized the conference, was not warned because the Ottoman State was not invited to this conference? In addition to these, it is a fact that although the Ottomans were invited to all major conferences gathered in Europe on issues that related to her interest since 1856, the Empire was not invited to small-scale conferences gathered for some specific issues. For instance, only Germany, Austria, Great Britain, Italy, France, and Holland were invited to the conference that gathered in London in 1867 to discuss the issue of the Duchy of Luxembourg. Also, the Ottoman Empire was not invited to the meeting in Morocco in 1880, which was established to investigate patronage rights. However, at the Congo Conference, which is planned to gather soon, the issues that will be resolved on occupation, seizure, and invasion rights can be requested to be applied to the rest of Africa, which also includes our lands later on. For this reason, even if a state that did not attend the meeting was not obliged to do so, this means a violation of the Treaty of Paris. Considering the participating states, it is seen that this conference has become a general meeting. Besides, the topics to be discussed concern us as well as we are in among European states. For all these reasons, it is our right to participate in this conference like Italy.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ BOA. İ. MMS. 79/3438 Document No: 1

¹⁷⁵ BOA. İ. MMS. 79/3438 Document No:9

Then-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Asım Pasha also remarked that the Ottoman Empire should participate in the Berlin Conference through a telegram that he sent on November 7, to the Ottoman Ambassador Said Pasha, as follows:

The Ottoman Empire, as an element of the European Concert, attended similar conferences held in different periods. Generally, Great Powers, including most irrelevant ones about the issue in question, were invited to the conference. From our perspective, it will pose a threat not only to the dignity of our Empire but also the right of representation as an African power.¹⁷⁶

As can be deduced from these archival documents, the Empire considered her participation in the conference as the necessity of being a part of the European system.

Implementing intense diplomatic efforts to participate in the conference, the Ottoman Empire also took steps through her embassy in London at Great Britain. The Ottoman approach to British officials can be interpreted as the Ottomans' lack of confidence in the German officials. Also, the Empire may not have wanted to leave its participation in the conference to chance. In this sense, the Ottoman Ambassador to London, Musurus Pasha, had a meeting with Lord Granville, who was in service at that time as British Foreign Minister. According to a telegram, numbered 271, which is sent by London Embassy to the Ottoman capital, Lord Granville stated that Great Britain was not against the conference. In fact, Britain was the one that comes up with the idea to hold such a conference. However, this offer had not accepted at that period. He also said that Great Britain, Spain, Portugal, Holland, and the United States were invited firstly to the conference since they were directly relevant to the issue. Then, Italy, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Russia were included on demand of Italy. On the other hand, Lord Granville was surprised due to the fact that the Ottoman Empire was not invited. According to his statement, "*if Great Britain could have sent the invitations, our government would not hesitate to invite the Empire.*" Additionally, he gave advice in terms of the way that the Ottomans should

¹⁷⁶ BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:64; Gücüm, "1884-1885 Berlin Konferansı ve Kongo Örneği; Afrika'nın sömürgeleştirilmesi karşısında II. Abdülhamid yönetimi", p.73.

follow through his words as follows “*if the Empire would like to participate in the conference, she should follow the same path which Italy had done, and should be persistent.*”¹⁷⁷

The Ottoman Empire tracked developments regarding the conference closely also through her embassy in Rome. Considered the related telegrams sent by the Rome Embassy to the Ottoman capital, it is seen that the Empire had been warned on the issue that the European Powers have the intention to expand their colonies in Africa through the Berlin Conference. The Embassy indicated that Italy is also invited to the Congo Conference that the Europeans will discuss to enlarge their colonies in Africa, in its telegram dated November 3, 1884. In the same document, it is also expressed that once the Italian participation in the conference was finalized, it sent two ships, namely Garibaldi and Amerigo Vespucci, to Congo.¹⁷⁸ The Ottoman administration interpreted this situation in the way that Italy has the desire to acquire land in West Africa. From this perspective, it can be said that one of the reasons that triggered the Ottoman Empire to participate in the conference was the possibility that Italy actualizes its intentions about the region by trying to include Tripoli in the discussions held in the conference. As a matter of the fact that this interpretation was proved through a telegram sent by the Rome Embassy. In this document, dated November 11, 1884, it is stated that a letter published in an Italian newspaper expresses that Italian delegates should intensively make efforts in the Berlin Conference to ensure that Tripoli is given to Italy.¹⁷⁹

Therefore, the Ottoman administration appointed Said Pasha¹⁸⁰, the Ottoman Ambassador to Germany, to make attempts at the German Empire to ensure the

¹⁷⁷ BOA. İ. MMS. 79/3438 Document No: 22

¹⁷⁸ BOA. Y. A. HUS. 180/36 Document No:5

¹⁷⁹ BOA. Y. A. HUS. 180/60 Document No:5

¹⁸⁰ Also known as Kürd Mehmed Said Pasha. He also served as Minister of Foreign Affairs for a total of 10 years in three different periods between 1882-1895. Please see. Mahmut Akpınar, “Osmanlı Hariciye Nazırları (1836-1922)”, *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Araştırmaları Dergisi*, No.35 (Autumn 2015), 173-205.

Ottoman participation in the conference. In this context, Said Pasha met with Count Hatzfeld, the German official, and sent a telegram dated November 11, 1884 and numbered 191 about this meeting. In this telegram, Said Pasha stated that he expressed that if the Empire is not invited to the conference, this situation will not be welcomed by his government in terms of bilateral trades by referring to the amicable relations between the Ottoman and German Empires. Then, Count Hatzfeld said that he would inform Chancellor Bismarck on the issue and give Said Pasha feedback as soon as he gets a response from Prince Bismarck. In the same telegram, it is stated that Bismarck responded to the Ottoman demand to participate in the conference positively; however, since Germany organizes the conference in cooperation with France, it is necessary to inform France of the Ottoman demand. Then, Count Hatzfeld expressed that the French cabinet has no objection on this issue, and the necessary instructions to invite the Ottoman Empire to the conference, would be delivered as soon as possible.¹⁸¹

As a result of the efforts that the Ottoman Empire spent and negotiations with Great Britain and Germany, the Empire took her part among the countries invited to the conference. As it is stated in the archival documents, it was pronounced to the Ottoman Empire that the official invitation would be delivered through post. Since there was a short time to the beginning of the conference and the official invitation will only be able to submit after the conference started, Germany informed France that the Ottoman delegation would participate without the official invitation. France did not pose any objection to this situation.¹⁸² In another telegram, dated November 12, 1884, sent by the Ottoman Embassy in Berlin, it is stated that the necessary documents are requested to send urgently due to the conference will start soon.¹⁸³ Besides, as stated in the telegram numbered 195, it was requested that one or more officials be presented at the conference as a technician along with delegations.

¹⁸¹ BOA. İ. MMS. 79/3437 Document No:7

¹⁸² BOA. İ. MMS. 79/3437 Document No:1

¹⁸³ BOA. İ. HR. 295/18660 Document No:4

Again, since there was a short time to the beginning of the conference, Said Pasha requested the appointment of Ohan Efendi, undersecretary of the Berlin Embassy, with this title.¹⁸⁴ This request of Said Pasha was accepted by the Ottoman administration and Undersecretary Ohan Efendi was appointed to the Ottoman delegation as a technician.¹⁸⁵

4.3. The Ottoman Attitude in the Berlin West African Conference

The first session of the conference was held in Prince Bismarck's residence at 2 pm on November 15, 1884. Ambassador Said Pasha took place in the first session of the conference on behalf of the Ottoman Empire. Considering the conference protocols, it is seen that the Ottoman delegation actively participated in the discussions on the issues that closely related to the Ottoman interests. On the other hand, the delegation also avoided taking a responsibility that may put the Empire in a difficult situation. The Ottoman Ministry for Foreign Affairs also followed the sessions closely. Such that Minister Asım Pasha requested from Ambassador Said Pasha to send the protocols of the sessions by courier. In addition to the protocols, Asım Pasha demanded to deliver analytical reports for each session to Istanbul.¹⁸⁶ That approach of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry revealed how much the Ottoman administration give importance to this conference.

During the Berlin Conference, Said Pasha gave importance to mainly two issues. First of them was the protection of the rights of the Muslim population, treating them as on an equal basis with the Christians, and providing the same level of protection, as well. Another subject was about the exemption of the Nile River from the limits of the region that the conference would determine to apply free trade and navigation.

¹⁸⁴ BOA. İ. HR. 295/18660 Document No:3

¹⁸⁵ BOA. İ. HR. 295/18661 Document No:1

¹⁸⁶ BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:183; Gücüm, "1884-1885 Berlin Konferansı ve Kongo Örneği", p.74.

The Ottoman Empire particularly insisted on this issue to prevent prospective claims of the colonial powers on the lands that the Ottomans controlled, in case of the Nil River is included in the free trade and navigation borders. Hence, this situation also reflected on the protocols of the sessions. The issue of determining the boundaries of the Congo basin was addressed in the second session of the conference on November 19. In this session, it was decided to establish a commission to resolve this issue and other details.¹⁸⁷ A report that was prepared as a result of the commission's inquiry was read, and opinions of delegates were asked in the third session on November 27. This report focused on three issue. These were as follow;

1-What is the extent of the geographical basin of the Congo?¹⁸⁸

2- Which territories should be added on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, south and north of the Congo's mouth, in the interest of commercial communications?¹⁸⁹

3- Is it appropriate to also place under the regime of commercial freedom certain territories extending to the East of the Congo Basin in the direction of the Indian Ocean?¹⁹⁰

The Ottoman delegate, Said Pasha took the floor while the discussions on these issues were continuing and said that although he accepted the recommendation of the commission on the 1st and 2nd articles, he had to wait for instructions from Istanbul before making a decision on the 3rd article. Said Pasha also stated that he would raise an objection in case that the envisaged regulation contains the Nile River and its basin.¹⁹¹ The incorporation of the Nile River into the free trade zone was also objected by the German Empire while it is supported by the United States of

¹⁸⁷ *Afrika-i Garbi İşlerine Dair Berlin 'de Müna'kid Konferans Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.28-29.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.31; BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:149

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.32; BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:149

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.35; BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:149

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.37-38.

America and France. The Ottoman State tried to implement the balance policy that it applied at that time during the conference and tried to take advantage of the disagreements between the European States. In this sense, Said Pasha, in the telegram he sent to Asim Pasha on December 3, stated that if he is allowed to support the offer of Germany about expanding the free trade practice eastward, the United States and France would not be able to insist on their proposals regarding the Nile basin.¹⁹² However, these efforts failed, and it was decided that the free trade zone is expanded towards the Indian Ocean in a way that includes the Nil basin.

As mentioned above, another issue that the Ottoman representative was actively involved in was that the freedom of religion was implemented in a way that covers the Muslim population that lives in the area where the conference handled it. Considering the Ottoman relations with the local Muslim authorities, and the Muslim population living in European dominions in the region, protecting their rights was of great importance for the Empire. For this reason, during the conference, it is seen that the Ottoman delegation spent great efforts to ensure that those people's rights would be secured.

Speaking at the second session of the conference on November 19, 1884, the Italian delegate offered that the issue of protecting Christian missionaries, scientists, explorers, and persons and property along with them is implemented in a way that covers all Africa without any sectarian discrimination.¹⁹³ He brought forward this offer once again in the third session on November 27, 1884.¹⁹⁴ Then, in the 4th session held on December 1, 1884, Said Pasha took the floor during the discussion of the article on freedom of religion and stated that it would be appropriate to add the expression that religious sanctuaries which are necessary for the practice of all religions, after the word of "a church" in the article in question. The German representative Count Hatzfeld, who chaired the session, stated that he found this

¹⁹² BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:310

¹⁹³ *Afrika-i Garbi İşlerine Dair Berlin'de Müna'kid Konferans Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.24.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.48.

proposal put forward by Said Pasha as appropriate.¹⁹⁵ Said Pasha also emphasized that if a delegation from the Islamic world is to be sent to the region in question, this delegation should be treated in the same way as their Christian counterparts.¹⁹⁶

In the same session, the Italian delegate once again reiterated his offer that missionaries, scientists, and explorers to protect not only in the region designated by the conference but also in the entire continent.¹⁹⁷ Upon the chairman of the session asked whether there was any objection to this proposal of the Italian representative, Said Pasha said that the conference's program was related to the Congo basin, and the Italian representative's proposal included land outside the conference program. Also, he reminded that the Ottoman State only assigned himself to attend the negotiations on the land specified in the conference program. For these reasons, Said Pasha stated that he had to oppose such a proposal.¹⁹⁸ Here, it should be noted that throughout the conference, the Ottoman delegation attached great importance to that any discussion, offer, or decision would remain within the limits of the conference program determined before. It can be stated that the aim here is to prevent any decision taken at the conference from being used in a way that threatens the Empire's lands in Africa. However, it is seen that the Empire had waived her attitude when it was necessary, although her general approach was in that way.

Monsieur Busch, another German representative in the conference, commented that the objection of Said Pasha to the Italian offer may arise from that it covers the Ottoman land in Africa. So, in his opinion if the Italian offer revised in a way that expresses as unsettled lands in Africa, it would be appropriate for the Ottoman representative, as well.¹⁹⁹ As a response, Said Pasha reiterated his stand that the

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p.76.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p.78.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p.81.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p.82.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.83.

Ottoman lands should definitely be excluded from that area in.²⁰⁰ Eventually, Count Hatzfeld declared that the Italian offer would not put to the vote due to opposition of Said Pasha.²⁰¹ Thus, it can be said that Said Pasha successfully prevented this Italian move.

As a matter of fact, this situation was confirmed in Said Pasha's report sent to Asım Pasha on December 1, 1884. In his telegram, Said Pasha states that he was successful in two issues in the negotiations within the scope of the conference. The first of them is that Said Pasha was able to prevent the Italian offer, which foresees that the protection of Christian missionaries is extended to cover the whole African continent. Secondly, he also ensured that the expression of the right to build churches, chapels, and temples is revised as the right to construct all religious architectures.²⁰² Even, Prince Bismarck noticed the efforts of Said Pasha in the conference to protect the Ottoman interests and complimented the Ottoman Ambassador at the reception that was organized in honor of the conference on December 1.²⁰³ Also, Prince Bismarck informed Said Pasha that the latter's objection to the Italian offer is supported by the German Emperor and government.²⁰⁴

Nonetheless, Said Pasha, who had been congratulated by Prince Bismarck on the evening of December 1, was criticized by him because of the Ottoman representative's speech made in the fifth session of the conference on December 18. In this session, Said Pasha made a statement, as in parallel to the general approach of the Ottoman Empire in the conference, against the German offer, which is presented to extend the free trade principle towards eastward Africa, in the direction of the instruction that he had obtained from the Ottoman administration before. In his

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p.83.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.84.

²⁰² BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:247-248

²⁰³ BOA. Y. PRK. EŞA. 4/54 Document No:2-4

²⁰⁴ BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:250-251

speech, the Ottoman delegation stated as follows; “*Since the conference gathered to discuss issues related to the northern parts of Africa, the Ottoman administration thinks it is unnecessary to attend to the discussion about the issues that are not included in the scope of the conference. For these reasons, it is sorry to express that I am not able to approve the extension of negotiations in question.*”²⁰⁵

After Said Pasha’s declaration, Bismarck conveyed his reaction to the Ottoman administration through the German Embassy in Istanbul. In a memorandum delivered by the German Embassy to Minister of Foreign Affairs Asım Pasha, it is stated that the Ottoman Empire has never dominated lands where remain below the 5 degree of northern latitude. Even if it is, it is specified that the formula which is decided by the conference does not pose any threat to the Ottomans’ right. Bismarck also emphasized that the conference’s decisions constitute a meaningful whole and if the Empire insists on her objection against some part of the decisions, the final agreement will be decided without the Ottoman Empire’s participation. The Empire was also warned that she might have to face difficulties that conflict with her interests even though she is a part of the international system if she violates the conference's rules.²⁰⁶ With this Prince Bismarck’s clear threat, Asım Pasha sent a telegram to Said Pasha on December 21, and demanded him to send a copy of his aforementioned speech. The minister also instructed Said Pasha to continue to attend the sessions and sign the related protocols.²⁰⁷ Considering the Final Act of the session, it can be said that the issue in question was resolved in a way that Germany had desired. In this way, it is seen that the Ottoman Empire renounced her attitude regarding remaining within the limits of the conference program.

It can be speculated that this behavior of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry can be explained in a way that the relations between Germany and the Ottoman Empire ranked in priority, considering the general situation of the Empire’s foreign policy.

²⁰⁵ *Afrika-i Garbi İşlerine Dair Berlin’de Müna’kid Konferans Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.116.

²⁰⁶ BOA. HR. SYS. 910/40 Document No:1; BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:366-377

²⁰⁷ BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:358

Ever since Britain had renounced its old policy regarding protecting the Empire's territorial integrity, the German Empire appeared as the best alternative in which its support was vital for the Empire in the international area.

Another issue that the conference had discussed was related to the new occupations. To under which circumstances, prospective occupations in the future will be accepted by the powers? The German Empire proposed a draft on this issue.²⁰⁸ Minister Asım Pasha requested Said Pasha to involve in negotiations on the condition that the protection of the Ottoman rights in eastern and northern parts of Africa. Said Pasha was also in favor of these regulations since they defend the acquired rights of colonial powers and give them the right to declare their demands against the new occupations.²⁰⁹ Said Pasha notified in his telegram, numbered 38, that the declaration, prepared by commission related to new occupations, was read in the eighth session of the conference on January 31, 1885. Since this issue had been discussed in the related chapter before, it is not necessary to dive into details of it. Yet, it should be reiterated that the Ottoman administration thought this regulation was suitable for her interests in Africa. For this reason, Said Pasha made a speech that expresses that the Ottoman Empire support the related regulations on the condition that the Ottoman possession in Africa would be respected. The Ottoman reservation was recognized by mainly Britain, France, and Germany.²¹⁰ However, considering the process after the conference, it is seen that the principles of effective occupation and hinterland were used to the detriment of the Empire in the widest sense.

In the same telegram, Said Pasha reported that after the declaration regarding new occupations was read, he made a speech in line with the instructions received on January 23, and his speech would be recorded on the protocols. According to the

²⁰⁸ *Afrika-i Garbi İşlerine Dair Berlin'de Müna'kid Konferans Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.139.

²⁰⁹ BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:415-416

²¹⁰ *Afrika-i Garbi İşlerine Dair Berlin'de Müna'kid Konferans Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.148.

telegram, the declaration was accepted unanimously.²¹¹ Considered Said Pasha's speech, it is seen that he specified that the Ottoman lands in northern and eastern Africa, and Ras Hafun, located in today's Horn of Africa, must be excluded from this declaration.²¹² Given the general situation of the Empire at that period, it can be said that the Ottoman delegation only aimed to protect the Empire's possession in Africa rather than acquiring new territories in the continent.

At the ninth session of the conference on February 23, the Italian representative proposed an offer to extend freedom of navigation, planned only for Congo and Niger, through all inland waterways on the continent.²¹³ Since this proposal included the Nil basin and may pose a threat to the Ottoman interests in the region, Said Pasha objected to it. This objection was supported by the British delegation, as well. Consequently, the Italian proposal was denied.²¹⁴

The Berlin West African Conference ended with its tenth session on February 26, 1885. In his telegram dated March 1, 1885, Said Pasha reported that a copy of the final agreement, signed by all states and sealed, was kept to send to the Ottoman capital through a trusted courier, for ratification. In the telegram, he also pointed out that the agreement matters for the Ottoman Empire particularly by its 3 articles. One of them was the 1st article which rules the extension of free trade principle towards the east. Another one was 6th article that is related to freedom of religion is implemented for all regions. The last one was 34th and 35th articles which specify actions to be taken to make new occupations effective. Said Pasha particularly draw attention to the 6th article. He stated that this article previously granted the freedom of religion only to Christianity and right to build churches, temples, and chapels.

²¹¹ BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:425-426

²¹² BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:430; *Afrika-i Garbi İşlerine Dair Berlin'de Müna'kid Konferans Mazbatalarının Tercümesidir*, p.147.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p.173-174.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 174-175.

However, it was then revised as in a way that covers Islam and its religious buildings through intensive efforts made by the Ottoman Empire.²¹⁵

Said Pasha send the final agreement of the Berlin Conference to Istanbul on March 4, with Mr. Koss, an engineer recruited by the Ottoman Embassy.²¹⁶ On March 12, he informed the Ottoman administration that the ratification process should be completed within a year. Pasha also expressed that the copy of the agreement signed by the Ottoman Empire should be sent back to keep in the German archives.²¹⁷ As it is understood from the telegram sent by the Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs Asim Pasha to the Berlin Ambassador Said Pasha, the Empire ratified the agreement on July 30, 1885.²¹⁸

The Ottoman participation in the Berlin Conference matters in a few ways. Firstly, as stated in the Treaty of Paris of 1856, it was once again confirmed that the Empire was among European states by her participation in the conference. Secondly, even if it was on paper, the Empire ensured that the protection of the Muslim populations' rights in Africa would be taken under legal terms. Even though this article could not be implemented effectively, the Muslim population in Africa did not forget the Empire's efforts, and they offered help in the most difficult times of the Empire. On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire had the privilege to benefit from the terms of the agreement. In this sense, the hinterland principle adopted under articles related to the new occupations mattered for the Empire. Despite the fact that the Empire ensured that her spheres of influence in Africa were recognized by participating in the conference, it is seen that France, Britain, Belgium, and Italy tried to penetrate the areas where the Ottoman influence placed in. In the ongoing process, it is seen that the Empire tried to defend her rights in Africa, particularly in the northern part, by referring to this provision.

²¹⁵ BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:484

²¹⁶ BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:509

²¹⁷ BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:490

²¹⁸ BOA. HR. SYS. 908/1 Document No:691

So, to what extent did the Berlin West African Conference affect the Ottoman Empire? In fact, the partition of Africa, which was discussed in previous sections, did not directly affect the Ottoman Empire, with some exceptions. In this sense, it can be said that the *Hatt-ı Üstüva* province of Egypt created an exceptional case.²¹⁹ As stated before, by establishment of this province, the Ottoman influence expanded towards Equatoria. Then, this province expanded its territories between 1878-1889 during the Emin Pasha's governorate.²²⁰ By this expansion, this province's border reached up to the region that covers territories of today's Uganda. Thus, the Ottoman interests became highly conflictual with European powers' that had ambitions in the region.

After the Berlin West African Conference, this province was targeted by European states, as well. In this context, Belgium attempted to annex this province in 1893. However, the Empire had ensured the acceptance of these states regarding the legal rights over *Hatt-ı Üstüva* province belonged to her and Egypt Khedivate, in the eight-session of the conference on January 31, 1885. For this reason, the Belgian attempted led to criticism on the Ottoman side. Upon these developments, the Ottoman Empire notified England and Belgium of its discomfort from this situation and made diplomatic initiatives to protect the rights approved at the Berlin West African Conference.²²¹ However, these attempts could not bring to a successful conclusion since Egypt was under British occupation at that time.

Considering the effects of the conference in Ottoman Africa, it is seen that the hinterland of Tripoli province came to the front. As mentioned in related sections of this study, France and Britain signed various agreements regarding the partition of Africa. Among these agreements, the Anglo-French Treaty of 1899 had brought

²¹⁹ Here, it should be noted that although Egypt had been invaded by Britain 1882, the Ottoman Empire maintained her legal rights over this province for a while. But, it also should be admitted that the Ottoman hegemony over this region remained on paper, rather than an effective one.

²²⁰ For detailed information about the foundation of this province please see, Iain R. Smith, *The Emin Pasha Relief Expedition 1886-1890*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

²²¹ İdris Bostan, "The Ottoman Empire and the Congo: The Crisis of 1883-95", p.106-108.

consequences for Kanem, Vaday, Bornu, and Tibesti, places where the Ottomans considered as the hinterland of Tripoli province. These regions were left to France through this treaty. By this agreement, France aimed to link its possessions in West, East, and North Africa and to reorganize trade routes in its interest.

The Ottoman Empire investigated this treaty through her embassy in Paris. The Ottoman Ambassador Münir Bey demand information from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this issue. In response, French Minister stated that the Ottoman claims over the region were baseless, and this region fell into the French sphere of influence through the territory which France possessed in the Lake Chad Basin.²²²

The Empire protested this French act by referring to the 34th and 35th articles of the General Act of the Berlin West African Conference. Besides, diplomatic contacts were made with states such as Germany and Italy by claiming that this Anglo-French agreement also posed a danger against German and Italian interests in the region. Thus, it was aimed to provide international support on this issue. However, both states did not respond to this Ottoman demand. The Ottoman-French rivalry over this region continued until the last Ottoman territory in Africa, Tripoli, was conquered by Italy.

²²² Abdurrahman Çaycı, *Büyük Sahra'da Türk-Fransız Rekabeti*, p.105.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The process of expeditions that accelerated after the second half of the 19th century brought the unknown parts of the African continent to the attention of the Europeans. In that period, Europe was experiencing rapid industrialization, emerged from the Industrial Revolution, and because of this, the need for raw materials increased. Correlatively, it emerged the search for new markets for the production surplus that occurred as a result of increasing production. This situation directed the Europeans' attention to Africa. European Powers involved in fierce competition to assume control of territories in Africa.

In the same period, another important development was the unification of Germany and Italy. The emergence of these two new states disturbed the balance among the powers in Europe, which had existed since 1815. Also, the involvement of these states in the race in Africa damaged the interests of the European states, carrying on activities in the continent. Thereupon, the need for an international conference to determine the necessary formalities regarding the partition of Africa emerged. With Germany's leading, the Berlin West African Conference was gathered.

In general terms, the Berlin West African Conference gathered to resolve three main issues. These were free trade and navigation on the Congo River, free navigation on the Niger River, and formalities to be observed for future annexations. Apart from these, the conference handled issues serving humanitarian goals, such as the abolishment of the slave trade, the prohibition of alcohol trade in the region, and civilize the indigenous people of Africa.

When the conference protocols are reviewed, it is understood that the Anglo-French rivalry lay at the heart of the conference. Both sides struggled to design the outcomes of the conference in accordance with their own interests. Considering the negotiations and the articles of the final act, it is seen that they both managed to preserve the existing state, although not to get what they desired. Thereafter, Britain prevented France from realizing its ambitions over the Nile River through the conference. On the other hand, France consolidated its hegemony over the colonies possessed in Western Africa.

Another prominent state in the conference was Germany. Because it was discussed in detail in the related section, it is not necessary to reiterate the emergence and evolution of the German colonial policy. On the other hand, it should be stated that Germany tried to exploit the Anglo-French rivalry reverberated in the conference. In this context, Germany gave its weight first on the French side and then sided with Britain. By this, Bismarck prevented any possible rapprochement between these two states. Through this policy, Bismarck pursued a goal of designing European politics for Germany's best interests. It is possible to say that he had reached his goal for a short time.

Considering the consequences of the conference, it can be said that one of the most significant results was the adoption of the principle of effective occupation. According to this, signatory states accepted to stock the sufficient military units where they annexed, and inform other states of this situation. This situation caused to increase in occupations in Africa. Therefore, European states immediately annexed most parts of the continent in a short time span. This situation also had negative consequences for the indigenous people living in Africa.

Another important outcome of the conference was the recognition of the International Association of the Congo by the participant states. Prince Bismarck was very effective in this process. Outside of the conference sessions, Bismarck spent great efforts to convince especially Britain, France, and Portugal to recognize the Association. Thanks to these efforts, King Leopold II of Belgium gained control over

a large territory in Africa. By this, it can be said that Bismarck aims to limit the influence of these countries in West and Central Africa.

The primary provision, accepted by all states in the conference without any reservation, was the prohibition of the slave and alcohol trade in the region in question. Despite the fact that it had appeared in the letter of agreement, it is seen that this provision was not applied in the following period. This was one of the failures of the conference.

Considering in general, it can be speculated that the main motivation behind the Berlin West African Conference is economical. In fact, when the rhetoric about the humanitarian purpose of the conference is excluded from the final act, only economic motivations, improvement of trade, free navigation, elimination of trade monopolies, free navigation, and refrainment of disagreements which might arise from future annexations remain. In this sense, it would be more accurate to define the primary stimulations of the conference by *3P; profit, plunder, prestige* rather than Livingstone's *3C; commerce, Christianity, civilization*.²²³ Lagos Observer, a newspaper published in Africa, stressed this aspect of the conference as follows; "*the world had, perhaps, never witnessed a robbery on a large scale. Africa is helpless to prevent it... It is on the card that the 'Christian' business can only and at a distant date, in the annihilation of the natives*".²²⁴

The Ottoman Empire was one of the states that participated in the Berlin West African Conference. During the research had made for this thesis, it was seen that the Empire was not among the states invited to the conference at the first stage. As stated in the archival documents, the Empire spend intensive diplomatic efforts to participate in the conference. According to these archival sources, there are few reasons for the Empire to want to attend the conference. First of all, the Empire was

²²³ Adekeye Adebajo, *The Curse of Berlin: Africa after the Cold War* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 2010), p.13.

²²⁴ G. N. Uzoigwe, "Reflections on the Berlin West Africa Conference, 1884-1885", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 12, No. 3/4 (Dec. 1984-June 1985), p.17.

considered a member of the European system under the relevant articles of the 1856 Paris Treaty. Depending on it, the Empire had participated in similar meetings before and considered the participation in the Berlin West African Conference as its natural right, which arises from the Treaty of Paris. Secondly, the Empire was considered as an African state since she had territories in the continent. In this sense, as an African state, it was her right to participate in the conference. For this reason, it is interesting that countries such as Russia, Austria-Hungary, Sweden-Norway, and Denmark, which were not related to Africa, were invited to the conference while the Ottoman Empire was not invited.

In addition to this, the Empire also had other motivations to attend the conference. At first, the Empire was interested in the conference because of the fear that European states, particularly France and Italy, might raise their ambitions over the Ottoman lands in Africa. By participating in the Conference, she aimed to prevent such a situation. Besides, the Empire had relations with other Muslim communities in Africa. During the research, it is seen that another motivation that pushes the Empire to attend the conference was these relations.

It is seen that the Ottoman delegation acted in the direction as described above during the conference. As far as reflected on archival documents and conference protocols, the Empire paid strict attention to the preservation of her lands and interests as well as the rights of the Muslim population living in the continent. The delegation actively participated in negotiations on these subjects. As reflected in correspondences between the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Ottoman representative in the conference, the Empire also made an effort to exploit conflict of interests that emerged between European states in her favor. However, it should be stated that these efforts of the Empire did not result in a way that it was desired.

If it is mentioned the achievements of the Empire in the conference, the first thing that should be stated that the Empire managed to revise the relevant article which regulates the freedom of religion in a way to protect the rights of the Muslim population in the continent. With this article, it was provided that the Muslim

communities be able to construct their religious buildings. On the other hand, the Empire had the opportunity to benefit from free navigation and free trade in the Congo Basin. However, considering the lack of such a merchant class in the Ottoman Empire that would carry business in this region, it is hard to say that this is a real gain for the Empire. Under the article, which includes the effective occupation principle, it was also mentioned in the hinterland principle. This also mattered for the Empire. Theoretically, it can be expected that this provision consolidated the Empire's hegemony over her lands in Africa. However, it did not work in this way. By 1894, territories in southern Sudan were partitioned between Britain and Belgium through an agreement. This situation clearly contradicted the Ottoman interests in the region. The Empire protested this act by depending on related articles of the Final Act of the Berlin West African Conference. However, the Ottoman protest remained inconclusive.²²⁵

In this thesis, it was tried to discuss the Berlin West African Conference; and shed light upon the Ottoman attitude in it. Thus, it was aimed to contribute to studies that focus on the Ottoman presence in Africa. The Empire's participation in a conference related to the West and Central Africa is important in terms of the Ottoman approach to the continent. In this sense, it is hoped that this thesis will provide motivation for researchers interested in the Ottoman presence in Africa to conduct research on this field.

²²⁵ İdris Bostan, "The Ottoman Empire and the Congo", p.103-119; 111-117.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

Bu tez çalışması Afrika tarihi açısından önemli sonuçlar doğuran Berlin Batı Afrika Konferansı'nı ele alırken, aynı zamanda bir Afrika devleti de olan Osmanlı Devleti'nin konferansa katılımını ve konferans süresince sergilediği tutumu yansıtmaya çalışmıştır. Özellikle konferans sürecini ve Osmanlı Devleti'nin konferanstakini tutumunu yansıtırken konferans oturumlarının mazbatalarından yoğun şekilde istifade edilmiştir. Yine o döneme tanık olmuş kişiler tarafından hazırlanan eserlerden de yararlanılmıştır. Bu çalışma süresince kullanılan bir başka kaynak türü de gazeteler olmuştur. Her ne kadar konferansın Osmanlı basınında yer bulmadığı görülse de yabancı basının konferansı yakından takip ettiği tespit edilmiştir. Kaynakların bu şekilde çeşitlendirilmesi konferansa dair bilgilerin doğrulanabilmesine olanak sağlamıştır.

15 Kasım 1884 – 26 Şubat 1885 tarihleri arasında Berlin'de gerçekleştirilen Batı Afrika Konferansı Avrupalı devletlerin Afrika'daki sömürgecilik faaliyetlerinin arttığı bir dönemde düzenlenmiştir. Konferansın çıkış noktasına bakıldığında her ne kadar konferansın temel konusunun resmi olarak Nijer ve Kongo Nehirlerinde serbest ticaret ve seyrüsefer ilkelerinin uygulanması olduğu belirtilse de temel motivasyonun kıtada faaliyet gösteren devletlerin arasında çıkan sorunların ileride savaşa yol açmaması için paylaşımın esaslarını bir düzenlemeye tabii tutmak olduğu görülmektedir. Osmanlı Devleti'nin konferansa katılımı incelendiğinde ise İmparatorluğun temel motivasyonunun bu paylaşımından pay almaktan ziyade yapılacak düzenlemenin İmparatorluğun Afrika'daki çıkarlarına karşı bir tehdit oluşturmasının önüne geçmek olduğu ifade edilebilir. Bir diğer sebep olarak ise özellikle dönemin padişahı II. Abdülhamid'in iktidarı sırasında ön plana çıkartılan

İslam Birliđi siyasetinin bir geređi olarak Afrika'daki Müslüman halkın çıkarlarını korumak ön plana çıkmıştır.

Bu kapsamda bu tez giriş ve sonuç bölümleri hariç tutulacak olursa 3 ana bölümden oluşturmaktadır. İlk bölümde Osmanlı Devleti'nin Afrika'daki varlığına odaklanılmıştır. Bu bölümdeki temel amaç Osmanlı Devleti'nin de konferansa katılmak için başvurduğu temel argümanlardan biri olan İmparatorluğun Afrika'daki geçmişi sebebiyle aynı zamanda bir Afrika devleti olduđu yönündeki savı desteklemektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda bu bölüm tezin ana konusunun 19. yüzyılda vuku bulması hasebiyle çoğunlukla bu yüzyıla odaklanarak Osmanlı Devleti'nin Afrika'daki varlığına ışık tutmaktadır. Öte yandan Osmanlı Devleti'nin kıtadaki izleri takip edildiğinde bu durumun iki şekilde vuku bulduđu görülmektedir. İmparatorluk bir yandan özellikle Kuzey ve Dođu Afrika'da kurduđu eyaletler ile doğrudan toprak kontrol ederek varlık gösterirken diđer yandan sınırları ötesindeki Müslüman topluluklar, aşiretler, sultanlık ile kurduđu ilişkiler sayesinde etkisini kıtanın en güney ucuna kadar hissettirebilmiştir. Bu anlamda Osmanlı Devleti'nin Afrika'daki mevcudiyetinin sınırlarını fiziki sınırlar ve duygusal/ruhsal/akılsal sınırlar olarak nitelendirmek mümkündür.

Fiziki olarak, Osmanlı Devleti'nin Afrika'daki varlığı incelendiğinde, bunun aslında 16. yüzyıla değin uzandıđı görülmektedir. 1517'de Mısır'ın fethedilmesiyle kıtaya ayak basan Osmanlılar sonraki süreçte bu bölgede iki yönlü bir ilerleyiş gerçekleştirmiştir. Buna göre Osmanlı Devleti kıtada bir taraftan Dođu-Batı yönünde ilerleyerek Kuzey Afrika'da etkin olurken, diđer taraftan da Mısır merkezli olmak üzere Kuzey-Güney yönünde bir ilerleyiş göstermiştir. Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kuzey Afrika'daki genişlemesine bakıldığında daha önce bu bölgede korsanlık faaliyetleri gösteren denizcilerin sonraki süreçte çeşitli sebepler dolayısıyla Osmanlı Devleti'ne sadakatlerini sunmalarıyla hakimiyetin Osmanlı Devleti'ne geçtiđi görülmektedir. Bu sayede Osmanlı Devleti Cezayir, Tunus ve Trablusgarp'ta kontrol sağlamıştır. Osmanlı Devleti'nin Afrika'da kontrol altında tuttuđu yerlerdeki yönetim anlayışı ise İmparatorluğun diđer bölgelerinden farklılık arz etmektedir. Devlet çođu yerde doğrudan bir yönetim anlayışı sergilerken Afrika'da çoğunlukla yerel idarecilerin

yönetimde kalmasına müsaade etmiş ve bu bölgedeki toprakları bu yerel idareciler vasıtasıyla yönetmiştir. Tabii, bu anlayışın süreç içerisinde zaman zaman değişikliğe uğradığını da belirtmek gerekir.

19. yüzyıla gelinene kadar Osmanlı Devleti'nin Afrika'daki topraklarının ciddi bir tehlikeyle karşı karşıya kalmadığı ifade edilebilir. Bu yüzyıla gelindiğinde İmparatorluğun Afrika'da kontrolü altında bulunan topraklar çok geniş bir araziyi içermektedir. Nitekim, Osmanlı Devleti'nin o dönemki toprakları üzerinde bugün 15 bağımsız Afrikalı devlet olduğu görülmektedir. 19. yüzyıl ise İmparatorluğun içerisinde bulunduğu genel krize paralel olarak Afrika'da da sorunlara sahne olmuştur. Avrupalı Devletlerin dikkatlerini kıtaya yöneltmesi Osmanlı Devleti'nin Afrika'daki varlığına tehdit oluşturmuştur. Nitekim, bu durum ilk olarak 1798 yılında Napolyon'un Mısır'ı işgal etme girişiminde kendisini göstermiştir. Fransızların bu hareketi karşısında Osmanlı Devleti İngiltere ve Rusya'dan yardım istemek zorunda kalmıştır. Ancak bu şekilde Fransızların işgalinin netice bulmasının önüne geçilebilmiştir. Osmanlı Devleti Afrika'daki ilk toprak parçasını da yine Fransızlara kaybetmiştir. Mısır'da istediği sonucu alamayan Fransa bu kez kendisine daha yakın bir coğrafyada bulunan Cezayir'i hedef almış ve 1830 yılında buraya asker çıkartmıştır. O dönem içerisinde bulunduğu kötü şartlar sebebiyle Fransızların Cezayir'i işgaline etkili bir şekilde karşılık veremeyen Osmanlı Devleti işgali diplomatik yollarla protesto etmiş, yabancı devletlerin desteğine başvurmuş olsa da bu çabalar sonuç vermemiştir. Öte yandan Cezayir'de güçlü bir yerel direnişle karşılaşan Fransa ise ancak 17 yıl süren bir mücadelede sonunda Cezayir'de tam anlamıyla hakimiyet sağlayabilmiştir. Avrupalı Devletlerin Osmanlı Afrikası'ndaki faaliyetleri sonraki süreçte de devam etmiştir. Bu anlamda yine Fransa 1881'de Tunus'u işgal etmiş, İngiltere de 1882'de Mısır'da fiili hakimiyet sağlamıştır. Tez çalışmasının konusu olan Berlin Batı Afrika Konferansı toplandığı sırada Osmanlı Devleti'nin Afrika'da elinde sadece Trablusgarp eyaleti kalmıştır.

Diğer yandan Osmanlı Devleti Afrika'daki sınırlarının ötesinde yaşayan Müslüman topluluklar, tarikatlar ve yerel sultanlıklar ile de ilişkiler kurmuş ve bu sayede etkisini kıtanın uzak bölgelerine ulaştırabilmiştir. Osmanlı Devleti'nin bahsi geçen

bu topluluklar iletişim kurması daha kıtaya ilk ayak bastığı tarihten itibaren başlamıştır. Kıtada kurulan Müslüman sultanlıkların Avrupalı devletlerin kıtadaki faaliyetleri karşısında Osmanlı Devleti'nden yardım talep etmeleri bu ilişkilerin oluşmasında etkili bir faktör olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Osmanlı Devleti'nin de imkanları ölçüsünde bu taleplere karşılık vermeye çalıştığı görülmüştür. Öte yandan bu sultanlıkların hac ve ticaret kervanlarının güzergahları üzerinde yer almaları da Osmanlı Devleti'nin bu yerel yönetimlerle ilişki kurmasında etkili olan bir başka etkidir. Bu anlamda Osmanlı Devleti'nin 1555'te Trablusgarp'ı İspanyollardan aldıktan hemen sonra Kanem-Bornu Sultanlığı ile temasa geçtiği görülmektedir. Bu sayede Akdeniz Havzası ile yerel Müslüman yönetimler arasında kalan hac ve ticaret yolları arasındaki bağlantı sağlanmış oldu. Diğer taraftan Osmanlı Devleti'nin Zengibar Sultanlığı ile kurduğu ilişkiler uluslararası seviyede de yankı bulması nedeniyle önem arz etmektedir. 19. yüzyılda özellikle İngiltere, Fransa ve Almanya'nın bölgedeki faaliyetlerini arttırması karşısında Zengibar Sultanlığı Osmanlı Devleti ile yakın ilişkiler kurmak için teşebbüste bulunmuştur. Bu dönem Osmanlı Devleti'nin Rusya ile karşı karşıya geldiği ve ağır bir yenilgi aldığı 1877-1878 Osmanlı Rus Savaşı ile aynı döneme denk gelmektedir. Bu savaşın sonuçları itibariyle önem kazanan İmparatorluğun İslam kimliği çerçevesinde II. Abdülhamid Zengibar Sultanlığı'ndan gelen bu teklife olumlu karşılık vermiştir. Özellikle II. Abdülhamid ve Zengibar Sultanı Berkaş arasında yakın ilişkiler kurulmuştur.

Osmanlı Devleti'nin sınırları dışarısında kalan yerlerle kurduğu ilişki biçimi açısından ön plana çıkan bir durum da tarikatlar ile kurulan ilişkiler olmuştur. Bu anlamda İmparatorluğun Senüsi Tarikatı ile kurduğu ilişkiler ön plana çıkmıştır. Nitekim, Sultan Abdülmecid döneminde bu tarikata vergi muafiyeti tanınmıştır. Bu muafiyet Sultan Abdülaziz döneminde de genişletilerek devam etmiştir. Osmanlı-Senüsi ilişkileri II. Abdülhamid döneminde daha da geliştirilmiştir. Bu dönemde Abdülhamid II Senüsi şeyhlerine elçiler ile birlikte bölgedeki insanlara dağıtılmak üzere kuran göndermiştir. Osmanlı-Senüsi iş birliği başta İtalyanların olmak üzere Avrupalı devletlerin bölgedeki sömürgecilik faaliyetlerine karşı bir direniş sergilemiştir. Osmanlı Devleti'nin Afrika'da yerel kabilelerle de ilişki kurma yoluna

giderek nüfuzunu kıtaya yaydığı bilinmektedir. Bu anlamda Osmanlı Devleti'nin Tevarık/Tuareglerle kurduğu ilişki dikkat çekmektedir. Bu kabile olan ilişkiler Osmanlı Devleti'nin Büyük Sahra'da Fransızlarla girdiği nüfuz mücadelesi açısından önem taşımaktadır. Osmanlı-Tevarık ilişkileri bu bölgede Fransızların sömürgeci faaliyetlerine karşı direniş göstermiştir.

İmparatorluğun Afrika'da kurduğu ilişkiler açısından dikkat çeken ve son dönemde araştırmacıların bu alana daha fazla ilgi duymasıyla yeni bilgilerin gün ışığına çıktığı bir başka yer de Güney Afrika'dır. Osmanlı Devleti Güney Afrika'da yaşayan Müslümanlar ile de çok yakın ilişkiler kurmuştur. İngiltere'nin bölgede hakimiyet kurmasıyla yaklaşık 3 milyon Müslüman nüfus da İngiliz kontrolü altına geçmiştir. Bu Müslüman nüfusun İslam dünyasından uzak kalması topluluk içerisinde bu konuda ayrışmaların ortaya çıkmasına sebep olmuştur. Bu durumdan rahatsızlık duyan İngiliz yönetimi kontrolü altındaki Müslüman toplumun da talebiyle Osmanlı Devleti'nin İngiltere'de elçiliği aracılığıyla Osmanlı Devleti'nden dini eğitim vermek üzere bir kişinin gönderilmesini talep etmiştir. Sultan Abdülaziz dönemine denk gelen bu olayda Sultan din alimi Ebubekir Efendi'yi 1862 yılında bir yardımcı ile birlikte Cape Town'a göndermiştir. Burada bir okul açan ve Müslüman nüfusa eğitim veren Ebubekir Efendi'nin faaliyetleri sayesinde bu insanlar ile Osmanlı Devleti arasında yakın bir bağ oluşmuştur. Ebubekir Efendi 1880'de Cape Town'da hayatını kaybettiğinde oğlu Ahmed Ataullah Efendi babasının görevlerini devam ettirmiştir. Ataullah Efendi 1884'te de Kimberley'e geçmiş ve buradaki Osmanlı Okulu'nun müdürü olmuştur. Osmanlı Devleti'nin bu bölgedeki faaliyetleri bu dini alimlerle sınırlı değildi. Hatta Ebubekir Efendi'nin bölgeye gönderilmesinden önce ilk temaslar 1850'li yıllarda bölgeye bir konsolos tayin edilmesiyle kurulmuştur. Abdülhamid II döneminde bu bölgedeki Osmanlı temsilciliklerinin sayısının arttırıldığı görülmektedir. Böylelikle Osmanlı Devleti I. Dünya Savaşı sonuna kadar kıtanın hemen hemen yer yerinde etkisini göstermiştir. İmparatorluğun kıtadaki yaklaşık 400 yıllık geçmişi bu perspektiften ele alındığında Osmanlı Devleti'nin aynı zamanda bir Afrika devleti olarak değerlendirilmesi mümkün görülmektedir.

Dolayısıyla Afrika ile ilgili düzenlenen bir konferansta yer almak yöneticiler tarafından İmparatorluğun doğal bir hakkı olarak görülmüştür.

İkinci kısım bu tez çalışmasının ana konularından birini oluşturan Berlin Batı Afrika Konferansı'nı ele almaktadır. Bu bölümde öncelikle konferans öncesi durumun genel bir değerlendirilmesini yapmak hedeflenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda Avrupalı devletlerin Afrika'daki faaliyetlerinin artmasının arkasında yatan “Yeni Sömürgecilik” üzerine bir tartışma yapılmıştır. 19. yüzyıla gelindiğinde yeni bir forma bürünen “yeni sömürgecilik” klasik sömürgecilikten farklı bir karaktere sahiptir. Özellikle 19. yüzyılda Avrupa'da yaşanan ekonomik gelişmeler bu sürecin tetikleyicisi olmuştur. Hızlı sanayileşme sonrasında ham maddeye duyulan ihtiyacın artması, seri üretim sonucu ortaya çıkan mal fazlası için yeni pazar arayışları ve oluşan sermaye fazlası için yeni yatırım alanları arayışı “yeni sömürgeciliğin” ekonomik motivasyonları olarak sıralanabilir. Bunun yanı sıra Afrika'da faaliyet gösteren ticari şirketlerin diğer ülkelerin şirketleri ile bölgede bir rekabete girmesi ve bu rekabet için siyasi destek ve koruma araması da “yeni sömürgeciliğin” siyasi boyutunu oluşturmaktadır. Bunlara ek olarak “yeni sömürgeciliği” klasik sömürgecilikten ayıran bir başka özellikle bu yeni anlayışın manevi unsur boyutudur. Bu dönemde ortaya çıkan “üstün ırk” anlayışı ve bu “üstün ırkın” geri kalmış toplumları “medenileştirmek” için bir sorumluluğa sahip olduğu inancı bu manevi unsuru oluşturmaktadır. Yine bununla paralel olarak bölgede Hristiyanlığı yayma girişimleri de “yeni sömürgeciliğin” manevi unsurlarından kabul edilmektedir. Tüm bu etkenler 19. yüzyılda Avrupalı Devletlerin Afrika'daki faaliyetlerinin artmasına yol açmıştır.

Bu bölümün ilerleyen kısımlarında konferansa katılan devletlerin Afrika'ya dair politikalarına yer verilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu doğrultuda devletlerin Afrika ile ilişkileri bu bölgede yürütmüş oldukları faaliyetler yine 19. yüzyıla odaklanarak işlenmiştir. Burada dikkat çekici olan konferansa katılan ülkeler arasında yer almasına rağmen Rusya, Avusturya-Macaristan, İsveç-Norveç ve ABD gibi ülkelerin Afrika'daki sömürgeci yarışa dahil olmadıkları görülmektedir. Bu anlamda öne çıkan ülkeler ise Portekiz, Hollanda, İngiltere ve Fransa'dır. 19. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında

bu ülkelere Belçika, İtalya ve Almanya katılmıştır. Bu ülkeler arasında bu dönemde Afrika'da kıyasıya bir yarış başlamıştır.

Afrika'nın sömürgeleştirilmesi sürecinde bu dönemde yoğunlaşan coğrafi keşiflerin etkisi büyüktür. Bu keşifler sayesinde kıtanın daha önce bilinmeyen iç kısımları da insanlığın bilgisine sunulmuştur. Bu anlamda ön plana çıkan aktörler ise John Speke, Samuel Baker, David Livingstone, Henry Morton Stanley ve De Brazza'dır. Bu kişiler çalıştıkları ülke ya da şirketler adına Afrika'da keşifler yapmış ve yerel şeflerle imtiyaz anlaşmaları imzalamıştır. Bu imtiyaz anlaşmaları sonraki süreçte Avrupalı devletlerce bölgede hak iddia etmek için kullanılmıştır. Avrupalı devletlerin kıtadaki çıkarları birbirleriyle çatışmaya başladığında çeşitli ittifaklar kurmak yoluna gittikleri görülmektedir. Bu anlamda İngiltere ve Portekiz arasında yaşanan yakınlaşmanın Almanya ve Fransa'yı birbirine yaklaştırdığı görülmektedir. Özellikle 1884 yılında konferanstan sadece birkaç ay önce imzalanan İngiliz-Portekiz anlaşması konferansa giden yolda döşenen son taş olmuştur. Bu anlaşma Avrupalı devletlerce tepkiyle karşılanmıştır. Bu noktada ortaya çıkan Alman Şansölyesi Bismarck anlaşmanın ölü doğduğunu ifade etmiş ve Afrika'da meseleleri görüşmek için Berlin'de bir konferans yapılmasını teklif etmiştir. Bu teklif diğer devletler tarafından kabul görmüştür ve Berlin Batı Afrika Konferansı'nın 15 Kasım 1884 toplanması kararlaştırılmıştır.

Berlin Batı Afrika Konferansı söz edilen tarihte Prens Bismarck'ın 1878'de ünlü Berlin Konferansı'nın toplandığı konutunda ilk oturumunu gerçekleştirmiştir. 14 ülke temsilcisi oturumda hazır bulunmuştur. Açılış konuşmasını yapan Bismarck ilk oturumda diğer katılımcı devletlerin temsilcilerinin oyuyla başkan olarak seçilmiştir. Bismarck konferansın 3 ana gündem maddesini görüşmek üzere toplandığını belirtmiştir. Bunlar Kongo Nehri'nde serbest ticaret ve seyrüseferin sağlanması, Nijer Nehri üzerinde serbest seyrüseferin sağlanması ve gelecekte meydana gelecek işgallerin geçerli sayılabilmesi için gerekli formalitelerin saptanmasıdır. Bunlar arasında sonraki süreçte Afrika'nın kaderini belirleyecek olan üçüncü maddedir.

Öncelikli olarak bahsi geçen nehirlerin havzalarını belirleme konusu gündeme gelmiştir. Bu noktada bu işin bir komisyona havale edilmesi kararlaştırılmıştır. Komisyon çalışmaları sonucu Kongo Nehri'nin doğuda Hint Okyanusu'na Batı'da da Atlas Okyanusu'na kadar genişletilmesi kararlaştırılmıştır. Buradan Kongo Havzası belirlenirken coğrafi kriterlerden ziyade ekonomik çıkarların dikkate alındığı anlaşılmaktadır. Bu durumun ortaya çıkmasında Almanya başta olmak üzere ABD, Fransa ve Hollanda devletlerinin temsilcilerinin etkili olduğu görülmektedir. İngiltere ve Portekiz ise Kongo Havzası'nın bu şekilde genişletilmesine prensipte karşı çıkmazken bölgedeki mevcut haklarının saklı kalması için çaba göstermiştir.

Konferansın bir diğer ana gündem maddesi Afrika'da gelecekte gerçekleşecek yeni işgallerin geçerli sayılması için hangi usullerin uygulanması gerektiği konusuydu. Bu konu ilk olarak konferansın 5 Ocak 1885 tarihli 7. oturumunda ele alınarak detayların saptanması için komisyona havale edilmesi kararlaştırıldı. Yeni işgallerle ilgili olarak Almanya tarafından bir taslak sunulmuştur. Bu taslağa göre devletlerden biri Afrika kıyılarında yeni bir toprağı işgal ettiğinde konferansa katılan diğer tüm devletlere bunu eş zamanlı olarak bildirmekle sorumlu olacak ve bildirimi alan devletlerin bu eylemi tanıma ya da karşı talepte bulunma hakkına sahip olacaktır. Taslağın devamında devletler işgal ettikleri veya himayelerine aldıkları bölgelerde barışın korunmasını teminen yeterli yargı sistemini kurmak, kazanılmış haklar ile garanti edilmiş ticaret ve transit özgürlüğüne ilişkin koşullara saygı göstermek zorunda olduğu belirtiliyordu. Almanya'nın bu teklifi oturumlarda tartışıldıktan sonra 31 Ocak 1885 tarihli 8. oturumda kabul edildi. Buna göre işgalin geçerli sayılabilmesi için "fiili işgal" ilkesi getirilmiş oldu. Özellikle bu madde sonraki süreçte Afrika'daki işgallerin hızlanmasına yol açmıştır.

Konferansta bu ana gündem maddelerini dışında da konular görüşüldü. Bunlardan biri Amerikan delegasyonu tarafından ortaya atılan bir demiryolu inşası teklifiydi. Henry Sanford tarafından yapılan bu teklife göre malların daha ucuz ve güvenli şekilde nakledilmesi için Vivi'den Stanley Pool'a kadar bir demiryolu inşası düşünülmüştü. Teklif ilgi görmeyince 23 Şubat 1885 tarihli 9. oturumda geri çekildi. Bir başka konu da konferansın ele aldığı bölgede alkol ticaretinin yasaklanması idi.

Bu teklife Hollanda, Fransa ve Almanya ticari saiklerle karşı çıksa da sonrasında alkol ticaretinin kısıtlanmasına yönelik ortak bir kara alınmıştır. Konferansın ilgilendiği bir başka konu da esir ticaretinin tamamen ortadan kaldırılmasıydı. İngiltere temsilcisi tarafından gündeme getirilen bu konu üzerine tüm temsilciler toplantıya katılan ülkelerin Afrika'da esir ticaretini ilga etmek için tüm güçlerine kullanacakları konusunda anlaşmaya vardılar.

Konferansın oturumlarında yer almayan ama sonraki süreçte Afrika'nın geleceği için Berlin'de düzenlenen Batı Afrika Konferansı'nın en önemli sonuçları arasında yer alan bir unsur da Uluslararası Kongo Derneği'nin tanınması süreci olmuştur. Dernek ilk olarak ABD tarafından konferans başlamadan önce Nisan 1884'te tanınmıştır. 8 Kasım 1884'te yani Berlin Konferansı'ndan sadece bir hafta önce Almanya ABD'den sonra bu derneği tanıyan ikinci ülke olmuştur. Fakat Kongo Derneği için Berlin Konferansı bir dönüm noktası olmuştur. Derneğin konferansa katılan diğer devletler tarafından tanınmasında Prens Bismarck'ın etkili olduğu görülmektedir. Onun çabalarının neticesi olarak önce İngiltere Aralık 1884'te daha sonra ise Fransa Şubat 1885'te Uluslararası Kongo Derneği ile anlaşmalar imzaladı. Portekiz bu konuda en büyük direnci gösteren ülkelerden biri oldu. En nihayetinde İngiltere, Fransa ve Almanya'nın da araya girmesiyle Portekiz de Uluslararası Kongo Derneği'ni Şubat 1885'te tanıdı. Konferansa katılan ülkeler arasında Berlin Konferansı devam ederken Uluslararası Kongo Derneği ile anlaşma imzalamayan tek ülke Osmanlı Devleti idi. Temsilci Said Paşa bu konu ile ilgili Osmanlı yönetiminden bir talimat almadan Kongo Derneği ile anlaşma imzalamayacağını 23 Şubat 1885 tarihli 9. oturumda ifade etmiştir. Burada Osmanlı Devleti'nin Uluslararası Kongo Derneği'ni konferanstan sonra tanıdığını belirtmekte fayda vardır. Konferans 26 Şubat 1885 tarihinde yapılan 10. oturumda Berlin Batı Afrika Anlaşması Genel Akdi'nin imzalanmasıyla son buldu.

Konferanstan sonra başta Almanya, İngiltere, Fransa ve Belçika başta olmak üzere Avrupalı devletler Afrika'da hızla işgallere başladılar. Fransa Doğu'dan Batı'ya doğru hareket ederek Afrika'daki sömürgelerini birbirine bağlamayı planlarken, İngiltere de Mısır üzerinden güneye doğru inerek bu hat üzerindeki sömürgelerini

birbirine bağlamayı amaçlıyordu. Almanya ise konferanstan hemen önce ele geçirdiği Kamerun, Togo gibi yerlere yenilerini ekleyerek Alman Afrika Koloni İmparatorluğu'nu kurmak için harekete geçti. Uluslararası Kongo Derneği konferanstan hemen sonra Kongo Özgür Devleti'ne dönüşüp Belçika Kralı II. Leopold'u yönetici yaptı. Böylelikle Belçika Afrika'nın tam ortasında büyük bir toprak parçası üzerinde hakimiyet sağladı. Öyle ki Belçika'nın Afrika'daki sömürgelerinin toplam yüz ölçümü Belçika'nın yüz ölçümünün 80 katına ulaştı. İtalya Doğu Afrika'da İngilizlerin de teşvikiyle sömürgecilik faaliyetlerine girişti. Fransa ise Sahra Altı Afrika'da etkinliğini arttırdı. 19. yüzyıla girilirken Afrika'nın sadece %10'luk bir kısmı işgal edilmişken konferanstan sonraki 20 yıllık süreç içerisinde Afrika'nın yaklaşık %90'ı Avrupalı devletlerce işgal edilmiş oldu. Bu dönem literatürde "Afrika Talanı" ya da "Afrika Yağması" olarak yer aldı.

Tezin üçüncü bölümünde Osmanlı Devleti'nin Berlin Batı Afrika Konferansı'na katılma süreci ve konferans süresince takip ettiği politika üzerine durulmuştur. Bu anlamda öncelikle İmparatorluğun 19. yüzyılda içinde bulunduğu şartlara göz atmakta fayda olduğu düşünülmüştür. Çünkü Osmanlı Devleti'nin o dönemdeki şartları algılayışı ve o şartlara karşı geliştirmiş olduğu politikanın konferansta da kendisini gösterdiği düşünülmüştür. Bu dönemin öne çıkan özellikleri ise askeri anlamda Batı'dan geri kalınmasıyla diplomasiye ağırlık verilmesi, İmparatorluğun mevcut topraklarının korunması yönünde politikalar izlenmesi ve Avrupalı devletlerin aralarında anlaşmazlıklardan yararlanarak İmparatorluğun korunması amaçlayan denge politikalarının takip edilmesidir. Aynı dönemde Afrika ile ilişkiler bağlamında ise İslam Birliği siyasetinin ön plana çıktığı görülmektedir.

Osmanlı Devleti ve Berlin Batı Afrika Konferansı bağlamında ilk olarak dikkat çeken durum konferans için ilk davetnamelerin gönderildiği esnada Osmanlı Devleti'nin konferansa davet edilmemiş olmasıdır. Osmanlı Devleti bu durumu Almanya, İngiltere ve İtalya'daki temsilcilikleri aracılığıyla takip etmiştir. Konferansa Rusya, Avusturya-Macaristan, İsveç-Norveç gibi Afrika ile ilgisi olmayan devletlerin davet edilip kendisinin davet edilmemesini şüpheyile karşılamıştır. İmparatorluk kendisine davet gönderilmemesi üzerine Berlin Elçiliği

vasıtasıyla bu konuyu Almanya Devleti'ne sormuştur. Bu soruya cevaben Alman Şansölyesi Bismarck, Osmanlı Devleti'nin konferansa unutulduğu için değil kasten davet edilmediğini söylemiştir. Bismarck'a göre Osmanlı Devleti'nin konferansa davet edilmemesinin sebebi konferansın Afrika'nın batısıyla ilgili olması, Osmanlı Devleti'nin Afrika'daki topraklarının ise kuzeyde yer almasıdır. Yine Bismarck bu durumu eğer konferansta bir Osmanlı temsilcisi bulunur ise diğer devletler tarafından Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Afrika'daki topraklarının da konferansta tartışmaya açılacağı ihtimaliyle açıklamış böyle bir durumun da Osmanlı'nın aleyhine bir sonuç doğurabileceğini ifade etmiştir.

Osmanlı Devleti ise aldığı bu cevap üzerine konferansa katılmak için gerekli diplomatik girişimleri başlamıştır. Bunun için öncelikle Hukuk Müşavirliği'ne konu ile ilgili bir rapor hazırlatarak İmparatorluğun da konferansta yer alması gerektiğini uluslararası hukuka dayanarak ortaya koymaya çalışmıştır. Bu rapora göre Osmanlı Devleti 1856 Paris Barış Anlaşması uyarınca Avrupa Sistemi içerisinde kabul edilmesi sebebiyle böyle bir uluslararası toplantıya katılmaya hakkı vardır. Osmanlı Devleti özellikle İngiltere ve Almanya ile yaptığı yoğun diplomatik görüşmeler sonrasında Almanya tarafından toplantıya davet edilmiştir. Toplantıda Osmanlı Devleti'ni temsilen Almanya Büyükelçisi Said Paşa görevlendirilmiştir. Konferansta temsilcilere eşlik etmesi için bir yetkilinin daha gönderilmesinin talep edilmesi üzerine Berlin Elçiliği Müsteşarı Ohan Efendi de Osmanlı delegasyonunda görevlendirilmiştir.

Osmanlı Devleti'nin konferans süresince takip ettiği politikalara bakılacak olursa Osmanlı temsilcisinin İmparatorluğu ilgilendiren görüşmelere aktif bir şekilde katılmaya özen gösterirken, devleti ilgilendirmeyen konularda sorumluluk almaktan kaçındığı dikkat çekmiştir. Osmanlı Devleti'nin konferansta yoğun çaba gösterdiği konular ise Nil Nehri Havzasının serbest ticaret ve seyrüsefer bölgesine dahil edilmesini önlemek ve bölgede yaşayan Müslüman nüfusun çıkarlarını gözetmek olmuştur. Bunlardan ilki Osmanlı Devleti'nin Afrika'daki çıkarlarına ters düşmesi dolayısıyla, ikincisi ise o dönem yoğunluklu olarak takip edilen İslam Birliği siyaseti çerçevesinde üzerine düşülen konular olarak dikkat çekmektedir. Osmanlı temsilcisi

Said Paşa'nın Nil Nehri Havzası'nın konferansta tartışılan bölgeye dahil edilmemesi için yoğun çaba sarf etmesine rağmen konferans sonrasında yapılan anlaşmaya bakıldığında bu konuda başarısız olduğu görünmektedir. Öte yandan bölge Müslümanlarının haklarının korunması konusunda ise Said Paşa'nın başarılı bir diplomasi trafiği yürüttüğü anlaşılmaktadır.

Peki Berlin Batı Afrika Konferansı Osmanlı Devleti'ni nasıl etkilemiştir? Bakıldığında birkaç istisna hariç Osmanlı Devleti'nin doğrudan etkilenmediği görülmektedir. Konferans sonrasında hızla artan işgaller Osmanlı Devleti'ni Mısır'a bağlı Hatt-ı Üstüva eyaletinde Belçika ve İngiltere ve Sahra'da Fransızlarla karşı karşıya getirmiştir. Her iki olay karşısında da Osmanlı Devleti konferans sonrasında yapılan anlaşmanın maddeleri uyarınca gerekli diplomatik girişimleri yapsa da Avrupalı devletler Afrika'nın paylaşımı konusunda kendi aralarında vardıkları anlaşmalar çerçevesinde hareket etmiştir. Bu durum da Osmanlı Devleti'nin yaptığı diplomatik girişimleri boşa çıkarmıştır. Avrupalı devletlerin bu hareketlerine karşın etkili bir direniş sergileyecek gerekli ekonomik ve askeri enstrümanlardan yoksun olan Osmanlı Devleti ise bu gelişmeleri kabul etmek zorunda kalmıştır.

Sonuç olarak konferans “fiili işgal” ilkesini getirmesi hasebiyle Afrika için önemli sonuçlar doğurmuştur. Konferansta alınan köle ve alkol ticaretinin yasaklanması gibi kararların ise kâğıt üzerinde kaldığı görülmüştür. Bu açıdan bakıldığında konferansın temel motivasyonunun ekonomik olduğu ifade edilebilir. Osmanlı Devleti açısından ise konferans sınırlı etkiye sahip olmuştur. Bölgede faaliyet gösterecek bir tüccar sınıfına sahip olmayan Osmanlı Devleti için serbest ticaret ve seyrüsefer ilkelerini bir kazanım olarak değerlendirmek güç iken, konferansta kabul edilen “fiili işgal” ilkesinin Osmanlı Devleti'nin Afrika'da kalan son topraklarında bir mücadeleye sebep olmuştur.

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