



Transformation of Pastoral Migration Routes: Space, Memory, and Resistance in the Case of Batman

Pastoral Göç Yollarının Dönüşümü: Batman Örneğinde Mekân, Hafıza ve Direniş

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Abstract

This study comprehensively examines the spatial, cultural, and social transformations of pastoral nomadism, carried out by nomads living in Batman, in recent years. Nomadism, a historical form of subsistence in southeastern Turkey, has undergone a radical transformation under the influence of modernization, spatial restrictions, security policies, climate change, economic pressures, infrastructural deficiencies, educational inadequacies, state control, and environmental degradation. The research provides detailed analyses of changes in migration timing, the structural transformation of routes, the diversification of transportation modes, the decline in livestock, the roles of women and youth in the migration process, trends in the transition to settled life, and the social foundations of cultural continuity. Designed with a descriptive quantitative research design, this study conducted face-to-face surveys with three hundred participants living in the rural areas of Batman city center and its surroundings, currently engaged in pastoral migratory activities, those who have engaged in this activity for many years in the past, and those who continue shepherding activities within this context. The findings reveal that the migration period has narrowed from the previous March-November period to April-September, weakening the rhythmic harmony established by the pastoral cycle with nature, and disintegrating traditional lifestyles. Furthermore, the transformation of traditional pedestrian migration routes largely into truck and lorry transport has increased economic costs and created deep rifts in cultural memory. A large portion of the participants are planning to settle down due to economic instability, difficulties accessing education and healthcare, and security concerns. Consequently, while the pastoral nomadic system in Batman is on the verge of disintegration in the face of economic hardships, modern spatial policies, and lifestyle pressures, living practices based on cultural belonging and memory persist. The study demonstrates that pastoral mobility is of strategic importance not only economically but also in terms of cultural identity, spatial belonging, and social continuity.

Keywords: *Pastoral Nomadism, Batman, Modernization, Cultural Transformation, Settlement Tendency*

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Özet

Bu çalışma, Batman’da yaşayan göçerler tarafından yürütülen pastoral göçerlik faaliyetlerinin son yıllarda geçirdiği mekânsal, kültürel ve toplumsal dönüşümü kapsamlı biçimde ele almaktadır. Türkiye’nin güneydoğusunda tarihsel bir geçim biçimi olarak varlığını sürdüren göçerlik, günümüzde modernleşme, mekânsal kısıtlamalar, güvenlik politikaları, iklim değişikliği, ekonomik baskılar, altyapı eksiklikleri, eğitim yetersizlikleri, devlet denetimi ve çevresel bozulmaların etkisi altında köklü bir dönüşüm sürecine girmiştir. Araştırma, göç zamanlamasındaki değişimleri, güzergâhların yapısal dönüşümünü, ulaştırma biçimlerindeki farklılaşmayı, hayvan varlığındaki azalmayı, kadın ve gençlerin göç sürecindeki rollerini, yerleşik yaşama geçiş eğilimlerini ve kültürel sürekliliğin toplumsal temellerini ayrıntılı biçimde analiz etmektedir. Betimsel nicel araştırma deseniyle tasarlanan bu çalışmada, Batman merkezinde ve çevresindeki kırsal alanlarda yaşayan, hâlen pastoral göç faaliyeti sürdüren, geçmişte uzun yıllar bu faaliyeti yürütmüş olan ve bu kapsamda çobanlık faaliyetlerini sürdüren üç yüz katılımcı ile yüz yüze anket yapılmıştır. Bulgular, göç zamanının geçmişteki Mart–Kasım döneminden Nisan–Eylül aralığına daraldığını, pastoral döngünün doğayla kurduğu ritmik uyumun zayıfladığını ve geleneksel yaşam biçimlerinin çözülme sürecine girdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, geleneksel yaya göç yollarının büyük oranda kamyon ve tır taşımacılığına dönüşmesi ekonomik maliyetleri artırmış, kültürel bellekte derin kırılmalar yaratmıştır. Katılımcıların büyük bölümü ekonomik istikrarsızlık, eğitim ve sağlık hizmetlerine erişim zorlukları ile güvenlik kaygıları nedeniyle yerleşik yaşama geçmeyi planlamaktadır. Sonuç itibari ile Batman’daki pastoral göçerlik sistemi, ekonomik zorluklar, modern mekân politikaları ve yaşam biçimi baskıları karşısında çözülme eğilimi gösterse de kültürel aidiyet ve hafızaya dayalı yaşam pratikleri varlığını sürdürmektedir. Çalışma, pastoral hareketliliğin yalnızca ekonomik değil, aynı zamanda kültürel kimlik, mekânsal aidiyet ve toplumsal süreklilik açısından da stratejik bir öneme sahip olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Pastoral Göçerlik, Batman, Modernleşme, Kültürel Dönüşüm, Yerleşik Yaşam Eğilimi.*

Introduction

Since the Neolithic period, animal husbandry has existed as one of the main subsistence strategies for many cultures around the world (Kardulias, 2015; 1). Pastoralism, which has Latin roots from the word *pasto* - *pastoralis* (shepherd), is an economic system based on the husbandry of domesticated animals such as sheep, goats, cattle, camels, llamas and reindeer on natural pastures and rangelands (Khazanov, 2015; 38, Blench, 2001;10, Kardulias, 2015; 4). Thanks to their high degree of adaptability to environmental conditions, pastoralists demonstrate the ability to live in arid, semi-arid or marginal regions that are generally unsuitable for agriculture (Kosko & Klochko, 1994; 2, Jensen, 2009; 4). The livelihood of these groups largely depends on the products obtained from their animals; However, contrary to the myth of the “pure nomad,” pastoralists often adopt multifaceted strategies that reduce their risks by combining pastoralism with various economic activities such as agriculture, trade, hunting/gathering, and wage labor (Blench, 2001;6, Kardulias, 2015;251).

In the academic literature on pastoralism, various conceptual distinctions are made based on the level of mobility of this lifestyle and its relationship to agricultural production. However, rather than being clearly demarcated categories, these concepts represent the ends of a broad socio-economic and spatial continuum extending from full nomadism to sedentary life. Consequently, pastoralism is a field prone to conceptual confusion, with transitions between concepts often blurred, dynamic, and contextually variable.

Nomadism represents the most mobile end of this continuum and is based on the Latin word *nomas* (nomadic man) (Kosko & Klochko, 1994; 2). Pastoral nomadism, whose economy is primarily based on animal husbandry and barter, requires cyclical or periodic movement, often long-distance, involving the entire community, its dwellings, and livestock (Khazanov & Wink, 2001; 212, Blench, 2001; 11). In true nomadism, agriculture is either absent or very limited (Kardulias, 2015; 83). Transhumanism refers to more organized and localized movement than nomadism (Duffy, 2019; 4). Transhumanism describes regular movements between fixed points (winter/summer quarters), usually over shorter distances, to take advantage of seasonal pastures (Blench 11, Kardulias, 84). In this system, communities have permanent settlements (villages), and only a portion of the population (shepherds) usually participates in mobility (Kardulias, 83, Khazanov & Wink, 212). Vertical transhumance, the seasonal movement between different elevations, especially in mountainous regions, falls into this category. In contrast, long-distance plane movements in deserts or across flat lands are called horizontal nomadism (Kardulias, 84, Hütteroth, 1959; 39-40).

Between these two main types, the terms seminomadism (semi-nomadism) and agropastoralism are used for communities where the primary economic activity is animal husbandry, but where significant agricultural production also takes place. Agropastoralists have a multi-focused vision of land use, considering the needs of both their livestock and their crops (Khazanov & Wink, 212, Hütteroth, 1959; 40, Kadrow, 1994; 71, Blench, 14).

The term "Kocher" is a Kurdish term widely used in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia to describe communities that maintain a pastoral nomadic lifestyle, and it is addressed in Turkish literature with equivalents such as "konargöçer" and "göçer". In this study, instead of the terms "kocher", "kocherism," or "kocher families", the concepts of nomadic pastoralist (koçer individual/community), pastoral nomadism (kocher lifestyle), and "pastoral households" (kocher families) and their derivatives are used.

When considering the conceptual framework of Turkish pastoralism, which is conceptualized as "yaylacılık" (transhumance), whose activity area is the highland pastures, Alagöz (1993; 1) argues that the concept of transhumance is originally linked to the word "yay" (summer) and is related to the verbs "yaymak" or "yaylamak," which refer to the dispersed grazing of animals in open areas. Similarly, Darkot (1968; 132) argued that the terms "yayla" and "yaylak" (yayla) emerged as a result of grazing animals in highlands during the summer due to the warmth of the lowlands. According to Tolun-Denker (1977; 35), the nomadic animal husbandry/shepherding practiced in these areas is often used synonymously with pastoral nomadism. Zaman (2007; 234) considers nomadic animal husbandry, like other pastoral movements (semi-nomadism, transhumanism, semi-transhumance, and alpine animal husbandry), to be an activity based on pasture provision. Emiroğlu (1977; 21) evaluates semi-nomadism as a transformation that occurs in this system during the transition from nomadic to settled life and states that it is different from transhumance, therefore, it is a way of raising animals in the plateaus in the summer and in the winter areas in the winter.

Consequently, pastoralism is a highly flexible and adaptable life strategy based on animal husbandry, which has developed a distinctive cultural identity and level of political autonomy. However, due to the diversity of mobile pastoralist communities and the degree to which they are intertwined with agricultural activities, clear distinctions between these terms are far from absolute, requiring an understanding of pastoralism within the context of its complex relationships with the settled world (Kardulias, 1-12, Khazanov & Wink, 2001; 212).

Pastoralism is particularly prevalent in arid and semiarid climate zones and is a dominant economic and cultural strategy practiced across a significant portion of the Earth's surface, approximately one-quarter, providing the livelihoods of millions of people (Khazanov, 2015; 38, Alidou, 2016; 2, Jenet et al., 2017). The spatial distribution of pastoralism is closely associated with arid and semiarid regions (drylands) globally, and this lifestyle is considered one of the most viable livelihoods in approximately 40-50% of such drylands worldwide (Blench, 2001 & Fox et al., 2025; 1). Pastoralism is a form of subsistence generally concentrated in semiarid, mountainous, and steppe regions. Pastoral activities are particularly widespread in the Mediterranean basin, the Central Asian steppes, and Sub-Saharan Africa (Akbaş & Baykal, 2022).

In terms of spatial distribution, pastoralism stands out as a deep-rooted and widespread subsistence tradition in the Mediterranean basin. Sources detail the historical continuity of mobile pastoralism in three key regions representing the northern, southern, and eastern limits of the Mediterranean coastline: Provence (Southern France), Northern Algeria, and Southwestern Anatolia

(present-day Turkey) (Duffy, 2019). In this context, Turkey holds a central position on the eastern flank of Mediterranean pastoralism, having preserved to the present day the tradition of transhumance, one of the most prominent forms of pastoral mobility, particularly in the Taurus Mountains, the Western and Central Anatolian plateaus, and the Eastern Anatolian mountain belts.

While pastoralism continues to be a primary source of livelihood for millions of people in arid, semiarid, and high-altitude regions globally (Alidou, 2016; 2), traditional forms of itinerant pastoralism are increasingly losing their vitality worldwide due to their inability to adapt to the economic and spatial structure of modern industrial societies (Khazanov, 2015; 58). Pastoral communities face spatial rearrangements due to climate change, border policies, and local grazing pressures (Fox et al., 2025). This transformation in pastoral mobility can be felt in Turkey and the region under study, as well as globally. In fact, Hütteroth (1959) states that Turkish pastoralism (an ancient economic balance) experienced a major disruption in the early 20th century, and that subsequent political actions perpetuated this transformation.

Hütteroth (1959) argues that this specialized economic structure, which contributed to the expansion of human habitation, was practiced as pure nomadism, with semi-nomadic transitional forms such as Mountain Nomadism (*Bergnomadismus*) and Plateau Farming (*Yaylabauerntum*). However, the First World War and its aftermath led to a shift in the trajectory of this activity. The war resulted in population loss, particularly among Armenians, altered demographic and economic structures, and consequently, created a qualitative deficit with the disappearance of groups engaged in irrigated agriculture, viticulture, and craftsmanship. This disrupted the symbiotic bond between nomads and settled people for winter fodder and grain supply, and as a result, many nomadic tribes (e.g., Ertuşi) adopted a settled lifestyle to meet their own needs. Hütteroth (1959) argues that subsequent changes stemmed from geopolitical transformations. The border drawn by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne divided Kurdish settlements in two, disrupting migration routes. With the complete closure of borders to migration in the 1930s, some tribes lost access to their highlands and were forced to settle down and engage in agriculture in Syria and Iraq. For nomads remaining in Turkish territory, pressure began to mount on their traditional highland areas. However, the turning point that most profoundly affected the economic structure of nomadism was the state's administrative restructuring, completed in 1935–1936. This new administrative arrangement led to the official transfer of sovereign rights over vast mountainous regions to villages or towns. Thus, nomadic communities began to be charged rent for the highlands they had traditionally used freely. This new financial burden exerted a pressure that exceeded the nomads' economic capacity, and the limited possibilities for legal appeal further exacerbated the situation. Consequently, increasing economic and administrative pressures forced nomadic communities to settle down and turn to agricultural production. Throughout history, pastoralism, under the influence of geopolitical constraints and administrative transformations, lost its traditional rhythm and tended to integrate into settled agricultural life (Hütteroth, 1959). As a matter of fact, in the 1950s, the state sometimes put pressure on nomads to settle down, sometimes through settlement policies and sometimes through military force, and this trend towards settlement gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s (Matsubara, 2012; 85).

The structural transformation in Turkish pastoralism is progressing more rapidly due to modernization. This transformation is not limited to structural aspects; it also encompasses economic activity. Indeed, as researchers such as Kaya (2018; 123) and Özalp & Sütü (2011; 154) have noted, current pastoral movements in Türkiye are shifting from traditional animal husbandry to activities largely focused on rest and recreation due to changing social, cultural, and economic conditions and rural migration.

The transformation observed in pastoral nomadism activities in Batman is the result of a multilayered process. This transformation is influenced by geopolitical and border regulations, administrative and property policies, modernization and state interventions, economic and market dynamics, climatic and environmental conditions, social and cultural changes, and security and military practices.

This study examines the transformation of pastoral nomadism practices in Batman, specifically within the context of spatial ruptures, social memory, identity, and cultural resistance. Pastoral nomadism, historically sustained in Batman and its surrounding areas, has undergone significant quantitative and qualitative changes in recent years. Numerous factors, including socio-economic imperatives, administrative interventions, spatial reorganizations, security dynamics, the closure of migration routes, and shifting modes of transportation, have transformed pastoral mobility not only spatially, but also culturally, politically, socially.

The impact of modernization on the transformation of nomadism is undeniable. Indeed, the pressure of modernization on rural lifestyles, the promotion of sedentary life, and the restructuring of state spatial policies are increasingly marginalizing pastoral nomadism. This peripheralization also means the suppression of the memory, identity, and resistance carried by the pastoral movement. Therefore, understanding pastoral nomadism requires rethinking it not only as an economic or productive practice, but also as a cultural form based on memory, a political movement, and a form of spatial resistance.

In this context, the primary aim of this study is to examine the transformation of pastoral nomadism from a multilayered perspective, focusing on the experiences, narratives, and daily practices of pastoral families or communities to reveal its socio-spatial and cultural dimensions. The fundamental problem areas presented in the introduction are discussed in an integrated manner, with a theoretical framework, methodological approach, and data analysis, aiming to reconceptualize pastoral nomadism within the context of contemporary sociology, human geography, and cultural studies.

The study examines pastoral nomadism from a multidimensional perspective and explores the socio-spatial and cultural aspects of this transformation, drawing on the experiences, narratives, and daily life practices of pastoral communities. It focuses on the following questions:

- What historical, spatial, and political pressures have transformed pastoral migration routes in Batman?
- How do nomads experience the obstacles they encounter on their migration routes and how do they cope with these challenges?
- How has the temporal structure of the migration cycle changed, and how has this change transformed the meaning of migration?
- What socio-cultural dynamics shape tendencies toward transition to settled life, and how do resistance practices emerge?
- What kinds of ruptures does this transformation process create in terms of collective memory, cultural identity, and social cohesion?

Theoretical Framework

Pastoral nomadism is not only a mode of production, it is also a carrier of social identity, cultural memory and spatial meanings. In this respect, nomadism is directly related to theories of space, collective memory, identity politics, and resistance studies. However, existing literature largely examines pastoral nomadism in the context of economic adaptation and the transition to sedentarism, while the intersections of memory, space, and everyday resistance strategies remain understudied. The experiences of nomadic communities in Batman offer a unique field suitable for filling this theoretical gap.

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987; 380) theory of nomadic thought posits that pastoral movement offers an alternative to the hierarchical, fixed, and bounded understanding of space. Nomadic space has a non-linear, continuous, and polycentric structure. Therefore, rather than being merely spatial transit routes, pastoral migration routes are spaces of "organic connection" that embody the interaction between nature and culture and where identity construction is reproduced. In this context, the migration routes of Batman nomads constitute a typical example of the holistic relationship established between environmental conditions and historical memory. Ingold's (1993; 162) "taskscape" approach further deepens this process, enabling us to conceptualize roads not merely as transportation routes but as dynamic spaces through which memory, labor, and everyday life flow. This approach allows us to conceptualize the migration routes of nomadic communities in Batman not only as spatial transit routes, but also as a multilayered social space where animal grazing, tent-building, product processing, storytelling, and ritual practices are intertwined. Therefore, the migration routes of Batman nomads can be considered a "taskscape" through which both production activities, cultural memory, and identity construction flow.

Halbwachs' (1992; 38) theory of collective memory is crucial for understanding how migration routes are constructed and transmitted within community memory. The narratives of Batman nomads, who are not passive victims but rather active actors of resistance at a micro-scale (Scott 1985; XVI), regarding their migration routes update spatial representations of the past and ensure the continuity of

cultural identity. However, these narratives also reveal that, as a result of the modern state's land regimes, security policies, and property regulations, migration routes have gradually narrowed, the use of space has been restricted, and the freedom of migration experienced by communities in the past has largely disappeared. Thus, nomad memory makes visible not only cultural continuity but also the transformation of spatial control and the erosion of pastoral freedom. Indeed, Harvey's (2006; 94) concept of "spatial justice," which explains the conflict between the pastoral movement and the spatial organizations of the modern state, supports this conclusion. The closure or reorganization of Batman nomads' migration routes, in the name of restriction, results in the despatialization of pastoral life. Khazanov (2015; 15) demonstrates the reaction of pastoral societies to modernization processes by stating that when pastoral societies were forced to adopt a settled life, not only their economic order but also their cultural texture, social relations and memories were transformed.

Pastoral nomadism is not only a mode of production; it is also a carrier of social identity, cultural memory, and spatial meanings. In this respect, nomadism is directly related to theories of space, collective memory, identity politics, and resistance studies. However, existing literature largely examines pastoral nomadism in the context of economic adaptation and the transition to sedentarism; the intersections of memory, space, and everyday resistance strategies are insufficiently explored. The experiences of the pastoralist communities in Batman offer a unique field suitable for filling this theoretical gap.

Recent research also reveals that the social and spatial practices of pastoral nomadism continue to be constrained. For example, Ahearn's (2025) study, "Mobile Pastoralist Geographies of Care," discusses the mobility of nomadic communities in terms of care spaces and their relationship with the state/social structure, revealing new challenges to pastoral nomadism in the context of spatial justice. Similarly, Gagnol and Afane's (2010) study, "When injustice is spatial. Pastoral nomadism and the territorial imperative in Saharan Nigeria," explores how pastoral nomadism in Niger is subjected to injustice through access to resources, land use, and the state's spatially restrictive policies. Trisno (2023), in "Reconceptualizing nomadic architecture: from the body to the creation of space," argues that the current transformation of nomadism is shaped by technology, architecture, and aesthetics.

As a result, it is important to rethink pastoral nomadism not only in terms of economic adaptation processes but also at the intersection of discussions of memory, space and justice, and to evaluate the experiences of Batman nomads as an original contribution in this context.

Method

Research Design

This study examines the spatial and temporal transformations in the migration practices of individuals engaged in pastoral nomadism (kocherism) in and around Batman province, the structural obstacles they face, and their tendencies toward transitioning to settled life, within the scope of a quantitative descriptive research design. Because the descriptive design aims to reveal the current

situation, no causal relationships or inferential analyses were conducted in the study; data were analyzed through frequency and percentage distributions.

The Study Universe and Sample

The research population consists of nomadic communities living in the central province of Batman and migrating to the highlands in the provinces of Muş, Bitlis, Siirt, Van, Erzurum, and Hakkâri during the summer months.

A maximum variation sampling approach was adopted in the sample selection process, ensuring the representation of individuals of diverse ages, genders, and tribal affiliations.

The inclusion criteria for the study sample were: currently engaged in pastoral migratory activities or having engaged in this activity for many years, and identifying as a "koçer" or being known by this identity within the community. A total of 300 participants were surveyed in line with these criteria.

Data Collection Tool

A 50-item survey form developed by the researcher was used as the data collection tool. The form was structured around themes such as migration time, periods of ascent and return to the plateau, modes of transportation, route characteristics, major problems experienced during the migration process, and tendencies toward sedentary living.

Pastoral migration studies in the literature (e.g., Hütteroth, 1959, Khazanov, 2015) and opinions of field experts were used in the development of the questions. Feedback was obtained from three experts to ensure content validity. The survey was administered to a pilot group of 20 people, and after the necessary adjustments were made, the field research was initiated.

Data Collection Process

Data collection took place in Batman city center and its surroundings, as well as on various plateaus, during the summer and fall of 2024. Participants were interviewed face-to-face, with questions read directly to them and responses recorded by the researcher. Each survey took an average of 20–25 minutes. All participants participated in the study on a voluntary basis.

Data Analysis

The obtained data were analyzed using SPSS 25.0 software. Only descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used in the analyses; the data were visualized using tables, graphs, and representative maps.

The study calculated distributions for the following variables:

- Times of ascent to and return from the plateau,

- Length of migration,
- Modes of transportation (pedestrian, horse, truck, articulated lorry),
- Types of problems encountered during migration,
- Tendencies and justifications for settling down.

Through these analyses, the transformations in the temporal rhythm, route structure, and lifestyle of pastoral nomadism in Batman were quantitatively described. The findings are presented in graphs and tables and discussed comparatively with the relevant literature.

Findings

In this section, findings regarding the transformation of pastoral nomadism in Batman are presented under thematic headings. The findings are derived from quantitative data, and each theme is analytically evaluated by relating it to the relevant theoretical framework.

Transformation in Migration Timing and the Disruption of Seasonal Rhythms

Pastoral migration in nomadic communities centered in Batman is not merely a process of geographical displacement; it is also a seasonal negotiation established with nature, the calendar (time), and various authorities. Field observations indicate that the starting and returning times of migration are gradually narrowing, and this compression is linked not only to climatic factors but also to social and political dynamics. 78% of nomads stated that they traditionally begin their migration to the plateaus in May (25% in the first half and 53% in the second half). Of the remaining nomads, 13% reported migrating in the first half of April, and a minority of 9% in the second half. The time of leaving the plateau, which we refer to as returning to winter quarters or settled areas, falls in September (76%), with 44% in the second half and 32% in the first half. Furthermore, the percentage of nomads who reported returning to winter quarters in October was 15%, while this figure rose to 9% in November (Figure 1). Therefore, the nomads spend approximately four months on the plateau. However, it's important to note that while the migration to the plateau lasts a few days at most, the return migration can sometimes take up to two months. This is due to transportation methods, which can extend the time away from wintering grounds from four to six months.

Furthermore, former nomads report that they begin their journeys to the plateaus in March and their return journeys begin at the end of November. This suggests that the sustainability of the migration rhythm is weakening and that seasonal mobility is being disrupted by modern lifestyles.

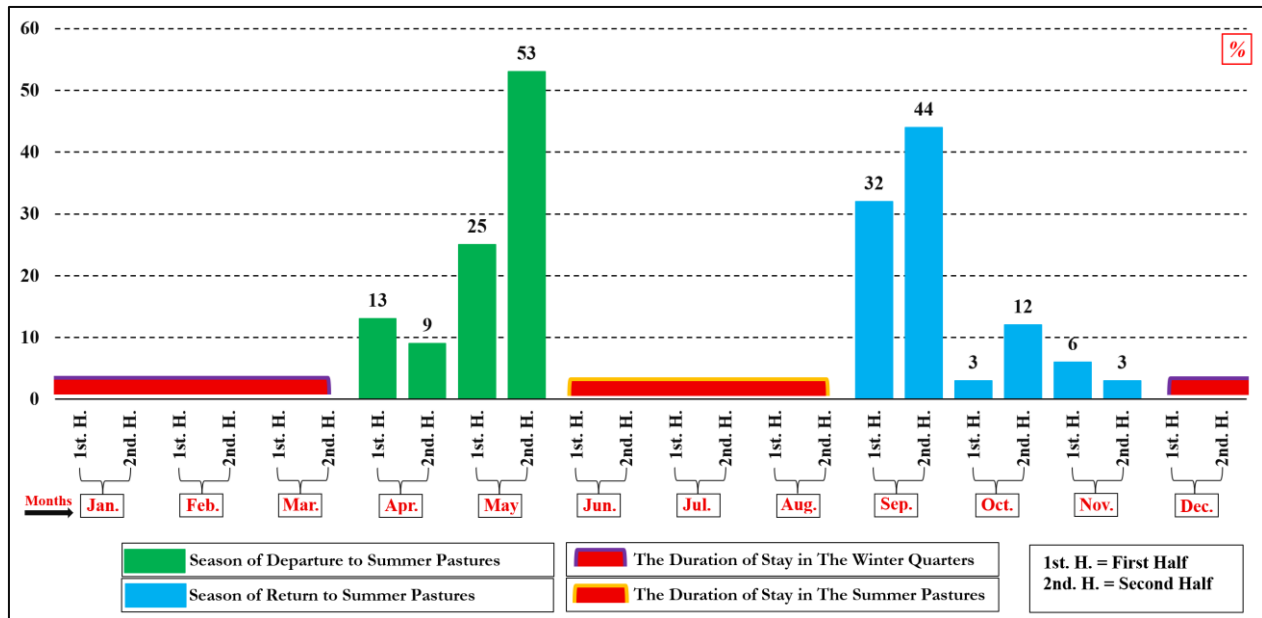


Figure 1. Seasonal Timing of Transhumant Movements: Departure to and Return from Summer Pastures

This rupture, in contrast to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) understanding of nomadic time, reveals that the pastoral rhythm is constrained by state policies, security concerns, and economic imperatives. The transformation occurring in nomadism is not limited to the decline in the number of individuals engaged in this activity (nomads), but also demonstrates the increasing suppression of the temporal flexibility inherent in the relationship between migration and nature. Foucault's (1977) understanding of disciplinary society, which posits that planning time controls movement, and therefore that the state seeks to control not only space but also individuals' time, supports the current situation of the Batman nomads. Consequently, the journey, which has become a race against time rather than a ritual, and the restrictions associated with this journey are at risk of losing a cultural memory.

The Transformation of Transportation Modes: Foot, Horse and Truck

Pastoral migration is not merely a matter of arrival; how the movement is carried out and how natural, forced, or forced it is are also of great importance. While nomadic migration routes were historically based on a fluid, flexible, and decentralized logic of movement, the intervention of the modern state has made these routes demarcated, that is, limited, directed, and constantly monitored. The interruption of nomadic routes in Batman by dams, military zones, private property, changes in the use of space (e.g., the increase in pistachio orchards), and security measures constitute the significant reasons behind this transformation. Nomadic migration in Batman is no longer a natural seasonal cycle; it has become a process determined by external factors such as governor's permits, road restrictions, property owner initiatives, and economic costs. Latour's (2005; 100-120) Actor Network Theory emphasizes that social processes should be considered not only through human factors but also through non-human actors such as technologies, roads, vehicles, animals, and natural elements.

This process, closely related to the theory in question, represents an intervention into the unique nature of nomads' migration. This intervention has forced the traditional highland migration from foot to a more technical mode of migration (trucks, lorries, etc.). The vast majority of nomads (71%) reported traveling to the highlands by truck or lorries, while 24% reported using traditional methods. However, this situation reverses when returning from the highlands to winter quarters. Eighty percent of nomads prefer the traditional method of migration from the highlands to winter quarters, while 15% use trucks and lorries (Figure 2).

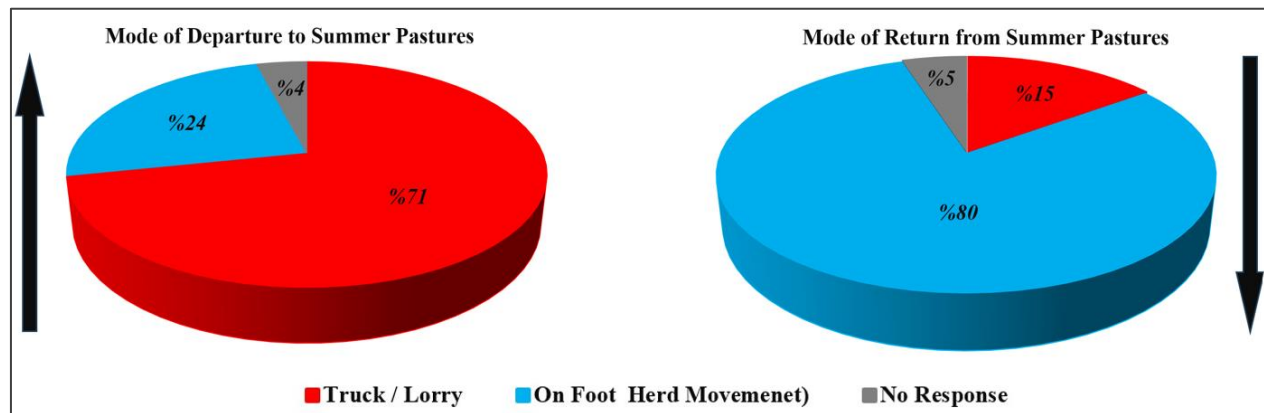


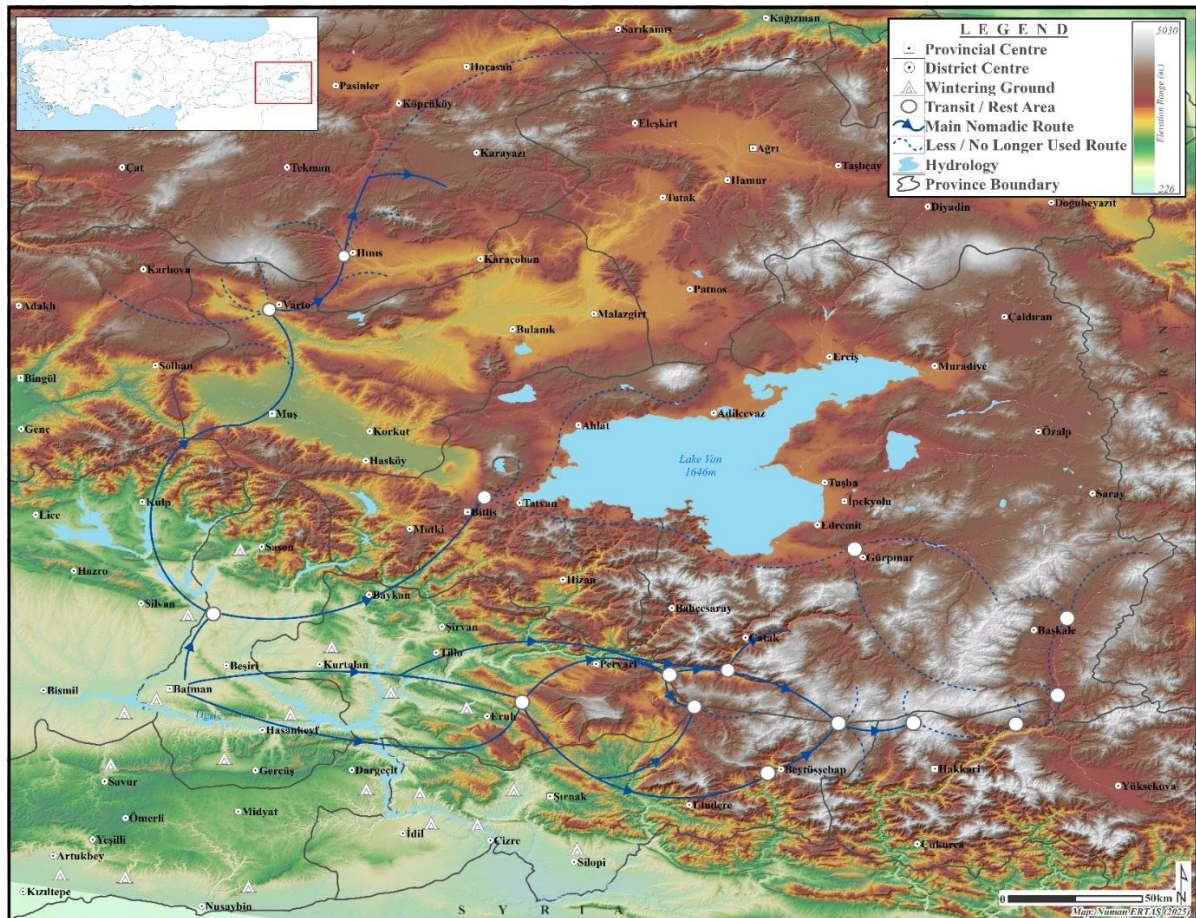
Figure 2. Modes of Animal Transportation Between Batman and the Summer Pastures

The primary reason for this change in the experiential aspect of pastoral movement is that, in accordance with seasonal norms, the crops along the route have been harvested, reducing vulnerability. Therefore, to minimize winter feed costs, this migration process is extended as much as possible. Furthermore, since most of the animals are pregnant on the return journey from the plateau, caution is exercised to avoid deaths and miscarriages caused by truck and lorry traffic, as well as adverse road conditions. In other words, the logistics of traditional pastoral migration is not a technical choice but a necessity that disrupts the nature of migration. Consequently, the aforementioned transportation technologies have become actors in pastoral migration and play a significant role in decisions made about the migration process. Cresswell (2010; 18-21) argues that this instrumentalized movement (migration) is not merely a physical displacement but a practice steeped in social, cultural, and political contexts. Consequently, it has evolved into a process determined by external factors such as the agricultural calendar (crop harvesting), economic concerns (winter feed), animal health (pregnant animals), and other risks. When we consider these issues as a whole, pastoral activity has been rendered a valueless and potentially illegal activity. Indeed, while transporting animals by truck is a form of labor that can be formalized by the state because it is more easily visible, countable, and controllable, animals transported on foot are not registered and are not visible, making them a marginal and valueless form of labor in the eyes of the state, as outlined in Scott's (2009) understanding of invisible labor.

Diversification of Routes and Closing Routes

Pastoral migration is not merely a form of movement or a movement centered on economic concerns; it is also an expression of a historical continuity or organic connection established with space. For Batman nomads, routes are not limited to transportation corridors; they are also geographical memories that reflect cultural memory, belonging, and the past. However, field observations indicate that migrations, once conducted along singular and shared routes, have become much more fragmented and individualized today. Nomads describe migrating along valleys, following shady paths that align with the natural gait of animals and are close to water sources. Today, these routes are either restricted or rendered completely unusable due to dam construction, road projects, military zones closed for security reasons, and the increase in private property.

Nomadic migration routes extend eastward from Batman and Siirt, via Bitlis and Muş, to the area around Lake Van, and from there to the high plateaus of Hakkâri. In the north, notable routes run from Bingöl and Muş north of Van, to the foothills of Mount Ararat, and to Erzurum. These movements generally occur from west and south to east and north, and from lower elevations to higher elevations. Thus, the migration cycle exhibits a regular flow in both southeast-east and northeast directions, ascending to the plateaus in spring and summer and returning to wintering grounds in autumn (Map 1).



Map 1. Routes of the Batman Nomads

As Massey (2005) states, space is comprised of relationships. Therefore, the change in nomads' migration routes means the loss not only of the route but also of relationships and nomadic memory. This fragmentation can be interpreted through Halbwachs's (1992) theory of collective memory: The disappearance of shared routes undermines the continuity of collective experience and creates erasures in spatial memory. It should be noted that the change in nomads' migration routes should not be interpreted solely as a directional shift; the real difference lies in the nature of these routes. While at first glance, the larger picture appears to maintain the same line, a closer look reveals a radically different character. Routes that once passed through valleys, grazing lands, and pastures near water sources are now often forced to travel over unpaved roads, barren lands, or areas far from water. Therefore, although the route's appearance on the map seems to have remained constant, the ecological, economic and social dynamics of migration have changed significantly.

The findings in the Batman case suggest that pastoral mobility is not limited to local dynamics; it can be considered part of a global transformation process that is reshaped under similar structural pressures in different geographies.

In the African Sahel region, the mobility of pastoral communities can be reduced due to the fragmentation of pastures, the expansion of agricultural areas, restrictions imposed for security reasons, and limiting administrative regulations. Consequently, this weakens livelihood security and can accelerate semi-settlement (Khazanov, 2015; FAO, 2018). In this context, FAO assessments emphasize the increased fragility of pastoral systems in arid regions and the potential for increased risks associated with restricting mobility.

In Central Asian examples, state policies, property regimes, and infrastructure regulations have been among the factors directly influencing the organization of pastoral mobility; “mobile pastoralist” lifestyles have had to be re-adapted in the face of modern economic and administrative transformations (Humphrey and Sneath, 1999). This context aligns with the phenomenon observed in the Batman area, where *“the route appears the same, but the nature of the route changes.”* Indeed, while mobility continues formally, parameters such as ecological access, cost, and security transform the character of the movement.

Similarly, studies addressing the transformation of pastoralism in the new millennium reveal that pastoral mobility is increasingly sustained under “restricted” conditions due to shrinking access to grazing lands, pressure from conservation areas and private property, marketization, and administrative interventions; this, in turn, transforms traditional patterns of movement. As Galvin (2009) also states, the fragmentation of grazing access and the restriction of mobility in pastoral systems can weaken the fundamental resilience of pastoral life by increasing costs and risks as the range of movement narrows. From this perspective, the route fragmentation and change in the nature of movement identified in the Batman example can be evaluated together with the structural transformation trends observed in different geographies (Blench, 2001). Consequently, the Batman example coincides with the trend in global pastoralism literature, including the Sahel and Central Asia, of shrinking grazing access, administrative/security restrictions, and the transformation of the nature of mobility under the pressure of marketization; while the route appears relatively preserved, it reveals the uniqueness of the local context in terms of significant erosion in ecological access and layers of collective memory.

Problems Related with the Highland Road: Violation of Spatial Justice

Pastoral migration is not merely a form of mobility; it is also a practice of transition intertwined with uncertainty, risk and struggle. The paths traversed by nomadic communities in Batman to reach the plateaus have become challenging passages fraught not only with geographical but also with socio-political, economic, and physical obstacles. Field data demonstrate that Batman nomads struggle not only with the harsh conditions of nature but also with the boundaries established by the state and property owners along their migration routes. In other words, while nature is the primary force determining when nomads return to the plateaus or barracks, the role of determining which routes and under what conditions they will cross lies with the state and property owners, along with nature. In other words, where and how nomads can move is determined not by themselves or by nature, but by others.

While participant nomads often cite poor road infrastructure, security inspections, disagreements with decision-makers, difficulties providing water for animals, and inadequate accommodation as the primary problems they face on the highland route, it becomes clear that these processes are often invisible at first glance, but when delved deeper, they reflect multilayered social processes. According to participants, the most significant problem experienced on the highland route, at 33%, is "animals piling up and dying in trucks due to terrain and road conditions" (Table 1). This problem should not be viewed solely as a structural deficiency or technical malfunction. It also demonstrates the fragility of transportation systems in the region, the migration routes, and the underdevelopment of the population engaged in this activity. Another important point here is that animal deaths both cause economic losses and threaten the sustainability of nomad migration. The second most common problem experienced by participants, at 29%, is "problems with landowners along the way while walking." This situation demonstrates that migration routes have become areas of social conflict. The lack of specific control mechanisms for spatial use and the commercialization of rural areas further exacerbate this problem. Lefebvre's (1991) statement that space is constantly reproduced through the conflicting interests of different actors supports this position. Consequently, the conflicting interests of these actors inevitably lead to changes in migration routes and the damage or erasure of cultural memory.

Issues Encountered During Migration to Summer Pastures	%
Death of animals in trucks due to difficult terrain and poor road conditions	33
Conflicts with landowners encountered while moving on foot along private lands	29
Death of animals due to the prolonged duration of migration	19
Truck drivers' unfamiliarity with the migration route	10
Illness, damage to belongings, or injuries to animals during migration	10

Table 1. Problems Experienced by Nomadic Pastoralists During Seasonal Migration Routes

According to participants, another significant problem encountered during the migration process is "the death of animals due to the long duration of the migration," a 19% response. This problem, which threatens the economic, social, and ecological sustainability of migration, also presents its own contradictions. As mentioned earlier, long-term migration is a migration from the highlands to winter quarters. Therefore, choosing this migration method seeks to gain an economic advantage by minimizing winter feed costs. However, while this choice provides this economic advantage, it can also result in the death of animals. This demonstrates that migrants operate in a fragile balance.

The problem of "truck drivers not knowing the route," mentioned by 10% of participants (Table 1), causes serious disruptions in the migration process. The fact that migration routes consist of mountainous and rugged terrain in many places exacerbates this situation. Although not developed for animal migration, Latour's (2005; 72) actor network theory, as previously mentioned, can be applied to this situation because external factors such as trucks, roads, and drivers also play a role in the migration process. The final problem encountered on the migration route, also cited by 10%, is "Illness during migration, damage to belongings, and animals becoming ill" (Table 1). Therefore, it can be said

that not only animals but also humans face life-threatening risks for migrant actors. During this process, migrant families face factors such as life-threatening conditions, health problems, nutritional deficiencies, and hygiene problems. This demonstrates that the migration process is not merely a matter of relocation or reaching the destination; it is also a challenging process characterized by the highest levels of losses and risks.

Tendencies to Sedentary Life and Cultural Tension

Findings regarding participants' thoughts on settling down indicate a complex transformation process. Factors such as the modernization process, capital structure, cultural practices, and spatial affiliation can be easily observed in this transformation. The majority of participants (60%) are considering settling down, while 40% express a tendency to maintain their current lifestyle. The reasons given by nomads considering settling down include "nomadism being difficult and tiring (33%)," "insufficient income (26%)," "city life being more comfortable (22%)," and "children's education (19%)" (Table 2). In this context, it can be concluded that the economic and social dynamics created by modernization have led nomads in Batman to move away from traditional nomadism and tend to settle permanently in the city. Based on observations, it can be said that this departure is based on economic reasons rather than a cultural affiliation with the city or settled life. Indeed, the proportion of nomads who do not consider settling down (40%) is not insignificant. 47% of nomads in this group used the phrase "I've gotten used to nomadism and I like it," demonstrating that this situation is related not only to economic concerns but also to cultural habits. As Bourdieu (1986) stated, individuals' choices are determined not only by economic but also by their accumulated cultural capital and their internalized lifestyle, or habitus. Khazanov (2015, 39) supports this notion by stating that this activity is not merely a means of survival but also a way of life. Therefore, it is important to remember that nomadism is not only an economic activity but also a sense of belonging or cultural continuity.

Are you considering moving to a fully settled life? (%)			
	Yes	No	
	60	40	
Reasons for Considering Sedentarization		Reasons for Rejecting Sedentarization	
Nomadic life is difficult and exhausting	33	I am accustomed to nomadism and enjoy it	47
Insufficient income from pastoral activities	26	Life in settled areas or cities is economically challenging	27
Urban life offers more comfort	22	I want to continue my father's occupation	20
Children's education	19	Settled life is monotonous and restrictive	7

Table 2. Intentions of Nomadic Pastoralists to Transition to a Fully Settled Lifestyle and Underlying Reasons

Among nomads who did not consider settling down, 27% cited reasons such as "it is difficult to live or make a living in a settled life/city." It can be concluded that nomads who lack the opportunity to acquire a profession outside of this activity may find it difficult to establish themselves in the city. As Khazanov (2015; 39) also stated, a common characteristic of all forms of pastoralism is a specific area of economic specialization. In this context, this specialization can often be limited to the transhumance aspect of animal husbandry. Indeed, adapting nomadic life practices to the city is both difficult and creates new problems. It is noteworthy that 20% of nomads attempt to maintain this

cultural affiliation by using the justification "I want to continue my father's profession." Finally, 7% of nomads stated that settled life is boring and oppressive (Table 2). Therefore, in the nomad's terms, "freedom" is only found in the highlands, and the importance of adaptation to natural life is emphasized here.

The findings reveal that the transformation in pastoral nomadism has deepened not only in economic but also in spatial, cultural, and political dimensions. A radical transformation has been observed in the socio-cultural structure of Batman nomads. Modernization has impacted Batman nomads in many ways. Traditional modes of production have dissolved, educational and employment expectations have increased, and the pull of settled life has intensified. Therefore, nomadism, once an active form of resistance, has become passive in the face of modernity.

Conclusion And Recommendations

This study presents a multilayered analysis of the transformation of pastoral nomadism practices in Batman within the context of modernization, cultural continuity, and spatial transformation. The findings provide a detailed examination of the pastoral movement's stance against modernism, considering the timing of migration, migration routes, mode or forms of transportation, problems encountered during migration, and nomads' tendency to settle down. The findings demonstrate that nomadism is not merely an economic activity or mode of production, but also a symbol of spatial memory, a historical connection to nature, and cultural resistance. However, the multilayered structure of nomadism has begun to gradually disintegrate and undergo a holistic transformation in recent years.

The narrowing of the temporal structure of migration disrupts the nature-harmonious character of migration, and this constitutes one of the most significant factors weakening the continuity of pastoral life. While traditional migration timing used to be between March and November, it has now been restricted to the April-September period due to government policies, changes in spatial use, and other modern factors, rather than decision-makers being nature-centered. This has led not only to the contraction of production activities but also to the contraction of nomadic memory and the detriment of collective structure.

The transformation of transportation patterns has radically altered the historical meaning of movement. This movement, once carried out entirely by foot and animals, is now carried out by trucks and lorries (mostly on the way back to winter quarters). While this transformation has accelerated migration, it has also disrupted the necessary and prolonged contact with nature. This transformation of movement also leads to the death of animals due to being transported on top of each other, harming herd health, and creating high costs for the nomadic economy. Changes in spatial use, such as the commercialization of agricultural lands along the route, the construction of dams, and the increase in privately owned land, significantly limit the use of migration routes. This situation not only disrupts transportation activities but also reveals the existence of spatial justice problems.

Transformation was not limited to routes or modes of transportation; it also influenced nomads' tendency to settle down. Due to the impact of modernization, nomads today consider urban areas safer, more comfortable, and more livable. However, this trend is considered a necessity rather than a choice. While this modernization process promises a more accessible and comfortable life, it also significantly erodes the unique identity and deeply rooted life practices of pastoral life.

When field observations and findings are evaluated overall, it can be considered that the Batman nomadic system is in a critical transition phase. Migration has narrowed both temporally and spatially, its natural nature has become technical, and spatial and cultural memory has begun to suffer. It should be noted that this change and transformation do not necessarily mean that nomadism has completely disappeared.

Considering the findings overall, various steps need to be taken to protect and ensure the sustainability of nomadic heritage. These steps should embrace a holistic approach at both the institutional and sociocultural levels. First, it is recommended that historical migration routes be identified, legally secured within the framework of "cultural heritage corridors," and protected through mapping. Recording pastoral routes is crucial for the preservation of cultural heritage and ensuring spatial justice. In this context, drafting a law that protects nomadic rights, permits, and the right to use land, as well as routes, is crucial for the sustainability of this activity and the relevant culture.

Providing safe accommodation areas and mobile veterinary services along the route is important for the ecological sustainability of migration in order to minimize the vital problems such as health, water, nutrition and shelter, animal care and health problems and security problems that nomads face during the migration process.

For nomadic activities to be sustained as a whole, the nomadic economy must be more robustly established and have a more strategic market network. Therefore, cooperatives must be established or strengthened to better market nomadic products, especially milk, dairy products, and livestock, and to provide economic input.

Today, nomadism is no longer just a term for people who go to the highlands; it has become a sub-identity. Therefore, former transhumant settlers who have settled in cities still identify as nomads today. In this context, it is crucial to develop alternative livelihoods compatible with animal husbandry, along with related educational and sociocultural support programs, for nomads who have settled or are in transition.

Overall, Batman's nomadism strives to preserve its unique identity and cultural continuity despite the powerful pressures of modernism. This effort requires consideration not only in economic terms but also in terms of cultural diversity and the right to spatial justice. Consequently, policies addressing nomadism, which signifies memory, identity, resistance, and dynamic culture, must be addressed not solely through the lens of aid or social support, but rather through the lens of spatial justice and sociocultural sustainability.

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