

Devlet Korkar Muhacir Sıralanır: Göç Kategorilerini Değerlendirmede Bir Yöntem Olarak Tarihsel Analiz*

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Öz

Bu makale, göç rejimlerinin tarihlerinin, kurumlar ve yasal kategoriler tarafından zorunlu göç çalışmalarında kullanılan kavramların üretilme biçimlerini aydınlatabileceğini iddia etmektedir. 1860'da Muhacirin Komisyonunun kurulmasının akabinde Osmanlı Devleti, muhacirlik konusunu muvakkat bir mesele olmaktan çıkartıp göçü ve yerleşimi merkezi yönetim yoluyla düzenlemeye başlamıştır. Osmanlıca muhacir kelimesinin tercümelerinde göçmen (migrant), nüfus azaltıcı (emigrant), nüfus arttırıcı (immigrant) ve mülteci (refugee) ifadelerinin hepsi yer alır. Terimin anlamındaki bu belirsizlik onun tarihsel kullanımının maddi önemi ile uğraşmayı gerektirir. Çağdaş çeviriler, hareket koşullarını vurgulamakla birlikte göçmen tecrübelerini belirlemek noktasında göçmen nüfusun iç bölümlenmelerine dayalı Osmanlı idari kategorileri de aynı derecede önemlidir. Bu makalede Osmanlı Muhacirin Komisyonunun kurumsal tarihini, organizasyon yapısını ve politikalarını inceleyerek yönetimin oluşmasının göçmen nüfusta cinsiyet, yaş, sınıf ve din temelinde nasıl alt kategoriler oluşturduğu görülebilecektir. Göç yönetiminin tarihsel analizi, Osmanlı göçmen teşekkülünün süreçlerini araştırmak için daha net bir çerçeve sunar ve zorunlu göç konusunu çalışan uzmanların göç kategorilerinin evrimini ve devam eden etkisini daha derinlemesine görmelerini sağlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Yönetim • Göç rejimleri • Göçmen kategoriler • Damgalama • Osmanlı İmparatorluğu

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State Fears and Immigrant Tiers: Historical Analysis as a Method in Evaluating Migration Categories*

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Abstract

This article argues that histories of migration regimes can illuminate ways in which institutions and legal categories produce concepts used in studies of forced migration. Following the development of the Immigrant Commission (Muhacirin Komisyonu) in 1860, the Ottoman State shifted from addressing the issue of immigration on an ad hoc basis to organizing migration and settlement through a central administration. Translations of the Ottoman term “muhacir” include migrant, emigrant, immigrant, and refugee. The ambiguity of this term requires engagement with the material significance of its historical usage. Contemporary translations highlight conditions of movement, but Ottoman administrative categories based on internal divisions within the immigrant population were equally important in determining migrant experiences. Through exploring the institutional history, organization, and policies of the Ottoman Immigrant Commission, this article considers how the development of administration created sub-categories within the migrant population based on sex, age, class, and religion. Historical analysis of migration administration offers a more precise framework for investigating processes of Ottoman immigrant incorporation and provides researchers of forced migration insight into the evolution and persisting impact of migration categories.

Keywords

Governance • Migration regimes • Migrant categories • Labeling • Ottoman Empire

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In the second half of the nineteenth century, millions of Muslims migrated from former Ottoman lands, fleeing an encroaching Russian Empire in the North Caucasus and Crimea, on the one hand, and nationalist struggles in the Balkans, on the other.¹ This mid-nineteenth-century influx of refugees into the Ottoman Empire was not the first time the state had welcomed large groups from elsewhere, nor was the immigrants' large-scale settlement the first attempt by Ottoman bureaucrats to employ population politics to facilitate state security. Despite these historical precedents, officials did not create an independent institution for migration administration until January 5, 1860, in response to mass migrations following the Crimean War. The establishment of the Immigrant Commission (*Muhacirin Komisyonu*) signaled a shift in official strategy. Rather than relying exclusively on local and regional arrangements, the Commission approached immigration as an issue deserving centrally coordinated management. This centralized administration was intended to facilitate immigrant incorporation through enumerating, categorizing, and systematically placing newcomers.

Studies of forced migration and resettlement often employ the term refugee as a static analytical category. Rather than a neutral concept based on defining movement, "refugee" is a term attached to the distribution of rights and resources. As such, the term gains meaning in relation to state and international migration regimes. Both migration regimes and categories have developed over time. Historical studies of emergent and changing migration regimes offer a method to analyze the production and material consequences of migrant classifications.

The Ottoman term *muhacir* was used interchangeably to indicate immigrants and what contemporary parlance would distinguish as refugees, asylum seekers, or IDPs (Kale, 2014, p. 267). The term retained its broad applicability throughout the late nineteenth century, but the development of centralized Ottoman migration administration lent new significance to the concept of *muhacir*. Following the establishment of the Immigrant Commission, laws and state strategies structured elements of newcomers' arrival, placement, and daily experiences within the empire. Whereas the label *muhacir* could apply to any immigrant, with the creation of a centralized administration, rights to entry and aid were allocated according to signifiers such as sex, age, class, and religion. These subdivisions within the category affected interactions among policies, officials, and newcomers.

¹ Historians have struggled to agree upon precise figures, but perhaps 223,000 Tatars left the Crimea for the Ottoman Empire during this era, and between 1861 and 1866 more than a million Circassians departed from the Caucasus (Karpat, 1985, pp. 67–69). Following the Russian-Ottoman war of 1877–1878, one and a half to two million immigrants fled from the Balkans and Caucasus (Karpat, 1985, p. 70; Kasaba, 2009, pp. 117–118). Another 640,000 arrived following the 1912–1913 Balkan Wars (Tekeli, 1994). Aside from those migrating immediately after these main conflicts, several hundred thousand more immigrants arrived in the Ottoman Empire around the turn of the century.

The rhetorical ambiguity of the term *muhacir* speaks to ongoing discussions in the field of Refugee Studies. Early in the development of the discipline, Zetter (1988; 1991) outlined the material importance and outcomes attached to the act of labeling types of movement. More recently, scholars have confronted the analytical shortcomings of the category of refugee, which reflects a policy-oriented status rather than an empirical condition. Although descriptions of the international refugee regime typically take the 1951 Refugee Convention as their starting points, assessments of the historical origins of the international refugee regime have critiqued the contemporary framework through highlighting alternative state and non-state responses to population displacement (Elie, 2010; Karatini, 2005). This historical approach traces the origins of the political and analytical separation of refugees and migrants while also commenting on how this separation can undermine refugees' long-term economic and social outlooks (Long, 2013).

Discussions regarding labeling underline ways in which the political nature of the term refugee creates meaning through the rights it engenders vis-à-vis other migrants (Bakewell, 2011; Scalettaris, 2007). Labels of forced migration are related not only to categorizations of movement by scholars and states, but also to the distribution of resources and rights extending far beyond the immediate circumstances of arrival. This paper applies this insight in investigating how the creation of migration administration contributed to creating meaningful political and economic distinctions among newcomers in the Ottoman Empire. Historical analysis of evolving migration regimes highlights the related history of the concept of refugee and its implications for resettlement and incorporation.

Within the Ottoman context, the flexible nature of the term *muhacir* has led researchers to retroactively engage in the work of categorization. Given the economic oppression, religious violence, forced resettlement, and policies of expulsion underlying mass migrations in 1860-1865 and 1877-1879, historians have traditionally applied the label refugee in a reflexive manner to describe almost all nineteenth-century Muslim immigrants. Nevertheless, close evaluations of the conditions of migrant departure from the Russian Empire highlight complex and varying reasons for mobility, 'mixed flows,' circular and return migration, and elite movement (Meyer, 2007; Williams, 2000). Reassessment of the circumstances of departure has added nuance to the prevailing categorizations of both the major episodes of mass migration and smaller-scale movements occurring over multiple decades. Yet, this scholarship has by and large failed to depict the state's administrative approach as equally important in considering the outcomes of these migrations. In short, this discussion continues to focus on distinguishing migrants based on their experiences and motivations for departure rather than explicitly engaging with what the term *muhacir* signified in the developing political and organizational strategies of an

evolving migration regime. Following the creation of the Immigrant Commission, such laws and settlement tactics as tiered systems of rights and aid structured elements of newcomers' arrival, placement, and daily experiences. Researchers should therefore examine classifications emerging within aid and settlement policies to grapple with meaningful differences in status within the larger category of Muslim immigrant.

The late-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire presents a useful example to assess the development of a sophisticated migration regime in response to large-scale population movements. During this era, Ottoman leaders launched a series of economic, administrative, legal, and political reforms intended to increase the power of the central government, augment the productivity of the population, and encourage affiliation with the state. The creation of the Immigrant Commission reflected broader changes in the relationship between state entities and Ottoman subjects. This article explores the formation of migration administration through a qualitative historical analysis of state-generated sources. In particular, I assess state ideals of organization and migrant settlement, considering how the development of migration administration contributed to a more sophisticated immigration regime ultimately activated by officials, migrants, and others.

Just as state and international migration and refugee regimes are the outcomes of historical processes, so too are the labels emerging from those regimes. Through incorporating historical analysis of developing regimes, researchers of forced migration can better assess the evolution and implications of non-static, context-specific categories. Qualitative analysis is a traditional methodological approach in history writing. In allowing researchers to evaluate the evolution of mobility regimes and labels, it remains an essential way to approach forced migration in the Mediterranean. After assessing the context, institutional history, and organizational ideals of a developing Ottoman migration administration, I will conclude by evaluating this methodology and suggesting other approaches to exploring emergent Ottoman migrant and refugee regimes.

Context

Ottoman demographic anxieties and trans-imperial population politics. The history of Ottoman migration administration is best understood within larger trends in the empire's management of its population and ongoing concerns about the state's economic welfare and security. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire faced manpower shortages and lacked intensive cultivation of its arable land, and Ottoman officials viewed increasing the population as a route to improved defensive capacity and economic development. Ongoing concerns about population and territorial losses throughout the first half of the nineteenth century

underlay the empire's liberal migration regime, epitomized in a post-Crimean War invitation to settlers from Europe and America. This invitation promised religious freedom, choice land, and tax exemptions to all who could prove that they had means and were willing to pledge allegiance to the sultan (Karpas, 1985, p. 62). Following the Crimean War, the empire continued to lose land and subjects. As a result of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878 and the Treaty of Berlin, the empire ceded two-fifths of its territory and 5.5 million people (Shaw & Shaw, 1997, p. 191). The outcome of the Treaty of Berlin exacerbated Ottoman economic concerns. Faced with the threat of national separatist movements and foreign intervention, the empire shifted to a less liberal immigration policy in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Non-Muslim migrants, particularly those arriving in large numbers, were more frequently denied entry by the Ottoman state (Kale, 2014, pp. 252–271).

Strategic interest in population management was not unique to nineteenth-century immigrations. As early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both the Ottoman and Russian Empires attempted to settle nomads as a component in establishing and safeguarding their borders (Kasaba, 2009, 65–70). Aside from sedentarization, population removal and colonization became increasingly visible tactics of state policy. Throughout the eighteenth century, Ottomans and Russians engaged in acts of “demographic warfare,” described by Mark Pinson (1970, p. 1) as exchanges “of populations, used to bolster the position of one state in territories either threatened by or recently acquired from the other state.” Through these informal population exchanges, Christians and Muslims swapped positions along the changing Ottoman-Russian border.

The extent of Tatar and Caucasian migrations in the 1860s took the Ottoman Empire by surprise. The ideal immigrant described in the 1857 invitation had a certain amount of wealth, which had to be proven to the Ottoman consul in the country of application (Karpas, 2002, p. 786). In contrast, the Muslim immigrants were an intense drain on the Ottoman treasury, requiring assistance for transport, temporary and long-term housing, provisions, and farming supplies. Concerns about the cost to the central treasury, particularly when migrants remained in the capital, contributed to decisions to move migrants to the provinces as quickly as possible and remained a constant concern in addressing potential corruption (Y.PRK.KOM 3.24, 1881; Y.PRK.MYD 3.11, 1883).² Though the Muslim migrants generally required

² Primary sources in this paper are from the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's Office, hereafter ‘the Ottoman Archives’). Abbreviations for collections used within the text refer to Bab-ı alî Evrak Odası Evrakı (BEO), Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi (DH.MKT), İrade Dahiliye (I.DH), İrade Meclis-i Mahsus (I.MMS), Meclis-i Vala Evrakı (MVL), Yıldız Sadaret Hususi Maruzat Evrakı (Y.A.HUS), Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Dahiliye Nezareti Maruzatı (Y.PRK.DH), Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Komisyonlar Maruzatı (Y.PRK.KOM), and Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Yaveran ve Maiyyet-i Seniyye Erkan-ı Harbiye Dairesi (Y.PRK.MYD). Ottoman sources listed sometimes appear with dates from the *Hicri* calendar. In such cases, I have included both *Hicri* and Gregorian calendar years.

such assistance, they still offered essential and potentially immediate internal and external security benefits. Migrants were used as colonizers on border regions as an ongoing component of demographic warfare. They also became a crucial tool in the effort to sedentarize nomads and an essential component in the extension of Ottoman central control over its provinces, as the Immigrant Commission deliberately settled immigrants in internal frontier zones on lands confiscated from nomadic pastoralists (Cuthell, 2005, p. 17; Kasaba, 2009, pp. 104–109; Rogan, 1999, p. 85). Economic success was an idealized component of immigration policy, but the sheer number of refugee arrivals and the relative low-cost and low-time commitment of settlement for security purposes determined initial state responses.

Following the Treaty of Berlin, the distribution of groups within the Ottoman Empire became as essential to security as the colonization of border regions. The Russian-Bulgarian success in creating an autonomous Bulgaria was realized through the creation of a Christian majority via expulsions of Muslims during the 1877-1878 War, and this lent a new urgency to establishing numerical dominance throughout the empire. The Treaty of Berlin required Ottoman reform in its six eastern provinces, and specifically mandated increased protection and representation for Armenian populations. While Ottomanism, or equality among ethnicities and religious groups, remained official policy, the threat of European intervention in areas with a large proportion of Christians lent migrants an important role in increasing the Muslim percentage of the population throughout Anatolia. This was a well-known policy within the bureaucracy by the last decades of the nineteenth century. For example, in 1890, officials in Muş, in Eastern Anatolia, noted that the primary reason for settling migrants in the area would be to equalize the distribution of Christians and Muslims, as there were currently much more of the former (I.DH 1185.92756, 1307/1890). Another specifically noted the imperial order encouraging the increasing of the Muslim population, and reported the decision of the Council of Ministers to settle migrants from the Caucasus in Erzurum, Van and Hakkari (Y.A.HUS 314.13 1312/1894). Both the threat of European intervention on behalf of Christian communities and the growing proportion of Muslims as a result of the immigrations encouraged Ottoman pan-Islamism, or the use of Islamic symbols to strengthen internal cohesion and loyalty to the state. Caring for Muslim migrants remained an important component of state legitimacy as derived by the role of the Sultan-Caliph, to the extent that a later iteration of the Migration Commission was named The High Islamic Immigration Commission (*Muhacirin-i İslamiye Komisyonu Alisi*), under the leadership of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909) (Karpas, 2002, p. 697).

The Ottoman state's initial response to the refugee influx was framed by security and economic concerns, but settlement strategies and aid policies were also conditioned by the state's modernizing reforms. Migration administration became intertwined in

Ottoman efforts to craft a healthy, productive, and loyal populace. Following the *Tanzimat* era (1856-1876), rank and file bureaucrats subscribed to the belief that the state could organize outcomes of social and economic well-being for its subjects (Reinkowski, 2005, pp. 195–214).³ During both the *Tanzimat* and the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, standardizing curricula, initiating a quarantine administration and sanitation regulations, developing a systematic census, and founding vocational orphanages were components of state centralization and endeavors in social engineering (Rogan, 1996; Yosmaoğlu, 2006).

Centralized migration administration arose during an era of ongoing population anxiety and efforts to organize development by the modernizing state. The extent of forced migration in the era, economic limitations, and security concerns contributed to a shift toward less liberal immigration policies. As a result, the economic promise of self-sufficient immigrants invigorating the Ottoman countryside was traded for the anticipated stability of a Muslim immigrant population. Under these circumstances, officials developed strategies to efficiently organize immigrant settlement and reduce overall cost to the state. Budgetary concerns also radically changed the institutions attached to administration itself. Throughout the fifty year period following the Crimean War, the Ottoman migration administration gained and lost members and appeared and disappeared as an independent organization in response to fluctuating numbers of arriving refugees and financial constraints. These fluctuations are themselves essential in considering outcomes of migrant settlement, as the lack of stability within migration administration contributed not only to an inability in successfully organizing migrants on arrival, but also to long-term complications in migrant placement.

Institutional history of Ottoman migration administration. Prior to the Immigrant Commission, migration remained an issue handled primarily at the local level. City governments and village communities cared for migrants fleeing the Crimean War. The central state issued directives as needed to border provinces, and migrants themselves applied to the state for assistance (Kocacık, 1980, p. 157). The state shifted toward centralized policies with the creation of the Immigrant Commission in response to the growing refugee crisis following the Crimean War.

The tasks of the Immigrant Commission were to organize the dispersal of individuals arriving in Istanbul, to collect information about the migrants, to advertise

3 The *Tanzimat*, meaning reorganization, was a nineteenth-century reform period. During this era the Ottoman state launched a series of economic, administrative, legal, and political reforms intended to increase the power of the central state over its provinces, augment the productivity of its population, and encourage greater affiliation with the state through egalitarian citizenship. Examples of these reforms include reorganizing regional administrative boundaries, standardizing education, and restructuring property law. These reforms continued under the reign of Abdülhamid II.

the need for donations for the migrants, to distribute these donations, and to publish the names and contributed sums of those giving assistance (Eren, 1966, pp. 54–61; Saydam, 1997, 105–106). Aside from the central institution in Istanbul, ministers were dispatched to areas of intense migrant arrival and settlement, and branches of the Immigrant Commission were also set up in major centers like Trabzon and Samsun. While this system of dispatching officials allowed for flexibility in the state's response to newcomers, it also reflected a broader lack of anticipation and administrative groundwork prior to migrant arrival, a key reason why some refugees remained tragically stranded in temporary housing for months.⁴

Once the number of immigrant arrivals abated in 1865, budgetary concerns contributed to the decision to dissolve the independent committee and split its responsibilities among several ministries. The complete termination of the commission was short-lived, as ongoing complications related to migrant aid and settlement encouraged the reestablishment of the commission, although it was dissolved again in 1875. The influx of migrants following the 1877-1878 war renewed pressure to establish specific institutions to organize migrant aid and settlement, and the Immigrant Commission reemerged as the Immigrant Administration in 1878 (Saydam, 1997, pp. 114–118). Several other organizations were created and dissolved as the Ottoman Empire faced intermittent immigrations caused by invasions, insurrections, and instability in the Balkans, Caucasus, and elsewhere. Institutions formed after the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) coordinated administration of all mobility in the empire, encompassing the organization of migrant settlement, the prevention of emigration from Ottoman lands, and the settlement and education of nomadic groups (Dündar, 2001, p. 60; Kocacık, 1980).

The basic course of migration administrative institutions in the Ottoman Empire reflected responses to mass influxes. Even though state officials recognized that the process of organizing and successfully settling migrants was a task that extended beyond the first few months of intense migrant arrival, its organization was repeatedly responsive only to new numbers. The lack of stability in these institutions meant that the efforts of the Immigrant Commission and later bodies were by no means the exclusive determinant in forced migrants' experiences within the Ottoman Empire, but the gap between policy ideals and outcomes was also the space within which migrants and others engaged with the state.

Administrative organization and state goals. Despite the changing quantity of personnel and bureaucratic infrastructure, state institutions for migration

⁴ Numerous migrant petitions asking to be removed from temporary settlement note delays of months and years, particularly after the 1860s migrations (for example see MVL 511.127, 1283/1866; MVL 533.109, 1284/1867; MVL 562.9, 1284/1867).

administration remained fundamental in arranging arrival and settlement in both Istanbul and the provinces. Directives describing organization and settlement policies accompanied the creation and subsequent changes of migration institutions. Even though modifications in bureaucratic structure and variations in allocated funding likely undermined the ability of officials to follow through with their mandate, sets of instructions give a sense as to how the administration was intended to function. These directives reveal the development of tiered systems of assistance and contextualize the terms with which migrants and officials engaged with settlement and aid policies. Though policies for migrant assistance, administrative goals, and plans for carrying out migrant settlement were not always actualized, they offer a foundation for assessing migrants' relationship to the state and their ongoing experiences within the empire.

Central directives offer an idea of the organization, roles, and extent of migration administration. As noted above, the abrogated Immigrant Commission was reestablished as the Immigrant Administration (*Muhacirin İdaresi*) following the population upheaval caused by the 1877-1878 War. Instructions in 1878 laid out the structure of the Immigrant Administration. These instructions directed general affairs and all issues regarding migrants to an umbrella organization, the General Administration for Migrants. This organization was comprised of two main branches, the *İdare-i Umur-u İskaniye* (Settlement Affairs Administration) and the *İdare-i Umur-u Hesabiye* (Accounting Affairs Administration). Aside from its twenty municipal offices, the institution also included an office devoted to issues of migrant health. Government administrators and reputable individuals from local and migrant communities manned the headquarters and various offices. The instructions specified that all components of the organization were to be assembled each day (I.MMS 59.2786 1295/1878. A transliterated version of the document is also available in Eren, 1966, pp. 96–113).

The fundamental responsibility of Settlement Affairs was to streamline the transfer of immigrants to the branch offices and districts beyond Istanbul by providing detailed information regarding the migrants who would be sent to the provinces. This information encompassed numbers of individuals, their places of origin and intended settlement areas, and calculations of the aid they would require from each appropriate branch office. Settlement Affairs organized and paid for migrant passage to their area of dispersal as well as organized provisions for the trip. It also covered the expenses of those being housed temporarily and coordinated provisions for those who were not yet registered. Settlement Affairs was also tasked with generating a complete monthly register showing the amount of provisions, neighborhood of settlement, and names of those receiving rations. This information was then submitted to the General Administration (Articles 35-40).

The main occupation of the Accounting Affairs Administration was to produce, organize, inspect, and analyze counterfoils and registers of migrants' daily stipends, food allowances, and other expenses. The branch was also to investigate and aggregate state expenditures for migrants who had already arrived in the empire. Based on the number of instructions issued in regard to the accounting administration, it is clear that levels of expenditures were seen as a matter of concern. The details provided to the branch reflected an overall effort to battle corruption on the part of officials and fraud on the part of migrant recipients of aid. This is unsurprising given the limited finances of the state, existing corruption within the Ottoman bureaucracy, and the high levels of fraud plaguing the previous commission's aid effort (Saydam, 1997, pp. 111–112). Tactics to combat corruption included holding scribes accountable for any sort of inconsistency found within the registers, forbidding erasure and mandating all mistakes be struck out and rewritten, and clearly stating the proper disposal of all redeemed provisionary vouchers. In terms of addressing potential fraud on the part of the migrants, the instructions stipulated that in the case of any lost vouchers, migrants could receive another document only after the local government investigated the situation. If the lost voucher reappeared, it would not be credited. All vouchers were to be stamped prior to distribution by the General Administration, the local imam or *muhtar* (district headman), or the correct office or branch (I.MMS 59.2786: articles 19-32).

Another key directive, issued in 1899, focuses on the process of migrant settlement in the provinces and more clearly illustrates the relationship between the central and provincial administration alluded to in earlier directives. These instructions offer insight into an extensive network of commissions at various levels of state organization. Each provincial center hosted a commission, and sub-committees in each *liva* (administrative district) and *kaza* (sub-district) coordinated with the office in the provincial center. The commissions were integrated into the structure of the community through their membership. Aside from an appointed official and scribe, the commissions were comprised of one salaried official from the provincial center, one from the municipal council, the necessary number of scribes recruited from the area, and several distinguished and public-minded individuals from the community (Y.PRK.DH 2.93 1305/1899. A transliterated version of the document is available in *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kafkas Göçleri (Türkiye Cumhuriyet Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2012, pp. 148–170)*.

Within this widespread and multi-tiered system, officials saw information and communication as key to creating a rapidly responding organization. Efforts to enumerate migrant populations were an essential component of the administration's responsibility at all levels. Settlement commissions and branch offices composed detailed registers of migrant names, origins, sex, and trade. Neighborhood administrative commissions catalogued the aid given to migrants until they became self-sufficient. Administrators in areas of migrant departure facilitated speedy

settlement through communicating numbers and projected arrival times to receiving areas ten to fifteen days prior to migrant arrival (Articles 15 & 19). The effort to accelerate settlement arose from recognition of the dangers of delay, as several items within the directive sought to avoid interruption and hasten the pace at which issues moved through the bureaucratic structure. Delayed responses were a matter of life and death throughout the newcomers' arrival, transfer, and settlement, and administrators boarded migrants in guesthouses as soon as possible to protect them from the elements as they awaited settlement (Articles 5, 7 & 17). Information was also essential in facilitating easy passage and tactics to address migrant sickness. Migrants too sick for travel and their families would be temporarily detained. In the event that households had to move on without the patient, officials prepared a list showing the location and time of the migrants' departure as well as information regarding where they would be settled. Administrators placed this list among the sick migrant's personal effects to facilitate family reunification after patient convalescence (Article 16).

Individuals from receiving communities were integral to the structure of the local commissions and migrant transport, and officials anticipated and required the assistance of community members throughout the settlement process. Despite the urgency with which information, decisions, and supplies were to be communicated, officials recognized migrant transport would be held up at various stages. Just as concerns about corruption arose from previous experience, the concern with delay and realistic recognition that immediate settlement was impossible likely arose in response to the difficulties of previous immigration episodes. Administrators knew immigrants would arrive in such numbers as to preclude immediate settlement, and so assigned communities to host their share of newcomers. These same communities assisted the migrants by employing them and building their houses. Local notables and wealthy, civically minded "patriots" were responsible for hiring and hosting the newcomers and providing the materials for building migrant houses (Article 29). Administrators also realized migrants would not be capable of producing enough as farmers in the first year of settlement, and mandated that the people of the area help them in sowing and preparing the land (Articles 25, 26, & 30).

Aside from revealing the intended organizational structure of the migrant administration, directives offer insight into ideals regarding the distribution of aid to migrants. These ideals structured migrants' opportunities within the Ottoman Empire based on migrants' individual and personal characteristics, establishing a system of differentiated resources for categories internal to the broader label of migrant/refugee. For example, officials sought to encourage immigrants' economic stability according to migrant resources, ability, and physical capacity. First, migrants were split according to their ability to fund their own travel and settlement. This defrayed

the overall cost of migrant care for the state, but it also allowed richer migrants freedom to relocate to preferred locations such as Istanbul. Second, directives reveal strategic attempts to facilitate settlement based on skill sets. The state intended to settle most migrants on farms, and settlers were to be given a certain amount of land, a pair of oxen, farming implements, and sowing seed. Conversely, religious leaders and those who practiced handicrafts were to be settled in towns and receive a cash payment in lieu of oxen and farming implements (Y.PRK.KOM 1.26, 1295/1878. See also I.MMS 60.2859, 1295/1879).

Aside from separating migrants according to skill set, officials also differentiated newcomers according to physical capacity. The writers of the 1878 directive note that it was necessary to provide assistance to those men who had neither family nor refuge and who lacked the strength for manual labor. However, they also expected there would be some for whom light work was a possibility, and various state offices were to inform the migration commission of any openings in order to facilitate the employment of those men. Physical capacity was also a determinate of settlement location. Individuals who were left without family or who were unable to work were to be settled in more desirable areas such as the Black Sea coast and Aydın and Hüdavendigâr provinces (I.MMS 59.2786, Articles 14 and 15).

Economic categories contributed to gendered distribution of aid. The 1878 instructions made special note of the treatment of women. Similar to men who lacked the strength for labor, women, particularly those who had been exposed to violence or left without immediate relatives, and orphans would continue to be cared for by the state. Those women who had not settled with relatives were to be found protectors from either migrant or local communities and employed in sewing uniforms for the army (Article 13). Of course, age also determined the allocation of aid. Another directive from 1878 specified adults in need would receive one and one-half pounds while children up to age ten would receive about three-fourths of a pound of daily bread provisions (Y.PRK.KOM 1.26).

Tiered systems of assistance offered a way to defray overall expenditures on migrant aid. They also served as a tactic in creating stability and reducing unanticipated movement in cities and settlement areas. Ottoman officials were concerned with the potential disruption caused by mobile or unattached populations. In the eighteenth century, Ottoman officials were anxious about the potential of itinerants and internal migrants to destabilize Ottoman cities. Likewise, during the *Tanzimat era*, officials increased the extent of the pass system, outlawed vagrancy, and expanded the orphanage system (Başaran, 2006; Herzog, 2011; Maksudyan, 2011). Providing aid to the unemployable or to single women reduced the likelihood of ongoing mobility by those groups. Aside from preemptive actions to maintain stability, the 1878

instructions also included tactics to reduce unwanted migrant movement throughout the empire, particularly after settlement. Measures included penalizing those who returned to Istanbul and those who moved illegally throughout the provinces. In both scenarios, migrants found outside their assigned locations would be refused transport and rent assistance and have their stipends abrogated (I.MMS 59.2786, Articles 7-18). Other measures obliquely emphasized the power of state officials to determine and fix migrant mobility, referencing the tendency to disperse migrant settlement and the state's right to return an immigrant to his or her country of origin (Articles 44-47).

State directives offer a sense of the extent of the project prompted by migrant settlement and provide several snapshots of Ottoman organizational and settlement ideals. Although these directives do not capture local and regional modifications that must have occurred in the course of their implementation, these documents highlight several issues. The directives merge immigrant history with the era's broader trends through underlining the growing connection between the center and the provinces during the late Ottoman Empire. Just as infrastructure such as telegraphs and railroads added to the institutional power and visibility of the state, migration administration established the state and its projects outside of Istanbul. The conveyance and settlement of large groups of people exemplified this era of increased interconnectivity. Settling migrants in less populated provinces or changing the ethno-religious balance of particular regions is reminiscent of traditional Ottoman tactics like the *sürgün* or *derbend* systems.⁵ In both, moving and placing people were tactics to extend state power; however, the vast scale of population movement in the nineteenth century and the Ottoman state's growing bureaucracy created greater change, assimilating both migrants and local communities. Individuals were incorporated into the state apparatus as civic-minded volunteers and local committee members. Carts and animals were commandeered from other areas to facilitate migrant transportation from ports, and in times when administrators or police were lacking, notables were required to accompany migrant caravans and facilitate further resource requisition along their route. Migrants' presence in areas required allocation of non-migrant individuals' time, labor, and resources.

Even as the institutional and administrative presence of the state increased, this reliance on the participation of non-officials opened the terms of migrant settlement to negotiation by state officials, migrants, and local actors. Analysis of the directives reveal negotiated policy shifts, accumulated experience arising in the course of the administrative endeavor, and the terms actors used in navigating

⁵ *Sürgün* was an Ottoman policy requiring long-distance migration by groups. It was used both as a punitive measure and a method to colonize newly conquered territories. The *Derbend* system was a communication-security tactic in which the Ottoman state settled nomadic tribes and other mobile groups along roads and passes (Kasaba, 2009, p. 18, 71).

settlement outcomes. Migrants, officials, and others' engagement with Ottoman migration administration contributed to the characteristics of its evolving migration regime. For example, early directives describe the ideal environmental attributes of designated settlement areas, a concern echoed in the 1889 instructions, which note migrant villages should be established in elevated areas near water and forests and in locations conducive to agriculture (I.DH 460.30579 1277/1860 and Y.PRK.DH 2.93: Article 27). Hasty settlement, corruption, and reduced availability of decent land meant these characteristics were frequently disregarded, and so environmental characteristics were often the terms through which both migrants and state officials evaluated settlement locations in the 1860s and 1870s. In particular, lamenting poor soil quality or an insalubrious climate offered an effective strategy for migrants requesting resettlement (See for example MVL 527.75, 1284/1867; MVL 511.40, 1283/1866; BEO 138.10299, 1310/1893; DH.MKT 332.24, 1312/1895). Aside from assessing the environmental drawbacks of their settlement locations, petitioners requested resettlement by referencing the policy of differential settlement for migrants with special skills, while those who were settled as farmers reminded officials of the state's obligation to provide seed and farming implements (Migrant petitions are widely available within the MVL collection. For examples related to employment and agricultural needs see 403.9, 472.64, 508.109, 609.42).

The process of resource distribution made administrative categories meaningful for both migrants and the state. Through evaluating several directives, I have sought to analyze the migration regime developed in the late Ottoman Empire and to highlight categorical distinctions created as migrants and administrators interacted with policy. The Ottoman state pursued a less liberal migration regime following 1878, reflecting security concerns and the utility of Pan-Islamism as an organizing principle (Kale, 2014). Nevertheless, the creation of a tiered system of assistance within the state's migration regime generated meaningful divisions beyond religious categories. Newcomers recognized and activated these divisions in articulating claims to rights and resources.

Methodological Perspective

In this article I applied an historical, qualitative approach, examining the evolution of a migration regime primarily through uncovering state organizational ideals for migration administration. The use of an exclusively qualitative approach to state documents has several well-known shortcomings, most obviously the one-sided perspective they afford. Incorporating migrant petitions provides a limited view of the contributions of non-state actors to the development and enacting of policy; however, petitions available in the central archive still reflect only those issues recognized and preserved by officials. Moreover, relying solely on instructions

issued from the center to assess migrant administration allows for unexplored divergences between central policy and its local outcomes. For example, officials engaged in a long-term effort to settle migrants from the Caucasus in the empire's Eastern provinces. Nevertheless, [Chochiev and Koç's \(2006\)](#) evaluation of Ottoman, Russian, and British sources reveals that Russian and Armenian concerns and the difficult environmental and economic features of the region limited successful settlement. Similarly, despite instructions to establish local immigrant commissions in areas of migrant settlement, further research may reveal that this mandate was inconsistently applied. Considerably more research should be conducted to evaluate the Ottoman Empire's success in establishing administrative infrastructure; however, the distance between policy and application in the late Ottoman Empire should also be recognized as an important feature of the empire's evolving migration regime. The gap between administrative ideals and local outcomes created a space in which officials and newcomers negotiated the relationships between migrants and the state.

What other approaches might further contribute to an understanding of the development and outcomes of the Ottoman Empire's migration regime? While it has proved notoriously difficult to establish accurate estimates of immigrant numbers, there are several bodies of sources that could allow for quantitative analysis of the development and activities of Ottoman migration administration. Digitization efforts within the Ottoman Archives should encourage the accumulation of data. For example, the recently digitized collection of the records of the Immigrant Commission (BOA. DH.MHC) contains several thousand documents, including tabulations of immigrant arrival and dispersal from Istanbul, hospitalizations, and orphan populations. Both the records of the Immigrant Commission and certain collections within the Yildiz Palace archive (especially Y.PRK.KOM and Y.MTV) offer the potential to track the expenditures of central and regional migrant administrative institutions, including through examining reports with names and positions of salaried employees. Ottoman provincial almanacs (*salname*) also offer information regarding membership of provincial and local Immigrant Commissions. Developing quantitative data from these collections would offer a route to comment on the physical manifestation of the state-migrant relationship. Mapping and other data visualization could reveal patterns of distribution of resources such as land, educational institutions, and health infrastructure. A series of layered maps depicting migrant settlement, integration, resource petitions, and resource deployment across multiple times and scales could render images of immigrant networks of information and migrant movement and generate visual insight into state goals and migrant responses. These visualization strategies could further contextualize the study of Ottoman immigration within a wider history of bureaucratic change and state centralization through directly comparing settlement strategies and assimilative tactics for immigrant and non-immigrant populations.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have evaluated the formation of a historical migration regime through analyzing the organizing principles and material changes anticipated by the creation of centralized migration administration within the Ottoman Empire. The history of the Immigrant Commission and its later iterations offers a key route to understanding migrant-state interactions, as some of the clearest indications of state ideals are articulated through the administration's legal foundations. The Ottoman state grappled with questions of security and resource scarcity in response to large numbers of forced migrants, and in doing so it developed policies that conditioned the terms of immigrant entry and settlement.

In the six decades following the Crimean War, as many as five million individuals migrated to the Ottoman Empire (Karpas, 2002, p. 691). Scholars have used the term refugee in describing certain episodes of mass forced migration during this era. In labeling migration, historians should consider both conditions of movement and administrative categories. The concept of refugee refers more directly to individuals' legal status rather than to their conditions of movement. As such, the term refugee offers little insight into migrants' experiences in the Ottoman Empire after arrival. As historians address the numerical and chronological breadth of this vast movement, research categories based on religion, ethnicity, place of origin, and location of settlement are all useful approaches in revealing outcomes of Ottoman policies and components of migrant experiences. Nevertheless, the state's differentiation of the immigrant stream in order to account for limited funds created a system of sub-divisions with material outcomes for migrants themselves. In considering the significance of the category of *muhacir*, historians should recognize the potential influence of these administrative classifications chosen by the state as a tactic in population management, especially as the development of these policies affected the terms migrants and officials used in contesting settlement outcomes.

Historical case studies offer insight into the production of legal statuses, and historical analysis offers a method to more precisely engage with the context-specific implications of scholarly and state categories of mobility. Through assessing the historical development of migration regimes, researchers of forced migration can better evaluate the significance of state-generated categories, consider how legal institutions produce concepts like refugee, and explore the evolution and persistence of classifications.

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