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The rise of the Köprülü family: the reconfiguration of vizierial power in the seventeenth century

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Stellingen (Propositions)

1. The rivalry between the inner-court servants and grand vizier that started in the reign of Murad III was the main cause of the political crises in the first half of the seventeenth century.
2. The Sultan Mehmed IV cannot be depicted as a “weak sultan”, leaving all political responsibilities to the Köprülü viziers. In contrast to this prevailing view, Mehmed IV was a key actor in shaping the politics.
3. Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha established the most efficient political network stretching from the provinces to the central bureaucracy of the seventeenth century by the end of their twenty-year tenure. Owing to the long years during which they stood at the helm of the state, the Köprülü grand viziers were not only able to place their clients in important posts, but also to make a very important network of their own from among their relatives and their clients that helped themselves gain primacy over all other competing vizier households.
4. Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha successfully restored the authority of the grand vizierate that can be seen as the most conspicuous result of the era of the Köprülü grand viziers.
5. The diaries and correspondence of foreign ambassadors and counselors are very useful in filling the gaps left by indigenous Ottoman chroniclers and history writers in the seventeenth century.
6. The political history of the Ottoman Empire is a neglected field in Ottoman historiography. It failed to produce biographical studies of even some of the most influential sultans and viziers.

7. While the sultan's household as an institution of recruitment declined in the seventeenth century, vizier/pasha households began to provide an alternative to the regular channels of palace and political appointments. The members of the vizier households moved directly from service in the vizier's household to important positions that differed from those of the sixteenth century.
8. Along with Istanbul, Edirne turned into the most significant administrative and political center of the Ottoman Empire in the second part of the seventeenth century, which brought about the underlying changes in the administrative structures.
9. The most practical way of dealing with stress during writing a doctoral dissertation is to watch blockbuster movies and TV series one after the other. Particularly, the series focusing on historical events, along with comforting the researchers, help them acquire a vantage point over the historical material at hand.
10. The digitization of the archival and literary sources in the last decade has eliminated barriers that prevent researchers from easily accessing to knowledge. Today, history researchers have unprecedented facilities that former generations did not. However, it remains obscure or unanswered to what extents the quality of historical researches have experienced an increase in quality.