

The Causes of Rural Migrations in 18th Century Ottoman Society*

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18. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Toplumunda Taşra Kaynaklı Göçlerin Nedenleri

Öz ■ Devlet tarafından yürütülen güdümlü göçler yanında, Osmanlı toplumunda iradi göçlere de her zaman rastlanmıştır. Kanûnî Sultan Süleyman döneminden itibaren ikinci tür göçü yasaklayan fermanlar çıkarılmışsa da bu nüfus hareketi hiçbir zaman bütünüyle önlenememiştir. 18. yüzyılda gerçekleşen taşra kaynaklı göçler, bu yüzyılda Osmanlı toplumsal ve iktisadi düzeninde gözlenen değişimle yakından ilişkilidir. Ekonominin nakdileşmesi ve merkezi yönetimin zayıflaması şeklinde özetlenebilecek bu süreçte devlet malikâne yöntemini yaygınlaştırmak suretiyle vergi gelirlerini nakit olarak merkezi hazinede toplamaya çalışmıştır. Malikâne uygulamasının yaygınlaşması askeri sınıfla birlikte, askeri sınıfın ortak ve temsilcisi sıfatıyla yerel güç odaklarının siyasi ve iktisadi açıdan güçlenmesine yol açmıştır. 18. yüzyılda taşra kaynaklı göçlerde rol oynayan; taşra teşkilatı görevlilerinin suistimali, kanunsuz tekâlif tahsilatı, güvenliğin zedelenmesi gibi etkenler ise bu gelişmenin sonuçları arasında sayılabilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: İradi Göçler, Reaya, Malikâne Sistemi, Askeri Sınıf, Taşra Teşkilatı, Tekâlif Tevzi ve Tahsili

1. Introduction

It is known that the Ottoman Empire tried to arrange and control population movements for certain purposes through specific measures. However, it cannot be said that population migration in Ottoman society consisted solely of those movements. From the period of Sulaiman I (1520-1566), imperial orders were issued that prohibited voluntary migrations. This prohibition, however, could not

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prevent population movements; migration from rural areas continued in the 18th century, just as they had under previous rulers.

Two new phenomena appeared in the 18th Century Ottoman Empire; the monetarization of the economy and the weakening of the central administration. The state tried to collect tax revenues for the Central Treasury in cash by propagating the *malikâne* system (life-term revenue tax farming). The application of the *malikâne* system engaged the military class and local powers as partners. Representatives of the military class became empowered both politically and economically. In the meantime, the extraordinary taxes that were broadly imposed in order to finance war expenses were made permanent. Those changes caused the subjects of the empire to break off their relationships with the land and began to migrate.

This article will describe firstly the major changes that took place in Ottoman society, both socially and economically in the 18th century. Then, from a critical point of view, it will discuss how social sciences dealt with the phenomenon of migration. These two parts will be followed by a chapter which is based on data compiled from Ottoman Archive Registers and, which will shed light upon the causes of rural migrations.

2. Ottoman Society in the 18th Century and Change

According to the generally accepted theory, one that is notably found in school textbooks in Turkey, the 18th century was a period of decline (1689-1774). This approach, which is a part of a larger periodization template reflecting the impressions of a political point of view to a great extent, is now being questioned by contemporary researchers who focus on various aspects of Ottoman history, especially its economic and social dimensions.

For instance, Karpat regards the 18th century as part of a larger era and names it as “the period of autonomy and provincial notables (1603-1789)”.¹ In terms of international relations, Quataert describes the period 1683-1798 as the “wars of contraction”.² On the other hand, McGowan, who concentrates on internal dynamics and whose evaluation dovetails with that of Karpat, also refers to the

1 Kemal H. Karpat, “Osmanlı Tarihinin Dönemleri: Yapısal Bir Karşılaştırmalı Yaklaşım”, trans. Talip Küçükcan, *Osmanlı Devleti ve Dünya*, Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), trans. Mustafa Armağan et al., İstanbul: Ufuk Kitapları, 2000, pp. 133-136.

2 Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire (1700-1922)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 37-51.

period 1699-1812 as the “era of provincial notables”.³ Adopting a wider point of view, Tabakoğlu regards the 18th century as part of the “classical period”, which starts with the settlement of Turks in Anatolia in the 10th century and extends toward the end of the 18th century. The classical period, lasting up to the dawn of the reform period in 1790, is divided by Tabakoğlu into three parts; formation (1075-1453), maturation (1453-1683) and losing flexibility (18th century).⁴

As it can be understood from the attempts of periodization, which we find it sufficient to mention briefly here, the 18th century, can be lengthened or shortened, and be described by its various aspects. This, of course, can be the case for many other time periods, based on the subjective point of view of the researcher. However, in terms of the outcomes of the wars that took place in this century and in terms of the economic indicators, it can be said that the 18th century reflects two different tendencies: Firstly, it has been observed that until about the 1760s, there was an expansion in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors of the economy, and successful results were generally obtained in wars. Secondly, in the latter half of the century, in which an opposite trend was observed, the downsizing in agricultural and manufacturing sectors was accompanied by defeats in several wars.⁵

The emergence of the central states in Western Europe coincided with weakening of the central administration in the Ottoman State. This process ended with local groups sharing power with the state. Attempts were made to describe the weakening of the Ottoman central administration and it was interpreted in several ways. According to Quataert, the hierarchical change in the ruling class was related to the changing character of war and the defeats that were suffered. Throughout this process, which Quataert named as demilitarization, the importance of the elite, who directed the war machine, decreased and skills in the field of finance started to gain importance.⁶

Therefore, in the 18th century, a new process began when the apparatus of administration was reshaped not only in the provinces, but also in the central district

3 Bruce McGowan, “Ayanlar Çağı (1699-1812)”, trans. Ayşe Berktaş, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi*, Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert (eds.), trans. Ayşe Berktaş et al., İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 2004, II, pp. 762-767.

4 Ahmet Tabakoğlu, *Türk İktisat Tarihi*, İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1994, pp. 41-44.

5 Mehmet Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet ve Ekonomi*, İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2000, pp. 211-215; Tabakoğlu, *Türk İktisat Tarihi*, p. 44; McGowan, “Ayanlar Çağı”, pp. 761-762; Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlı-Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi (1500-1914)*, İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1988, pp. 164-167.

6 Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, pp. 42-43.

of the country. Obviously, the most important change observed in this process is the actual transfer of political authority from the sultan to the bureaucracy.

On the other hand, according to Karpaz, the rise of the provincial notables originates from the status of elitism given by the state to those who served the state (based on their period of service) and was obtained by other parts of the community that were outside this hierarchy through their economic power.⁷ However, the rise of the notables should not be regarded as a social dynamism of the lower classes. It can be said also that the political and economic powers obtained by the provincial notables due to their roles within the state were frequently employed in areas outside their duties. This was due to the weakness of the administrative and supervisory apparatus.

The change experienced in the socio-economic structure of the 18th century Ottoman state caused various shifts in the community. For instance, while *timar* (military fief) holders, one of the two most fundamental elements of the Ottoman army, lost their power and prestige during this process; *janissaries*, who were among the dissatisfied groups, turned into organizers of the rebellions that broke out in Istanbul. The military section of the ruling class, which acquired the role of investor at the same time, seemed to have attained the opportunity of gaining wealth, both through the system of life-term revenue tax farming and pious foundations. The middle class provincial bureaucrats and notables who served in various management levels in the state strengthened their power as the partners and representatives of the life-term revenue tax farm holders in the provinces.

Parallel to these developments, some of the taxpaying subjects that had to leave farming were forced to make a choice between being soldiers or highwaymen. Eventually most managed to avoid paying taxes. At the same time, it is understood that villagers who wanted to be relieved from some of the tax burden, which increased due to the effect of the wars, started to look for more secure and suitable land or alternate occupations.

The Ottoman State, as it endeavored to reduce its expenses in parallel with those developments, also tried to increase its income and to balance its budget through policies like currency debasement, confiscation, imposing new taxes or increasing the rates of the existing taxes and internal borrowing. Among those policies, internal borrowing is the most effective one in terms of both obtaining additional income and its long-term effects on the whole of the social structure. To this end, first the method of tax farming, which was as old as the *timar* system, was spread so that it would inevitably support the tendency of *timar* areas becoming *mukâtaas*. The method became widespread in the 17th century and provided the state with

7 Karpaz, "Osmanlı Tarihinin Dönemleri", pp. 133-134.

monetary income and the *iltizam* (tax farm) holder with opportunities of profit, but it was abandoned when its long-term negative effects arose.

Iltizam holders, who owned the tax source for a temporary period in the tax farming system, gave priority to profit maximization and therefore did not take into consideration the long-term productivity of the production factors, causing the taxpaying subjects to suffer losses. Since those taxpayers were the fundamental elements of agricultural activity, this situation negatively affected the economy in the long run.⁸ In 1695, the state moved to replace the method of tax farming with the system of *malikâne* in order to eliminate the negative effects of the tax farming system on both *iltizam* holders and taxpaying subjects. It was thought that through this method, the monetary advantage of tax farming and the element of protection supplied by the *timar* system for the taxpaying subjects would be maintained.

It will be useful to mention two important social outcomes of the practice of *malikâne*, which influenced the 18th century as a method of internal borrowing. Firstly, the part of the community that the state borrowed money from, and therefore included in the wealth sharing, was comprised mostly of the members of the tax-exempt ruling class.⁹ It can be said that the state had to share the political power in the provinces with the provincial notables in parallel with this development. Secondly, during this process, an archetypical investor emerged who lived in Istanbul and who usually transferred the act of supervising the production to the local representatives.¹⁰ In brief, the process of transition from *timar* to tax farming, and from tax farming to *malikâne* strengthened the tendency of private ownership and supported the establishment of pious foundations.¹¹

The state tried to gather income revenues into the central treasury in cash by spreading the practice of *malikâne* and made extraordinary taxes permanent over the course of time. Eventually, the practice of collecting taxes directly weakened the taxpaying ability of the producers.¹² Extraordinary wartime taxes that were collected to meet war expenses and for other necessities were united, monetarized, and became also permanent.¹³ In the meantime, *imdâdiyye* tax, which was a kind of internal

8 Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet*, pp. 102-103; Pamuk, *Osmanlı-Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi*, p. 156; Tabakoğlu, *Türk İktisat Tarihi*, p. 187.

9 Erol Özvar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Malikâne Uygulaması*, İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2003, p. 26.

10 Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet*, p. III.

11 Tabakoğlu, *Türk İktisat Tarihi*, p. 207.

12 Bruce McGowan, *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe: Taxation, Trade and Struggle for Land 1600-1800*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 105.

13 McGowan, *Economic Life*, p. 109.

borrowing imposed to meet war expenses when necessary, was allocated to province and subprovince governors for their administrative and military expenses and became permanent beginning from 1718; thus, they were included in ordinary taxes.¹⁴

Consequently, the fact that the state had to increase its cash income beginning from the 17th century and start to apply policies to this end influenced the *timar* holders and taxpaying subjects, who were the two important elements of agricultural production. In the meantime, some timar holders left their land in order to look for additional income due to the insufficiency of their *timars*.¹⁵ Some of them had to transfer their *timars* to *iltizam* holders and migrate. In parallel with this development, some taxpaying subjects who were involved with agriculture migrated to big cities, especially to Bursa, Edirne and Istanbul, among other regions.¹⁶

3. Social Sciences and the Phenomenon of Migration

Before dealing with the causes of migration from the provinces in the Ottoman community, one should look briefly with a historical perspective at the contributions of social sciences in understanding the phenomenon of migration. Within the discipline of economics, the phenomenon of migration is regarded as a movement of workforce from regions where economic sources and facilities are insufficient compared to the available amount of workforce, to regions where sources and facilities are abundant. In this context, the fall and rise in the amount of two given regions are associated with the waves of economic narrowing and recovery.¹⁷ In the literature of the economic history, especially in England, the phenomenon of rural-urban migration is studied in association with industrialization.¹⁸ Anthropology further deals with the issue of migration on the basis of developed versus underdeveloped and modern versus traditional, and interprets the phenomenon of migration as a part of the modernization process.¹⁹

14 Tabakoğlu, “İmdâdiyye”, *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, XXII, pp. 221-222.

15 Tabakoğlu, *Türk İktisat Tarihi*, p. 208.

16 Ahmet Tabakoğlu, *Gerileme Dönemine Girerken Osmanlı Maliyesi*, İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1985, pp. 211-212.

17 Brinley Thomas, “Migration-Economic Aspects”, David L. Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, New York: Macmillan and The Free Press, 1968, X, p. 296.

18 Rondo Cameron, *A Concise Economic History of the World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 188.

19 Francis Watkins, “Migration”, Alan Bernard and Jonathan Spencer (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 370-371.

There is no consensus among the social sciences about what factors need to be regarded as determinant in the attempts to explain the phenomenon of migration. The factors that are given importance vary based on the relevant discipline's point of view. If we leave the priorities of gradation of causality aside, it can be said that the disciplines that handle the phenomenon of migration try to explain it based on the attractiveness or repulsiveness of the socio-economic or socio-cultural conditions in the places from which people migrate.

When we deal with the causes of migrations originating from the provinces in the 18th century Ottoman community, we will list the remarkable repulsive elements in terms of socio-economic aspects of the regions from which people migrate. However, it should not be forgotten that only some of those who were exposed to the same challenging or encouraging conditions in a region were induced to migrate.

It is also necessary to deal briefly with the common definition of the concept of migration which includes: "relatively permanent movement of persons over a significant distance".²⁰ Here, the terms "significant distance" and "permanence" in the definition need to be examined carefully, especially in the context of historical migrations.

First of all, the term "significant distance" should be understood as including economic, social and cultural differences between the departure and arrival points, a separate concept from the geographic distance which it implies. Otherwise, according to the definition above, when it is examined from the historical point of view, for instance, when a villager from a *timar* village of Gebze (Kocaeli) settles in a pious foundation or a life-term revenue tax farm, or an agricultural land belonging to a member of the ruling class near the village, he would not be regarded as an immigrant.

Yet, when the same villager settles in a nearby town and looks for an occupation other than in the field of agriculture, he could be regarded as an immigrant. Each of the villages mentioned above, however, are places where agricultural activity is the main occupation, but demonstrate different qualities in terms of production organization and tax liability. Therefore, even if the distance between the destination and the arrival place is short, the first example seems as appropriate as the second one to be identified as migration. Further, it should not be forgotten that under the historical conditions mentioned above, except for some big residential areas, the non-agricultural employment possibilities of the towns and cities are limited.

²⁰ William Petersen, "Migration-Social Aspects", David L. Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, New York: Macmillan and The Free Press, 1968, X, p. 286.

Likewise, the term “permanence” in the definition above is not clear enough. There is no consensus among social sciences about the criterion of a time period that is long enough for a person who migrates from one place to another to be regarded as an immigrant. People who move from one place, settle in another place and live there until they die are regarded as immigrants just like seasonal workers and nomads.

The permanence of any historical or modern migration seems to be closely related to the purpose, expectation and determination of the immigrant, and the opportunities and reactions presented by the arrival place. When historical migrations are taken into consideration, it should be emphasized that the attitude of the state is also a determinant in terms of permanence.

Here, it will be useful to deal with the concept of being “native”, which is closely connected with permanence. While some inhabitants of a city are regarded as native from a certain point of view, others are not regarded as native and they are described as strangers. Such evaluations, which reflect a universal tendency and which are based generally on the period of time spent in the residential place, seem to be functional in terms of the society and culture, except for their relative qualities. The processes of acculturation and socialization have a quality that lasts longer than the average human lifespan and sometimes can last a few generations. However, in a historical context, where the issue of being native is framed through legal arrangements, it is vitally important for immigrants to be considered as native in the shortest time possible.

In the medieval history of Western Europe, a serf who settled in any city and is not caught for a year and a day was regarded as free legally.²¹ But the regulations of the Ottoman Empire regarding voluntary migrations prescribed that immigrants who had not lived in a new settlement area for a certain time and are not recorded in the tax registry were to be sent back home. If the condition regarding tax is put aside, the time period necessary for an immigrant to be considered as native and not to be sent back home was determined as 15-20 years in the first half of the 16th century. This period was reduced to 10 years by the state in the 18th century.²²

21 Joyce E. Salisbury, “Europe”, Joyce E. Salisbury (ed.), *The Greenwood Encyclopedia Global Medieval Life and Culture*, Greenwood Press, 2009, p. 113.

22 Cengiz Şeker, *İstanbul Ahkâm ve Atik Şikâyet Defterlerine Göre 18. Yüzyılda İstanbul'a Yönelik Göçlerin Tasvir ve Tahlîli*, (Unpublished doctoral dissertation) İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2007, pp. 29-31.

4. Causes of Migration from Provinces in the 18th Century

Before dealing with the causes of the voluntary migrations from provinces in the 18th century, it will be useful to mention similar population movements that took place in the 17th century. Although its size had not yet been determined, the most remarkable example of population movement from provinces is the one that was influenced by the *Celâli Rebellions*. During this process, most of the villagers settled in places that were more secure but less suitable for agriculture; and some started work in animal husbandry. According to Pamuk, some of the reasons for that movement of population were impoverished *timar* holders leaving their *timars* behind, the subsequent transfer of authority to collect tax to *iltizam* holders, and the effects of the *Celâli Rebellions*.²³

Regarding the axis of cities that saw high levels of migration such as Kayseri (Karaman province), Divriği (Sivas province), Eğin (Diyarbakır province), Niğde (Karaman province), Sivas and Arapkir (Diyarbakır province), the phenomena that played a driving force in these migrations were issues such as the abuse of provincial officials, illegal tax collection, the existence of uncontrolled armed groups which had a negative effect on provincial security, the Ottoman-Persian wars, fires and various other disasters will be examined in details in the following.

a. The Abuse of the Provincial Officials

Although the 18th century is named as the “age of provincial notables” by some historians, in *Istanbul Ahkâm Registers* and *Atik Şikâyet Registers* there are only two examples showing or implying that the acts of provincial notables and officials caused migration from the provinces. Both examples took place in the second half of the 18th century and they are related to the migration of *dhimmi* (non-Muslim) taxpaying subjects in the hinterland of Istanbul. It is observed that, in the first example, some taxpaying subjects migrated from the villages of Terkos district (Çatalca) fiscal unit which was administered as a tax farm, leaving for the towns around Terkos due to *kesret-i mezâlim* (extreme oppressions).²⁴

In the second example regarding the migration from Pınarhisar (Kırkkilise), the cause of migration is stated as *kesret-i teaddiyat* (extreme transgressions).²⁵ However, the exact nature of the apparent oppressions and transgressions and the people who committed them are not stated clearly in either of the documents. There is

23 Pamuk, *Osmanlı-Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi*, p. 166.

24 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.İS.d, no. 9, p. 95.

25 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.İS.d, no. 11, p. 105.

only one example mentioning provincial notables and specific complaints against them in the sources mentioned above. In one instance from 1796, the taxpaying subjects who migrated from Çirmen township (Ormenion) were asked to pay tax in the name of the notable of Çirmen in their new settlement, the Bekçiler village of Silivri. Nevertheless, in this example, the notable does not seem to be directly related to the migration.²⁶

The registers of sultanic edicts that do include evaluations regarding the repulsive factors in the provinces present a different picture of the provincial notables and officials. In one sultanic edict of the period of Mahmut I (1730-1754) dated 1747, it is emphasized that the peace and welfare of the people of Istanbul depended upon preventing overpopulation within the city, and that the welfare of the provinces depended on determining the amount of tax in accordance with the financial resources of the people.²⁷ In this evaluation, which reflects the view of the state regarding the phenomenon of migration, two aspects are to be noted; the responsibilities of the provincial officials who undertake the duty of distribution and collection of taxes and the amount of taxes itself that could upset the balance of population between Istanbul and the provinces. In the same sultanic edict, it is emphasized that when the immigrants were asked why they came to Istanbul, they said they could not put up with the oppressions and transgressions of *vâlîs* (governors), *kâdîs* (judges), *nâîbs* (deputy judges), *âyân*s (provincial notables) and *murâbahacıs* (usurers).²⁸

However, the taxpaying subjects were generally regarded as being responsible for the problem of migration in the previous sultanic edicts of the early 18th century that banned migration to Istanbul. For instance, in the sultanic edict dated 1721, which belongs to the period of Ahmet III (1703-1730), it is stated that the reason why taxpaying subjects wanted to migrate to Istanbul was to avoid paying taxes.²⁹ In another sultanic edict dated 1734, it is stated that the ease and comfort experienced by the people who came to Istanbul as farmers or for other purposes was an attractive factor for migration.³⁰ Consequently, both sultanic edicts put the blame for the migration on the shoulder of the immigrants.

26 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.İS.d, no. 12, p. 297.

27 M. Münir Aktepe, "XVIII. Asrın İlk Yarısında İstanbul'un Nüfus Meselesine Dair Bazı Vesikalar", *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, 13 (Eylül 1958), p. 23.

28 Aktepe, "XVIII. Asrın İlk Yarısında", pp. 23-24.

29 Aktepe, "XVIII. Asrın İlk Yarısında", p. 4.

30 Aktepe, "XVIII. Asrın İlk Yarısında", p. 14.

The state's view of migration in the case of Istanbul changed over the course of time, beginning from the sultanic edict dated 1747 mentioned above, and further, the blame for migration was gradually put on the provincial officials, rather than the taxpayers who were the subjects of the migration process. A sultanic edict dated 1742 from Mahmut I era (1730-1754) gives a detailed list of the administrators who were regarded as being responsible for the problem of migration. In that edict, the names of the officials are listed one by one, including especially *viziers* and *beylerbeyis* (provincial commanders), judges, *kethuda yerleris* (colonels of the local cavalry corps), *janissary* field marshals, provincial notables, *mukâtaa voyvodalaris* (tax farming officers), *mîrî has zabıtlaris* (officers of the sultan's timars), and also executives and collectors of the revenues of pious foundations and *timar* holders who imposed unjustified extraordinary taxes on taxpaying subjects in order to close the deficit between their revenues and expenditures. Further, it is stated that the deficits in the budget of the state officials originated from their excessive expenditures.³¹

Unlike *Istanbul Ahkâm Registers* and *Atik Şikâyet Registers*, there are many examples in *Sivas* and *Karaman Ahkâm Registers*, which confirm the view in the sultanic edicts. It is seen in those registers that those who were generally called *cebâbire* (tyrants), *zaleme* (oppressors) or *mütegallibe* (usurpers) by both the taxpaying subjects and the state, are often emphasized to be an important factor behind the migration of taxpaying subjects, due to their illegal practices. Many elements of executive authorities like *mütesellims* (lieutenant-governors and local collectors of taxes and tithes), tax farmers, purchasing agents, *iltizam* holders, army officers, *janissaries*, deputy judges and provincial notables are included in the edict.

As an example, the people of Arapkir went before the Arapkir judge and sued the *mütesellim* who confiscated the money of the people whom he indebted unjustly through various means and attempted to damage their honour. The *mütesellim* in question collected an extra amount of 4941 *kurush* for himself along with the taxes of the year 1746. Before that, with a group of one hundred highwaymen, he also confiscated 10 or 15 akçes from the taxpaying subjects. Arapkir judge stated that the people would not endure any more and inevitably leave their villages if his oppression could not be ended.³²

The people of Divriği complained about something similar. They say that the *mütesellim* (who was a native of Divriği and a moneylender who had held the same position for twenty years) was a tyrant and an unjust person. The people

31 Aktepe, "XVIII. Asrın İlk Yarısında", pp. 21-22.

32 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 2, p. 398.

of Divriği wanted the *mütesellim*, who caused many people to migrate from the township due to his illegal practices, to be replaced by a person with empathy for taxpaying subjects.³³

It is seen clearly in the examples of Divriği and Arapkir that *mütesellims* are regarded as a causal factor behind the taxpaying subjects being dispersed and personally ruined through the *mütesellims'* illegal practices. Along with *mütesellims*, *iltizam* holders and military police chiefs are also among the officials that people complained about. It is understood that *iltizam* holders and military police chiefs in Sivas collected two or threefold poll tax from *dhimmi* taxpaying subjects and that the subjects who could not afford to pay it had to leave their villages.³⁴ Although it is forbidden for the natives of a town to work as deputy judges, it is stated that the deputy judge in Sivas who held that post for fifteen years indebted the taxpaying subjects through various ways. Further, he practiced nepotism and took sides in the law suits rendering the taxpaying subjects helpless.³⁵

Among the state officials who organize the regional distribution and collection of taxes and use their authorities for their own benefits are those called *mübâyaacıs* (purchasing agents). The taxpaying subjects of Eğin stated that Zarelioğlu Mehmed Bey, the purchasing agent, did not give them receipts when they paid their taxes. They also stated that the purchasing agent imprisoned some of them and demanded extra money. The people of Eğin sued the purchasing agent who resorted to illegal practices to ensure the amount of money he planned to collect was realized, but they were not successful.³⁶

Along with the officials who organized the distribution and collection of taxes, the provincial notables and some wealthy and influential people who collaborated with them were held responsible for the migration from provinces by the

33 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 146, 243; BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 2, p. 103.

34 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 238.

35 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 3, p. 104.

36 It is understood that the taxpaying subjects paid the tax by borrowing money but they had not obtained the payment receipt yet. Although they gave the wheat, barley and 3000 *kurush* that they obtained to the purchasing agent, it is stated that the amount that the purchasing agent collected from the taxpaying subjects by force exceeded 8000 *kurush*. See BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 7. The purchasing agent, Zarelioğlu Mehmed Bey, about whom there are many complaints, became the governor of Sivas later. He is also the brother of Köse Paşa, who is the most influential person of Divriği. See Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Anadolu Derebeyi Ocaklarından Köse Paşa Hanedanı*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998, pp. 4, 28-29, 67.

taxpayers. The complaints of the people of Sivas township are similar to those of some *timar* holders; in particular their complaint about the *Bezzâzistan Kethudası* (Representative of the Market Hall) who claimed to be a provincial notable and who intervened in the distribution of tax, causing the taxpaying subjects to be dispersed. The people of Sivas demanded that their claims had to be taken and returned to themselves from the representative who increased the tax more than fifty percent for his own benefit.³⁷ It is evident also that the provincial notables in Kayseri collected more taxes than usual.³⁸ The *dhimmi* taxpaying subjects of two villages in Kayseri claimed that some *dhimmis*, whom they defined as tyrants and unjust people, caused the taxpaying subjects to disperse.³⁹

In the *Atik Şikâyet Register* numbered 114, it is stated that 200 taxpaying subjects who went to Istanbul from the villages of Zara (Sivas) and Yarhisar (Sivas) before 1727 for business did not return.⁴⁰ And long after the *malikâne* holder's attempt to collect *ispence resmi* (poll tax) from the immigrants, the exodus from Zara did not stop. Records show that 200 more people from Zara migrated to Istanbul by 1744, about twenty years after that attempt. It is emphasized that those migrations originated from the oppression of two scoundrels: one Muslim and one *dhimmi*. The two men informed on the villagers to executive authorities by making false criminal accusations and they intervened in the distribution of taxes for their own advantage. It is claimed that their real aim was to harass and pester the villagers through those practices in order to seize their property.⁴¹

Those complaints, which were mentioned while giving the example of Zara, are not peculiar to Sivas only. It is notable that in Eğin and Kayseri, there were wealthy and influential people who forced the villagers to leave their land through similar practices and benefited from them.⁴²

37 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 3, p. 127.

38 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.KR.d, no. 1, p. 55.

39 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.KR.d, no. 1, p. 60.

40 BOA, A.DVNS.ŞKT.d, no. 114, p. 123.

41 BOA, A.DVNP.AHK.SP.d, no. 2, p. 42.

42 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 10. The *dhimmi* who was an element of oppression on taxpaying subjects in Eğin also committed counterfeiting. It is also seen that *dhimmi* moneychangers who exercised power on the villagers in Eğin through such applications supported some villagers – probably because they used those villagers for various jobs – and made the other villagers pay their share of taxes. See BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 2, p. 423 and BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 2, p. 463. For Kayseri, see BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.KR.d, no. 2, p. 139 and BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.KR.d, no. 2, p. 201.

b. Illegal Tax Collection

As previously indicated, according to the state in the first quarter of the 18th century, the reason behind the migrations from the provinces was the populace fleeing from their tax burden. However, towards the middle of the century, the view of the state on the problem of migration changed, and it was implied that the taxpaying subjects complained more about the illegal tax collection of the officials who distributed taxes, rather than the taxes themselves.

It seems that everyone involved tried to evade taxes whenever they could. This attitude caused the tax amount that would have normally been collected from immigrants to be passed on to others. For instance, in Eğin, it is understood that although no distinction of tax-exempt/tax-bound was made about *seferiyye* and *hazariyye* taxes, and although tax-exempt ruling class had taxable land and property, they avoided paying taxes by claiming that they were members of the military. Further, the taxpaying subjects of Eğin claimed that some of their citizens who migrated and settled in Istanbul regarded themselves as tax-exempt. The people of Eğin filed a lawsuit against their citizens in Istanbul in order to settle this serious problem, which would certainly be a cause of new migrations, and they wanted the lawsuit to be decided by the judge of Istanbul. They told the judge that they could not afford to pay taxes and that the situation caused them to be dispersed and ruined.⁴³

Similar complaints are observed in Kayseri, which was a source of migration and which was also obliged to pay to Karaman governor and *sancak* (subprovince) governors 24 purses of *imdâd-ı seferiyye* (wartime taxes).⁴⁴ This example substantiates the idea that the more serious problem for those living in a village is not the tax itself, but rather the frequent migration away from their village, because it decreases the number of taxpayers to share the fiscal burden. A typical account of this situation could be found in the statements belong to the deputy judge of Kayseri, another important township as a migration source.⁴⁵

43 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 2, p. 152.

44 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.KR.d, no. 1, p. 73.

45 “Kayseriyye kazâsına tâbî’ dörder ve beşer yüz ve dahi ziyâde menâzili hâvî ma’mûr ve âbâdân kurânun ekser ahâlî ve re’âyaları Âstâne-i sa’âdetümde tüccâr ve taşçı ve nakkâş amelesi ve kalfası olup her biri birer mahhale müntesib olduklarına binâen karyelerinün muharrir kalemiyle tahrîr olunmuş asıl hânelerinden birer mikdârı maktû’ kayd ve hisse-i tekâlif mutâlebe olunmamak üzere evâmîr-i aliyye ısdâr ve ba’zıları dahi karyelerinün harâb olmasını ve ismi nâ-ma’lûm cîsr ta’mîrine me’mûriyyetlerini veya hud karyelerinün âhar kazâyâ naklini îrâd vesâir bahâne ile hânelerün tenzil idtûrüp sefer vukû’unda evâmîr-i aliyyemle matlûb olan imdâd-ı seferiyye ve mekârî davarları

The taxpaying subjects of Puşadı district in Eğin, which was one of the important towns from which people migrate, expected the state to make things easier in terms of taxes for the villagers who did not migrate. The wartime tax of Arapkir subprovince for the year 1746 was 10 purses of akçe and the share of Puşadı district was 873,5 *kurush*. The taxpaying subjects of Puşadı claimed that if this amount, which was calculated based on the number of households, had not changed, the tendency to migrate would have increased; therefore, they demanded that 500 *kurush* be regarded as sufficient, as in years previous.⁴⁶

The second aspect of the tax issue which makes it a causal factor for migration is related to the amount of wartime taxes. In the complaints made by taxpaying subjects, the additions to the payment amounts determined by laws made by the officials who, themselves, were responsible for distributing and collecting taxes seem to be unjustified extraordinary taxes. When the complaints made by taxpaying subjects about Eğin tax farmers are examined, it becomes clear that the tax farmer collects funds under the names of *zahîre-baba*, *devr*, *selâmiyye*, *kaftan-baba*, *mübâşiriyye*, etc.⁴⁷ It is stated in the same place that this application is illegal.⁴⁸ The tax farmers and *mütesellims* in Arapkir township collected unjustified extraordinary taxes under the names of *kudûmiyye*, *zahîre-baba*, *kaftan-baba*, *nal-baba* and *mefruşat akçesi* similar to those in Eğin.⁴⁹

Although the state asserted many times that those taxes were illegal, it is understood that along with legal taxes, illegitimate taxes under those names continued to be collected. For instance, the tax farmer in Eğin tried to collect 2000 *kurush*, which was more than the wartime tax of Arapkir township (1500 *kurush*), as *selâmiyye akçesi*. The tax farmer tried to raise this sum through the support of some *dhimmi* taxpaying subjects of Eğin. Furthermore, the same tax farmer, together with the taxpaying subjects who agreed with him, filed a lawsuit against the villag-

ve zahîreden ve vüzerâ ve mîrmîrân vesâir askerî tâifesiñün mürûr u ubûr mesârifinden cümle ma'rifeti ve ma'rifet-i şer'le ber müceb-i defter hisselerine isâbet iden tekâlîflerini edâ eylemedüklerinden anlarun hisseleri sâirlerine tahmîl olunarak fukarâ-yı ahâlî ve re'ayanın tâkatleri kalmayup perâkende ve perîşân olmalarına ve tekâlîf-i mühimme-i seferiyyeniñ ta'tiline bâ'is" olunduğı belirtilmektedir. BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.KR.d, no. 2, p. 176.

46 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 2, p. 362 and BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 2, p. 403.

47 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 28.

48 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 3, p. 122.

49 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 3, p. 150. The wartime taxes determined for the governors of Sivas were 15.000 *kurush* and the share of Arapkir in it was 1500 *kurush*.

ers of Gemurgab and Apçağa who resisted paying *selâmiyye akçesi* in the presence of Eğin's deputy judge. The villagers unveiled three decrees in the court proving that those taxes were illegal.⁵⁰ The provincial notables were also among those who demanded unjustified extraordinary taxes.⁵¹

Another complaint made especially by *dhimmi* taxpaying subjects in the regions from which there were frequent migrations is *jizya*. However, the complaints were not about *jizya* itself, but the amount charged more than the law prescribed, as was the case with the wartime taxes. Those kinds of complaints centre on the fact that the *jizya* scale, which was determined in three levels, was raised one level during the determination of *jizya* tax by *jizya* collectors. *Jizya* collectors also included the people who were tax-exempt within the scope of the *jizya* tax, which was an effort to maximize their undeserved gains.

Although the legal *jizya* scale in Eğin was determined as 10 *kurush* for the highest level, 5 *kurush* for the middle level and 2.5 *kurush* for the lowest level, *jizya* collector charged 5 *kurush* for lowest level and 10 *kurush* for the middle level as *jizya*. He even charged children who legally did not have to pay *jizya*.⁵² As a result of the complaints of the people of Eğin, a decree was issued ordering that the extra money accrued by *jizya* collector be returned to its owners. However, after a short time, the *jizya* collector in question stated that the complaints were not true and that the *dhimmi* taxpaying subjects made complaints acting upon the provocation of some evil *dhimmi* taxpaying subjects in Istanbul. In this record, we find that when any lawsuit regarding such an issue was filed, the lawsuit was decided by the Imperial Council after the tax was collected and that the decree issued as a result of the complaints of *dhimmis* was deemed invalid.⁵³

Furthermore, the *dhimmi* taxpaying subjects of Talas in Kayseri made similar complaints about the *jizya*. It is stated that in Talas, taxes from the top level to the low level 4, 2 and 1 gold coin of 25 *kurush* respectively, or in cases where it was difficult to obtain gold 11, 5.5 and 2.75 *kurush* respectively, should be collected from *dhimmis* based on their financial payment capabilities.⁵⁴ *Dhimmis* living in other Kayseri townships than Talas also made similar complaints. The *jizya* collector, it is stated, not only increased the *jizya* amount but also collected 40 or 50 *kurush* more from the *dhimmi* taxpaying subjects under the name of *istical akçesi*. It is

50 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 3, p. 204.

51 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 3, p. 303.

52 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 12.

53 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 24.

54 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.KR.d, no. 2, p. 3.

emphasized in the complaints made by the taxpaying subjects that such practices played an important role in increasing migration.⁵⁵

Along with unjustified extraordinary taxes and *jizya*, there are complaints about poll taxes, but they are not as frequent as unjustified extraordinary taxes and *jizya*. The only complaint we see about poll tax is by the *dhimmi* villagers of Zara. Thus the poll tax is also among the taxes that are collected more than the law prescribes. In this example, it is stated that *iltizam* holders and military police chiefs of Zara demanded a two or threefold poll tax from the taxpaying subjects.⁵⁶

Finally, regarding taxes, it will be useful to mention the issue of tithe. It is understood that the rate of tithe prescribed by the law is one-fifth in Eğin, Arapkir and Sivas.⁵⁷ Additionally, it is stated that in Ürgüp, the rate of tithe is one-eighth for the agricultural products of the taxpaying subjects.⁵⁸ However, some *timar* holders and *malikâne* holders demanded one-fifth instead of one-eighth from the taxpaying subjects, which is contrary to the law. One must remember that in the province of Karaman, which includes Ürgüp, the rate of tithe is limited to one-fifth. It is possible that Ürgüp (which was in the same province as Kayseri and Niğde, two towns from which people often migrated), received some of the migrants from neighboring townships in from east to west, due to its relatively low rate of tithe.

c. Existence of Uncontrolled Armed Groups

Another cause of migration from the provinces was the violent acts of uncontrolled armed groups or highwaymen. There are many complaints that groups of highwaymen who sometimes presented themselves as soldiers and policemen around the provincial officials of the state, or who sometimes worked independently, and who posed a great threat for both villagers' and travellers' security of life and property. Those armed groups interrupted the flow of daily life by plundering the goods of villagers and travelers, even killing and wounding people. However, the state expected taxpaying subjects, who were already under economic pressures

55 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.KR.d, no. 2, p. 43. Özkaya states that some taxpaying subjects who did not want to pay *jizya* preferred working as shepherds in some farms or assistants to the collectors of *jizya*. See Yücel Özkaya, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda XVIII. Yüzyılda Göç Sorunu", (ayrı basım), *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 14 (1983), p. 181.

56 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 238.

57 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 35; BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 2, p. 316 and BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 96.

58 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.KR.d, no. 2, p. 207.

of various elements, to struggle against highwaymen. To this end, in 1733, the taxpaying subjects of Eğin were bound with a vow of 10.000 *kurush* to catch and surrender the group of highwaymen who appeared in their township, if they came to their township again. The group of highwaymen left Eğin for a short time, but they appeared again after fewer than ten years passed.⁵⁹ It was not only Eğin that was under the pressure of highwaymen. Due to some villagers of Kesme village in Divriği becoming highwaymen in 1727, half of the villagers left their homes and it was assumed that others would also leave their village and move to safer places if security was not re-established.⁶⁰

Some groups of highwaymen were controlled and guided by *janissaries*, such as a group in Eğin which plundered properties and killed people. The members of this particular group did not obey an official who ordered them to join a military campaign. Although the state thought that those *janissaries* it defined as highwaymen and other armed groups that threatened security were a serious obstacle in terms of order and prosperity, it could not intervene on time and in necessary places to mitigate their effects on the law-abiding population. When troops were sent to the region to bring them under control, groups of highwaymen disappeared before the militia arrived and appeared again as soon as the troops left the region, so the highwaymen continued their activities, undeterred.⁶¹

In certain regions in Anatolia during the 18th century, especially in the places where the state had difficulty extending help, groups of highwaymen would recruit men from various sections of the community, thereby eliminating security for the locals for some time to come. The most common of the gangs of highwaymen were irregular militiamen unattached to a household. For instance, when thirty-one soldiers who were household guards of the Sivas provincial commander were dismissed, the first thing that those soldiers did was to engage in robbery.⁶² It is

59 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 21.

60 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 22. As a matter of fact, there are two documents confirming that some taxpaying subjects of the village of Kesme dispersed a round Sivas, Tokat, Istanbul and Edirne in or before 1730. See BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.İS.d, no. 1, p. 107 and BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.İS.d, no. 1, p. 110. Moreover, it is stated that the highwaymen in Kesme came down from Mount Kaz and settled in the village, that they had been investigated and expelled and that they returned with a desire of vengeance after a while. Most of the population of the village, which consisted of about 300-400 households, had to leave their village. See BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 24.

61 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 2, p. 34.

62 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 1, p. 204. When the subgovernor of Adilcevaz (Diyarbakır) was robbed in Kurtbeli (Sivas) and all of his possessions were taken, an investigation

clearly stated that each provincial notable in the villages and townships of Niğde was instrumental in this diminishment of security and the notables also caused villagers and travellers to be prostrated. Those groups defined as “mobs” consisted of soldiers, Kurds and Turkmens and officials determined they were to be eliminated for the peace and security of villagers and travellers.⁶³

It is necessary to mention nomads as another reason behind the migration from provinces. The state tried to settle nomadic tribes in the 18th century, one of the settlement regions being Central Anatolia. However, it was not very easy for nomadic tribes to put down roots and live in permanent settlements and their presence also became a source of trouble for the villagers. The most serious problem the villagers faced during this process was the destruction of planted areas by the nomads’ animal herds.

Nomads posed a direct threat to villagers in terms of security of property by preventing them from earning their living and sometimes threatening their safety. The activities of some nomadic tribes belonging to the congregation of Rışvan Kurds in and around Divriği were aggravating to the villagers. They not only let their animals enter planted areas and destroy their crops, but also stole and confiscated the animals of the villagers, and even went so far as to kill members of the community. The villagers had nothing else to do but migrate when they faced such tyrannies.⁶⁴ The villagers of Kızılcaviran in Divriği complained about the same nomads for similar reasons.⁶⁵ It is understood that the area in which the members of the Rışvan tribe were active was not limited to Divriği and that it expanded to Zara. When the *sancak* governor of Karesi went to visit the Erzurum minister of war, he stopped over in Zara and his money and possessions were stolen. After the investigation, it was understood that the thief was a member of Rışvan tribe.⁶⁶ Meanwhile, nomads also dared to impose an unjustified yearly duty like usurpers did.⁶⁷

Members of the tribe of Lekvanik Kurds consisting of more than one hundred and fifty-seven cavalymen killed people, plundered and committed theft. It was

ensued. As a result, it was found that this robbery was probably committed by irregular military forces who had been dismissed by the provincial commander of Sivas. When they were dismissed, they said plainly; “We will go to Kurtbeli and rob people.”

63 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.KR.d, no. 1, p. 280.

64 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 2, p. 176.

65 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 2, p. 321.

66 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 2, p. 330.

67 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 2, p. 394.

decided that the villagers of Harmancık (Bursa) and Köstere (Kayseri) districts in particular would have to migrate if those groups were not neutralized.⁶⁸ However, it is apparent that they were not neutralized because the governor of Karaman, who was appointed to follow those highwaymen, was on an expedition.⁶⁹

d. Ottoman-Persian Wars

Ottoman-Persian wars, which continued intermittently and which lasted almost the whole 18th century, interest us here only with its indirect effect on migration from the provinces. The route the Ottoman army followed while heading east passed through areas hit by frequent migrations. When this situation and the long period of the wars are taken into consideration, the effects of Persian wars seem to be either limited, or it is possible they were simply not recorded sufficiently. In *Atik Şikâyet Registers* and *Istanbul Ahkâm Registers*, there are only three examples in which the effects of Ottoman-Persian wars are emphasized as a reason behind the migration from the provinces. Two of them are related to Eğin and one of them is related to Sivas; they are dated 1727, 1735 and 1746 respectively. The *dhimmi* taxpaying subjects of Eruşla village in Eğin stated that their village, consisting of twenty-eight households, was on the route of the expedition of the Ottoman army and that they would not be able to pay taxes if their fellow villagers who had moved on to Istanbul did not return.⁷⁰

The *dhimmi* taxpaying subjects of Şirzi village in Eğin, which consists of three households, expressed a concern that most of the villagers had recently moved to Istanbul and now the remaining population had to pay the tax shares of those villagers, even to the point where they were forced to borrow money to pay their taxes from the commencement of the Iran expeditions. Instead they proposed that the state should collect taxes from their fellow villagers in Istanbul.⁷¹ Along with Eğin, it is seen that those wars emphasized as a factor behind migration from Sivas, too. The *dhimmis* that migrated from the village of Ganem in Sivas a few years before 1746 stated that they migrated because of the increasing tax amounts during the expedition periods.⁷²

68 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.KR.d, no. 2, p. 67.

69 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.KR.d, no. 2, p. 97.

70 BOA, A.DVNS.ŞKT.d, no. III, p. 311.

71 BOA, A.DVNS.ŞKT.d, no. 149, p. 190.

72 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.İS.d, no. 2, p. 169.

Similar evaluations to the examples above are seen in *Sivas* and *Karaman Ahkâm Registers*. It is mentioned, for example, that the village of Hozekrek in Eğin was on the route of the army just like the village of Geruşla, and that its placement along that route was a factor that caused migrations during the expedition periods. It is understood that the lands of Hozekrek were left uncultivated for years because most of its inhabitants migrated.⁷³ Another dimension of the negative effects of the expeditions on the taxpaying subjects can be observed in the example of Niğde, where an official who was appointed to register the recruits collected more than the prescribed *zahîre-baha* tax in some villages.⁷⁴

e. Fires and Disasters

Along with the factors that have already been discussed, there are some examples, though very few, mentioning that fires and disasters were also causes of migration. Many people had to leave their hometown due to the two fires that broke out in Şile. After the first fire that broke out in Şile some time before 1728, many taxpaying subjects settled around Galata.⁷⁵ The second fire that is said to have broken out in the latter half of the century took place in Yeniköy (Şile) and precipitated a migration to Kocaeli.⁷⁶ Additionally about 20-30 taxpaying subjects who survived after the plague that claimed the lives of about 300-400 people in Molova (Midilli) settled in Istanbul and Izmir.⁷⁷ Thus, disasters like fire and plague that broke out in any region also triggered migration.⁷⁸

f. Population Pressure

The phenomena that are listed above as the reasons for migrations from the provinces that took place in the 18th century are based on various historical resources and statements made in various contexts. Apart from those reasons, there are clues suggesting that population pressure in the regions from which people migrated may have played some role in encouraging migration. Most of the villages of the townships other than Divriği and Sivas, (about which we have not been able to

73 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.SS.d, no. 3, p. 362.

74 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.KR.d, no. 2, p. 106.

75 BOA, A.DVNS.ŞKT.d, no. 119, p. 36.

76 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.İS.d, no. 14, p. 64.

77 BOA, A.DVNS.ŞKT.d, no. 89, p. 373.

78 BOA, A.DVNS.ŞKT.d, no. 119, p. 36; BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.İS.d, no. 14, p. 64 and BOA, A.DVNS.ŞKT.d, no. 89, p. 373.

find sufficient data and from which people frequently migrated in the 18th century), were among the most populous villages at the beginning of the 19th century. Among those villages whose populations in 18th century we do not know are; Kesme, Pingan (Divriği), Zara (Sivas), İliç (Eğin), Fertek and Misli (Niğde), all of which became districts at the beginning of the next century. In light of those examples, it appears there was a remarkable population pressure in the regions mentioned above and that it could be a determinant factor for migrations.⁷⁹

5. Conclusion

During the process of the monetarization of the economy and the weakening of the central administration in the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire tried to collect tax revenues in the central treasury in the form of cash by extending the system of *malikâne*. This initiative paved the way for the military class and the local power elites and representatives of the military class to be empowered both politically and economically. During this process, the extraordinary taxes that had been imposed to meet the war expenses in general were made permanent.

Ottoman-Persian wars, fires, disasters and population pressures aside, phenomena mentioned in this article such as abuse by provincial officials, illegal tax collection, and the existence of uncontrolled armed groups that threaten security in the provinces are seemingly related to the expansion of the *malikâne* system. However, these three phenomena, that can arguably be seen as the main reasons for the migration from the provinces, are usually associated with the structure of provincial organization rather than with *malikâne* holders.

It was within this context that complaints about the officials who were responsible for distributing and collecting taxes come to the forefront, amidst the chorus of complaints of taxpaying subjects about the provincial officials. Those officials who oppressed the taxpaying subjects and transgressed their rights are named as tyrants, unjust people and usurpers. It is understood that officials like lieutenant-governors and local collectors of taxes and tithes, *iltizam* holders, military police chiefs, and purchasing agents were among the influential people of the regions where they worked, and that they used their official duties for their own economic and social benefits and collaborated with wealthy and dominant taxpaying subjects.

While the decrease in the number of the households in the regions from which people migrated had already increased the amount of taxes to be paid per person, it is seen that the provincial officials who were appointed to distribute and collect

79 Şeker, *İstanbul Ahkâm ve Atik Şikâyet Defterlerine Göre Göçler*, p. 74.

taxes collected unjustified extraordinary taxes, over and above those prescribed by legislation. It is also apparent that tax evasion by the members of the military class who used their status as an excuse for tax evasion further increased the burden of taxes on ordinary taxpaying subjects. Regular taxes like *jizya*, poll tax and tithe were collected more than what was prescribed by the legislation and *jizya* collectors, iltizam holders, military police chiefs and *malikâne* holders were those behind the collection of these inflated taxes.

It is understood that along with the abuse of the provincial officials and illegal tax collection, the acts of various groups of highwaymen such as hijacking, robbery, plundering, wounding and killing paved the way for migration. The archives also show that irregular military forces and villagers sometimes joined the groups of highwaymen that were controlled and guided by *janissaries*. Some nomadic Kurdish and Turkmen tribes also had a negative impact on the security of provinces.

The Causes of Rural Migrations in 18th Century Ottoman Society

Abstract ■ Voluntary migrations in Ottoman society have always taken place side by side with the forced migrations imposed by the state. In spite of sultanic decrees forbidding free migrations even from the time of Sulaiman the Lawgiver, this kind of social mobility was unstoppable. Rural migrations in the 18th century are closely associated with changes that took place in the socio-economic structure of the Ottoman society of that time. Characterized by the monetarization of the economy and the weakening of the central administration, this period included attempts by the Ottoman State to extend life-term revenue tax farming, a practice designed to collect taxes destined for the central treasury in cash. The practice enabled the strengthening of both the tax-exempt ruling class and the local power holders who acted as their associates and representatives. The consequences of this development involved the misuses of provincial administrators, the practice of illegal tax collection and the loss of security, etc., all of which played influential roles in 18th century rural migrations.

Keywords: Voluntary Migrations, Taxpaying Subjects, Life-Term Revenue Tax Farming, Tax-Exempt Ruling Class, Provincial Administration, Distribution and Collection of Taxes

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