

Japan's Progress Reified: Modernity and Arab Dissent in the Ottoman Empire

Renee Worringer

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Renée Worringer

University of Guelph

Abstract:

The apparent success of Meiji Japan's rapid modernization project at the turn of the twentieth century did not go unnoticed by inhabitants of Ottoman lands concerned with their Empire's survival, including Ottoman statesmen and political activists determined to achieve the same results. Ottoman Arab journalists and intellectuals who were subtly

objecting to their exclusion from political power within the Empire, however, produced a discourse on Japanese modernity that explored Japan's reform and modernizing projects as well as its distinct national identity. In doing so, these Arab writers formulated a critique of the Ottoman state by highlighting its failures in contrast to modern Japan, though their idealization of Japan resembled that of their Ottoman Turkish counterparts.

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