

FROM NOMADISM TO SEDENTISM IN EURASIA:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RUSSIAN AND OTTOMAN SEDENTARIZATION
POLICIES TOWARD TURKIC NOMADS IN KAZAKHSTAN AND ANATOLIA, FROM
THE LATE NINETEENTH TO THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

by

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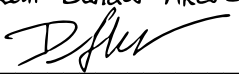
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the sedentarization policies of the Ottoman and Russian empires toward nomadic and semi-nomadic communities in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. It compares the Ottoman experience in southern Anatolia with the Russian imperial experience in the Kazakh steppe. The study argues that sedentarization was not only a policy of settling mobile groups in fixed places. It was also part of a wider imperial effort to make populations more visible, taxable, conscriptable, and governable.

The thesis asks how both empires understood nomadism as an administrative problem, which tools they used to transform mobile communities, and what kinds of results these policies produced. It focuses on population registration, taxation, military service, land regulation, administrative reorganization, statistical knowledge, and the language of civilization. In the Ottoman case, especially through policies such as the *Fırka-i Islâhiye*, sedentarization was closely connected to Tanzimat centralization, provincial reform, agricultural production, and the incorporation of Muslim nomadic groups into the imperial order. In the Russian case, sedentarization in the Kazakh steppe was more directly linked to settler colonization, land redistribution, statistical surveys, and the weakening of pastoral nomadism.

By bringing these two cases into the same comparative framework, this thesis shows both similarity and difference. Both empires tried to restrict mobility and strengthen central authority, but they did so through different imperial logics. Ottoman policy aimed mainly at integration and provincial control, while Russian policy produced deeper forms of colonial encirclement, land loss, and social marginalization. The thesis therefore treats sedentarization not as a completed transformation, but as a contested and uneven process shaped by state power, local actors, resistance, negotiation, and adaptation.

DEDICATION

Жаным анам Нұргүл ханымға арнаймын.

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1. Chapter I: Introduction

“Hakkımızda devlet etmiş fermanı

Ferman padişahın dağlar bizimdir”

“The state has issued its decree on us;

The decree is Sultan’s, but the mountains are ours.”¹

~ Dadaloğlu

The second half of the 19th century was a period characterized by intense reform efforts in both the Ottoman and Russian empires. A key aspect of these reforms was the process of transformation aimed at reestablishing the state’s authority over the periphery. One of the most prominent challenges during this process was the question of how to govern the nomadic and semi-nomadic communities living on the empires’ peripheries. These social structures, based on mobility, posed major problems for the central empires. This was because there were significant tensions between the nomadic way of life and the fundamental functions of the modern state, such as population registration, taxation, conscription, and administrative control. This situation transformed nomadism from simply a different way of life into a direct administrative problem. In this sense, the sedentarization policies implemented in both empires, while appearing at first glance to be measures aimed at transitioning nomads to a settled life, were in fact part of a broader restructuring process. In the Ottoman example, this process was closely linked to the reorganization of the provinces, the registration of the population, and the strengthening of central authority within the framework of Tanzimat-era centralization policies. In Russia, however, the same process was advanced alongside the legal and administrative redefinition of the Kazakh steppes, the transformation of the land regime, and the promotion of settler colonization. For this reason, settlement policies should not be viewed merely as a matter

¹ Dadaloğlu, *Bütün Şiirleri*, ed. Tuba Öztürk (İstanbul: Akvaryum Yayınevi, 2007), 17.

of population settlement in the two empires, as these policies emerge as a multidimensional field involving the reconstruction of land, population, and administrative structures.

The existing literature tends to address the Ottoman and Russian examples within separate contexts. While Ottoman studies focus primarily on central-provincial relations, the Tanzimat reforms, and the processes of modern bureaucratic state-building; studies on Russia are shaped around colonization, settler colonialism, and colonial land policies. This division makes it difficult to conduct a comparative assessment of the common aspects and structural differences in the settlement policies implemented in the two empires. Furthermore, the fact that settlement is often treated in the literature either as a policy imposed from above by the state or as an inevitable process of social transformation also makes comparative historical writing challenging.

This thesis aims to go beyond these approaches and examine settlement policies within a comparative framework. The central question of the study is how the Ottoman and Russian empires problematized nomadic communities, what administrative, legal, and military tools they utilized to transform these communities, and what kinds of outcomes these policies produced on the ground. In this regard, the thesis does not treat settlement as only a state policy or a completed transformation. Instead, settlement is evaluated as a multi-layered process in which different tools are used together, shaped by the reactions of local actors, and resulting in different outcomes in each region. Within this framework, the study aims to highlight the similarities and differences between the two empires. In both empires, settlement policies appear to share common objectives such as population registration, the restriction of mobility, and the strengthening of central authority. However, the methods of implementing these objectives and the outcomes they produced differ significantly. In the Ottoman example, settlement was primarily implemented to integrate the existing population into the settled order and to bind the provinces more closely to central administration. In Russia, this process

proceeded alongside settler colonization, the redistribution of land, and the economic and spatial marginalization of the local population. Consequently, despite similar administrative objectives, the outcomes in the two empires were not symmetrical.

The contribution of this study lies in demonstrating, by examining the Ottoman and Russian examples within the same analytical framework, that settlement policies were not merely applications specific to local contexts, but rather manifestations of a broader state logic in different forms. At the same time, the thesis aims to demonstrate that settlement processes were not one-way and completed transformations, but rather historical processes shaped by forms of negotiation, resistance, and adaptation, producing regionally diverse outcomes.

In this respect, the thesis first discusses the relevant literature and theoretical framework. It then examines the Ottoman and Russian examples in separate chapters. In the final chapter, these two examples are analyzed comparatively to examine the similarities and differences in the policies of modern empires toward nomadic communities. Thus, the study evaluates the transition from nomadism to sedentary life as a fundamental element of the modern state's efforts to reorganize the periphery.

1.1 Literature Review

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the settlement of nomadic and semi-nomadic communities was not merely an administrative measure for either the Ottoman or the Russian Empire. This long settlement process is significant because it demonstrates how the modern state problematized mobility, reorganized land, sought to register the population, and made remote regions more controllable through specific tools and policies. For this reason, viewing sedentarization merely as the transformation of nomads into peasants is insufficient in this context. Sedentarization is a broad historical field that includes centralization, land regimes, taxation, military service, security, schooling, and processes of social transformation. The existing literature has shed significant light on this field for both empires. However, the

Ottoman and Russian examples have not been examined in a comparative manner. The primary objective of this thesis is to attempt to discuss these two literatures in a comparative framework.

The Ottoman and Russian cases are compared in this thesis not because they were identical, but because they reveal how two late imperial states dealt with a similar administrative problem under different imperial conditions. In both cases, nomadic and semi-nomadic populations challenged the modern state's desire to register people, collect taxes, recruit soldiers, define land rights, and extend bureaucratic authority into the periphery. For this reason, sedentarization was not only about changing a way of life. It was also about making mobile populations more visible, more controllable, and more closely connected to the state.

At the same time, the comparison must begin with an important difference. In the Ottoman case, especially in southern Anatolia, the state usually treated the targeted nomadic groups as Muslim subjects who had to be integrated into the imperial order. The aim was to discipline, educate, tax, conscript, and settle them as part of the empire's core Muslim population. In the Russian case, especially in the Kazakh steppe, the situation was different. Kazakh nomads were not imagined as part of the Russian imperial core in the same way. Their sedentarization was connected to settler colonization, land redistribution, statistical surveys, and the legal marginalization of the indigenous population. Therefore, this thesis compares both similarity and difference: both empires tried to make nomads governable, but they did so through different imperial logics and produced different results.

To establish this comparative framework, it is necessary to take into account studies that approach the problem on a conceptual and theoretical level. James C. Scott's work *Seeing Like a State* is particularly significant here². Scott emphasizes the modern state's desire to make

² James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 1–5.

mobile, dispersed, and locally based social structures readable. This indicates that settlement policy should not be interpreted only as a matter of transitioning to a sedentary lifestyle. States are engaged in efforts to make people more visible in terms of population, taxation, military service, and administrative control³. In the Ottoman context, Fuat Dündar's study on censuses and population classifications is noteworthy because it shows that the state did not merely record society but also reconstructed it through classification⁴. Metin Heper's article on center-periphery relations, meanwhile, highlights that interventions in the provinces were aimed at strengthening central control⁵. On the Russian side, Peter Holquist demonstrates that the late Tsarist settlement administration was guided by a bureaucratic culture that emphasized technical knowledge, planning, and expertise⁶. Yanni Kotsonis's study on tax reforms analyzes the process by which the individual, separated from collective structures, becomes the state's direct counterpart⁷. Willard Sunderland, meanwhile, conceptualizes Russian expansion as an issue of internal colonization aimed at reorganizing the imperial space⁸. Paolo Sartori's article, *Constructing Colonial Legality in Russian Central Asia: On Guardianship*, adds an important point to this literature by showing that Russian rule did not simply leave legal pluralism in place. It also tried to reshape Islamic legal practice and the legal thinking of colonized subjects through appeals, bureaucratic review, and the gradual creation of what Sartori calls a new

³ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 183–184.

⁴ Fuat Dündar, "Empire of Taxonomy: Ethnic and Religious Identities in the Ottoman Surveys and Censuses," *Middle Eastern Studies* 51, no. 1 (2015): 151–152.

⁵ Metin Heper, "Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire: With Special Reference to the Nineteenth Century," *International Political Science Review* 1, no. 1 (1980): 91–93.

⁶ Peter Holquist, "'In Accord with State Interests and the People's Wishes': The Technocratic Ideology of Imperial Russia's Resettlement Administration," *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 151–153.

⁷ Yanni Kotsonis, "'Face-to-Face': The State, the Individual, and the Citizen in Russian Taxation, 1863–1917," *Slavic Review* 63, no. 2 (2004): 221–222, 229, 238–239.

⁸ Willard Sunderland, "The 'Colonization Question': Visions of Colonization in Late Imperial Russia," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 48, no. 2 (2000): 212–213.

“colonial legality”⁹. When these studies are evaluated together, it can be seen more clearly that in both the Ottoman and Russian cases, settlement policies were not merely administrative measures but were also closely linked to the modern state’s capacity to perceive, classify, and integrate the periphery into the center.

1.2 Literature on the Ottoman Empire

The first major part of literature in the Ottoman Empire consists of conceptual and historiographical studies. Rudi Paul Lindner’s article titled *What Was a Nomadic Tribe?* provides a crucial foundation for understanding traditional nomadic tribes. Lindner argues that categories such as tribe and nomadic clan cannot be taken as fixed and natural social units. The author argues that these formations were often constructed within the language of the sedentary world and state records. This discussion is important because it sheds light on the interpretation of negative statements regarding nomads found in Ottoman and Russian documents. Lindner reminds us that the historian should not repeat this language¹⁰. Reşat Kasaba’s work, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees*, similarly evaluates the Ottoman world through the lens of mobility. Furthermore, it views nomads not as marginal, powerless, and voiceless elements on the empire’s periphery, but as actors integral to its central functioning¹¹. Tutku Akin’s article titled *A Literature Review: The Relationship Between the Ottoman Empire and Tribes in the 19th Century* serves as an important guide shaping the historiography of the field. By distinguishing between state-centered, negotiated, and identity-focused lines of literature, the article makes the main threads of the discussion visible to

⁹ Paolo Sartori, “Constructing Colonial Legality in Russian Central Asia: On Guardianship,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56, no. 2 (2014): 422–23, 446–47.

¹⁰ Rudi Paul Lindner, “What Was a Nomadic Tribe?” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24, no. 4 (1982): 689–691, 693–697, 710–711.

¹¹ Reşat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014): 4, 18, 34–35.

researchers¹². Together, these three works demonstrate that Ottoman tribal history is not just a matter of public order but must also be approached as a conceptual problem.

Following this conceptual framework, the second major approach in the literature focuses on centralization and the Tanzimat reforms. Yonca Köksal's article *Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire* argues that the state sought to settle tribes through coercion, mediation, negotiation, and cooperation with local leaders. This is a crucial argument, as it removes sedentarization from being a one-sided state decree and brings to light the multifaceted political mechanisms involved¹³. Ahmet Şamil Gürer's article titled "The Settlement Policy of the Ottoman Empire and the Implementation of the Tanzimat Principles on the Semi-Nomadic People," however, interprets the settlement policy directly as the implementation of the modernizing Tanzimat principles in the provinces¹⁴. Kemal H. Karpat's work, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics*, examines and analyzes the demographic aspects of this process through census data, records, and social classification¹⁵. Başak Kale's article *Transforming an Empire: The Ottoman Empire's Immigration and Settlement Policies in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* also treats the settlement of nomads within a broader population settlement regime. Thus, Kale demonstrates the institutional and organizational similarities between migrant settlement and nomadic settlement¹⁶. When these four studies are considered together, it

¹² Tutku Akın, "A Literature Review: The Relationship Between the Ottoman Empire and Tribes in the XIXth Century," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 20, no. 40 (2022): 329–353, <https://doi.org/10.55842/talid.1165257>: 329–333, 347–349.

¹³ Yonca Köksal, "Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 3 (2006): 470–472, 486–487, 491.

¹⁴ Ahmet Şamil Gürer, "The Settlement Policy of the Ottoman Empire and the Implementation of the Tanzimat Principles on the Semi-Nomadic People," *Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 11, no. 1 (2020): 5–13, <https://doi.org/10.33537/sobild.2020.11.1.1>: 5–7, 11.

¹⁵ Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 9–11, 26–33.

¹⁶ Başak Kale, "Transforming an Empire: The Ottoman Empire's Immigration and Settlement Policies in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 2 (2014): 252–255, 258, 263–264.

becomes clear that Ottoman settlement was not solely a security-oriented policy. Furthermore, these four studies shed light on how Ottoman policy also targeted different dimensions, such as reform, demographic management, and the project of rebuilding the provinces.

The most classical and concrete example of Ottoman literature is centered around the Fırka-i Islâhiye. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's work *Tezâkir* provides a detailed account and analysis of the reform and settlement activities in the regions of Çukurova, Kozan, Gavurdağı, and Kürddâğı from the perspective of a Tanzimat bureaucrat. Here, settlement is not merely about settling nomads in one place. Settlement policy was constructed in a multilateral manner as a state-building process interconnected with taxation, military service, road construction, cadastral surveys, the establishment of new districts and towns, and the suppression of local power centers¹⁷. Yusuf Halaçoğlu's pioneering article, *Fırka-i Islâhiye ve Yapmış Olduğu İskân*, views Fırka-i Islâhiye as a reform instrument that established new settlements, settled tribes, and administratively reorganized the region, and analyzes it based on primary sources¹⁸. Nuri Yavuz's articles titled *Kuva-yı Islâhiye'nin Musul ve Kerkük'teki Faaliyetleri* and *Fırka-i Islâhiye Ordusunun Özellikleri ve Faaliyetleri*, make a significant contribution to the literature by demonstrating that this policy should not be viewed as limited solely to the Çukurova region and draw attention to the military and administrative nature of the policy pursued¹⁹. The same author's book, *Fırka-i Islâhiye*, also examines this material through a more comprehensive perspective, drawing on archival documents and secondary sources²⁰. Saim Yörük's publication

¹⁷ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir* 21–39, ed. Cavid Baysun, 2nd ed. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1986), 107–109, 140–150, 181–182; for Cevdet Paşa's later retrospective summary of the same mission, see Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir* 40: *Tetimme*, ed. Cavid Baysun, 3rd ed. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991), 83.

¹⁸ Yusuf Halaçoğlu, "Fırka-i Islâhiye ve Yapmış Olduğu İskân," *Tarih Dergisi* 27 (1973): 1–3, 6–9, 18–20.

¹⁹ Nuri Yavuz, "Fırka-i Islâhiye Ordusunun Özellikleri ve Faaliyetleri," *Akademik Bakış* 5, no. 10 (2012): 113–114, 126–127. Nuri Yavuz, "Kuva-yı Islâhiye'nin Musul ve Kerkük'teki Faaliyetleri," *Gazi University Journal of Education Faculty* 27, no. 1 (2007): 238–243.

²⁰ Nuri Yavuz, *Fırka-i Islâhiye* (İstanbul: Sonçağ Akademi Yayınları, 2021), 11–13, 40–43.

Fırka-i Islâhiye: Cevdet Paşa – Kozan ve Gavur Dağı Ahvâline Dair Lâyihâ does not hold significant theoretical or analytical importance. However, the publication is valuable because it makes a primary source/report from the Ottoman Archives accessible to researchers and usable in a comparative manner²¹. The greatest advantage of Ottoman literature, which developed around military units, is that it provides a detailed account of the Ottoman state's activities on the ground. However, this advantage is also the most significant limitation of this literature. In the tradition of Cevdet Paşa, Halaçoğlu, and to some extent Yavuz, tribes are often portrayed as an issue to be addressed by the central state, or as communities that must be organized and brought under control through the imposition of top-down measures. In these texts, the state's intentions and practices are made abundantly clear. However, the social reactions of the settled communities, their negotiations with the state, and the costs of this process are not adequately reflected. For this reason, the literature centered on the *Fırka-i Islâhiye* is invaluable in terms of revealing the operational logic of Ottoman settlement policy on the ground. However, when this literature is used alone, it is insufficient because it provides state-centered reading.

Therefore, evaluating more critical and conceptual studies is essential to fully grasp literature. Selim Deringil's article titled '*They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery*': *The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate* argues that late Ottoman elites increasingly viewed nomadic and semi-nomadic communities within a colonial framework, using the example of North African Bedouins. Deringil's most significant contribution is his linking of the discourse of civilization to the colonial debate²². Fasih Dinç's article, *Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı'nın İskân Politikası: Caf Aşireti Örneği* also interprets the settlement policies

²¹ Saim Yörük, *Fırka-i Islâhiye: Cevdet Paşa – Kozan ve Gavur Dağı Ahvâline Dair Lâyihâ* (İstanbul: İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık, 2017), 3–4, 19–21, 69–70.

²² Selim Deringil, "'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, no. 2 (2003): 311–314, 317–318.

implemented during this period as a tool of civilization and discipline²³. Although Janet Klein's book *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* does not focus directly on settlement policy, it is highly significant for demonstrating how tribes were reorganized by the state and how peripheral regions were administered²⁴. These studies reveal that Ottoman tribal policy was not solely about forced settlement. Rather, these policies were pursued with other objectives in mind, such as military mobilization, border management, civilization, modernization, and centralizing the provinces.

Another important branch of the Ottoman-side literature consists of studies focused on economic and social transformation. Meltem Toksöz's work, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Making of the Adana-Mersin Region 1850-1908*, approaches the transformation in the Çukurova from a perspective broader than public order and centralization. By drawing attention to the growth of commercial agriculture, integration into the world economy, and changes in labor regimes she highlights that settlement was not only a question of security or administrative measures. It was also closely tied to the reorganization of land and labor under changing economic conditions of the 19th century.²⁵. Suat Dede's dissertation, titled *From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia: The Case of the Rışvan Tribe (1830–1932)*, demonstrates through a microhistorical study that the transition to a sedentary lifestyle was not a sudden or short-term process. The author's demonstration of how the settlement process was a long-term, fragmented, and painful process is important for understanding social transformation with greater depth. We can observe much more clearly that this process struggled to transform social structures, particularly in the fact that livestock

²³ Fasih Dinç, "Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı'nın İskân Politikası: CAF Aşireti Örneği," *OTAM* 40 (2016): 410–412.

²⁴ Janet Klein and Renan Akman, *Hamidiye Alayları: İmparatorluğun Sınır Boyları ve Kürt Aşiretleri* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 16–20, 29–30, 141–142.

²⁵ Meltem Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Making of the Adana-Mersin Region, 1850–1908*, *The Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage* 45 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 19–20, 135–36, 189–90.

farming retained its importance for a long time and that tribal memory continued to survive. This study also demonstrates that this social transformation cannot be interpreted as a linear process²⁶.

This difference also explains why the Ottoman section of the literature review gives more space to works on Tanzimat centralization, tribal administration, provincial reform, population management, and commercial agriculture. This does not mean that Ottoman colonial or colonial-style practices are irrelevant. On the contrary, the works on civilization, reform, and “borrowed colonialism” are important because they show that Ottoman integration could also be expressed through a hierarchical language. Ottoman officials often described nomadic communities as backward, disorderly, or in need of reform. However, the Ottoman case examined in this thesis was not identical to the Russian settler-colonial case. The Ottoman state aimed mainly to incorporate these communities into its own administrative, fiscal, military, and religious order. For this reason, the Ottoman historiography most useful for this thesis is not only the literature on colonial discourse, but also the literature on centralization, settlement, local power, land, labor, and state-building.

In summary, there are several main approaches to the subject in Ottoman literature. Lindner, Kasaba, and Akın focus on the conceptual and historiographical parts of the literature. Köksal, Gürer, Karpat, and Kale situate settlement within the context of centralization, reform, and demographic management. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, Halaçoğlu, Yavuz, and Yörük examine state practices in detail within the framework of the *Fırka-i Islâhiye*. Deringil, Dinç, and Klein, on the other hand, discuss the process within the context of the civilizing of settlement, border

²⁶ Suat Dede, “From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia: The Case of Rışvan Tribe (1830–1932)” (master’s thesis, İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, 2011), 46–47, 60, 73, 80–81, 89–90, 98.

policy, and colonial-style administration. Toksöz and Dede, meanwhile, bring the economic and social dimensions of the process into focus.

1.3 Literature on Kazakhstan and the Russian Empire

The literature on the policy of sedentarization in the Kazakh steppe has taken shape in a manner distinct from Ottoman historiography. Compared to the Ottoman Empire, the case of Kazakhstan has developed more explicitly around the concepts of colonization, land seizure, and settler colonialism. The literature on Russian and Ukrainian peasant settlement is central to this thesis because, in the Kazakh steppe, sedentarization cannot be separated from settler colonization. The movement of Slavic settlers into the steppe changed the conditions of Kazakh nomadic life. It narrowed access to pasturelands, disrupted migration routes, and gave the colonial state a reason to survey, classify, and redistribute land. Therefore, the settlement of Slavic populations is not an external subject. It was one of the main mechanisms through which Kazakh mobility was restricted and pastoral nomadism was weakened. This is why the Russian/Kazakh historiography necessarily gives more attention to colonization, land policy, statistics, and settler expansion than the Ottoman section. One of the classic texts in this field is George J. Demko's *The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan, 1896–1916*. Demko outlines the geographical spread of Russian and Ukrainian peasant resettlement, the scale of colonization, and its demographic impact on the steppe within a historical and geographical framework²⁷. Martha Brill Olcott's article *The Settlement of the Kazakh Nomads* and her book *The Kazakhs* are among the foundational studies in the literature. Olcott demonstrates that Russian land policy profoundly disrupted the Kazakh nomadic economy. She argues that this development also created a strong pressure toward sedentarization during the late Tsarist

²⁷ George J. Demko, *The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan: 1896–1916* (Richmond: Curzon, 1997), 74–126.

period²⁸. Gülnar Kara's article titled *19. Yüzyılda Çarlık Rusya'sının Kazak Jüzlerinde Gerçekleştirdiği İdarî Reformlar ve Neticeleri* contributes to this discussion through the perspective of administrative reform, demonstrating how the steppe was divided into more manageable administrative units and politically redesigned along a progression from the 1822–1824 regulations to the 1867–68 and 1891 reforms²⁹.

This classical colonization literature has been addressed in more recent studies on a more critical and theoretical plane. Alexander Morrison's work titled *Russian Settler Colonialism* conceptualizes Russian expansion directly as settler colonialism. Morrison emphasizes that the 1891 Steppe Statute, as a vital pillar of settler colonialism, established the legal framework that allowed settlers to claim indigenous lands under the logic of “surplus land”³⁰. Ulrich Hofmeister's article *Civilization and Russification in Tsarist Central Asia, 1860–1917* draws attention to the ideological language of this colonialism. Hofmeister emphasizes that the colonizers viewed nomadism as a backward stage and settled agriculture and Russian culture as an advanced stage³¹. Steven Sabol's book *The Touch of Civilization: Comparing American and Russian Internal Colonization* examines the Russian example by comparing it to the tragic history of Native Americans within a broader discussion of internal colonization³². The same author's work, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazakh National Consciousness*, highlights the impact of colonization on the formation of Kazakh

²⁸ Martha Brill Olcott, “The Settlement of the Kazakh Nomads,” *Nomadic Peoples* 8 (1981): 14–23. Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, 2nd ed. (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1995), 14–16, 18–20.

²⁹ Gülnar Kara, “19. Yüzyılda Çarlık Rusya'sının Kazak Jüzlerinde Gerçekleştirdiği İdarî Reformlar ve Neticeleri,” *GTTAD* 3, no. 6 (2021): 376–381.

³⁰ Alexander Morrison, “Russian Settler Colonialism,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, ed. Lorenzo Veracini and Ed Cavanagh (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 313–26, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315544816>: 313, 321–322.

³¹ Ulrich Hofmeister, “Civilization and Russification in Tsarist Central Asia, 1860–1917,” *Journal of World History* 27, no. 3 (2016): 411–413, 421–422, 430.

³² Steven Sabol, *The Touch of Civilization: Comparing American and Russian Internal Colonization* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2017), 3–6.

national consciousness based on historical events³³. Adeeb Khalid's book *Central Asia: A New History from the Imperial Conquests to the Present* also examines the transformation of the steppe within the context of the "colonial order," presenting a broader historical framework spanning from the Tsarist conquests to the Soviet era³⁴.

One of the most striking aspects of the Russian/Kazakh literature is that it demonstrates how colonization was supported and planned through scientific studies. Ian W. Campbell's article titled *Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested: The Shcherbina Expedition of 1896–1903* does not interpret the Shcherbina Expedition as a simple land surveying activity. Campbell interprets these surveys as a knowledge regime governing settler colonization. On the other hand, Campbell's most significant contribution is demonstrating that actors within the Russian administration were not always in agreement³⁵. Zhanar Jampeissova's article, *Imperial Statistical Research in the Kazakh Steppes (Late 19th–Early 20th Centuries): Defining Nomadic Communes and their Borders*, analyzes and elaborates on the epistemological dimension of this process. Jampeissova argues that categories such as the nomadic commune and its borders were not objectively given but were instead constructed by the colonial administration³⁶. Virginia Martin's work, *Law and Custom in the Steppe: The Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century*, also focuses on the legal aspects of this process of reconstruction. Martin emphasizes that rather than completely abolishing customary law, the Russian administration sought to define it, codify it, and

³³ Steven Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), xx–xx, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230599420>: 1–2, 9.

³⁴ Adeeb Khalid, *Central Asia: A New History from the Imperial Conquests to the Present* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021), 96–107.

³⁵ Ian W. Campbell, "Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested: The Shcherbina Expedition of 1896–1903," *Central Asian Survey* 30, no. 3–4 (2011): 423–436, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2011.604220>: 423–424, 432.

³⁶ Zhanar Jampeissova, "Imperial Statistical Research in the Kazakh Steppes (Late 19th–Early 20th Centuries)," *Oriente Moderno* 96, no. 1 (2016): 118–131, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22138617-12340100>: 118–120, 131.

reinterpret it within its own administrative logic. The author demonstrates that, despite these efforts by the Russian administration, the Kazakhs were able to create spaces for negotiation within this legal regime³⁷. When these three works are evaluated together, they reveal that the steppe was not merely occupied militarily or demographically. Indeed, scientific studies and legal regulations were also utilized for the purposes of colonization.

The literature focusing on social and environmental consequences plays a significant role in understanding the settlement of the Kazakh steppes and the colonial occupation they faced. David Moon's work, *The Plough That Broke the Steppes: Agriculture and Environment on Russia's Grasslands, 1700–1914*, explores the environmental history dimension of colonization and illustrates the ecological consequences of opening the steppe to agriculture³⁸. Gülnar Kara's article *19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler* addresses the social consequences of this transformation through the examples of the poor and immobile groups known as zhataq³⁹. Emre Teğın's article titled *Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism: The Impacts of Russian Colonialism on the Kazakh Steppe during the 19th and 20th Centuries* addresses the loss of pastureland, the depletion of water sources, the restriction of migration routes, and the increasing dependence on markets. Teğın does not equate land loss with complete sedentarization. Teğın's conclusion is particularly significant, as it demonstrates that the breakdown of the pastoral order did not directly result in sedentarization. Indeed, the

³⁷ Virginia Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe: The Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 2001), 1–5, 8, 34–47, 156–160.

³⁸ David Moon, *The Plough That Broke the Steppes: Agriculture and Environment on Russia's Grasslands, 1700–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1–15, 89–164, 279–284.

³⁹ Gülnar Kara, "19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler," in *Sosyal, Beşeri ve İdarî Bilimlerde Yeni Ufuklar*, ed. Sinan Sönmez, Ertan Özçoban, Dursun Balkan, and Hüseyin Karakuş (Ankara: Gece Akademî, 2019), 337, 343, 349.

author interprets this period as a prolonged process of administrative encirclement and colonial contraction⁴⁰.

There are also complementary studies on this trajectory of social and environmental transformation. Sarah I. Cameron's book *The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Violence, and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan*, which draws on long-term and cultural perspectives, focuses on a chronologically later period. However, the work holds a critical position because it demonstrates how land loss and colonization during the late Tsarist period laid the groundwork for Soviet violence⁴¹. Another scholar utilizing a cultural perspective is Carole Ferret. In her article *The Ambiguities of the Kazakhs' Nomadic Heritage*, the author discusses the many forms nomadism took and how it was transformed into a cultural heritage in the modern era⁴². Danielle Ross's book *The Tatar Empire: Kazan's Muslims and the Making of Imperial Russia*, meanwhile, points out that the transformation of the steppe should not be considered solely through the lens of ethnic Russian and Ukrainian settlers. Ross emphasizes that the Muslim Tatars, who played a significant role within the empire, were influential in this process through their networks of intermediaries, ulema, and merchants⁴³.

When considered together, the Russian/Kazakh literature utilized in this study can also be grouped around four main categories. The first article by Demko, Olcott, and Kara establishes the classical framework of reform and colonization. Morrison, Hofmeister, Sabol, and Khalid explain and examine the logic of colonialism, civilization, and empire at a

⁴⁰ Emre Teğin, "Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism: The Impacts of Russian Colonialism on the Kazakh Steppe during the 19th and 20th Centuries," *bilig*, no. 111 (2024): 29–53, <https://doi.org/10.12995/bilig.11102>: 29, 31, 35, 39–43.

⁴¹ Sarah I. Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Violence, and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2018), 23, 26–27, 101.

⁴² Carole Ferret, "The Ambiguities of the Kazakhs' Nomadic Heritage," *Nomadic Peoples* 20, no. 2 (2016): 176–199, <https://doi.org/10.3197/np.2016.200202>: 183, 186, 192.

⁴³ Danielle Ross, *Tatar Empire: Kazan's Muslims and the Making of Imperial Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020), 4, 6, 26.

theoretical level. Campbell, Jampeissova, and Martin demonstrate how the steppe was reimagined and reorganized through knowledge and law. Moon, Kara's second article, Teğın, Cameron, Ferret, and Ross discuss and evaluate the social, environmental, cultural, and long-term consequences. This literature has been studied in detail against the Ottoman example and is clearly shaped around settler-colonial priority, colonial law, and the regime of statistical knowledge.

1.4 Conclusion to the Literature Review

This literature review indicates several key findings. Initially, in both the Ottoman and Russian cases, the policy of sedentarization was not merely about settling nomadic communities into a sedentary lifestyle. These policies also entailed the restriction of mobility, the redefinition of land, the registration of the population, the transformation of local powers, and the restructuring of the provinces according to a new and modern state logic. Second, although the literature on the two empires focuses on similar topics, there are many differences within the literature. On the Ottoman side, state formation, the Tanzimat, the Fırka-i Islâhiye, modernization, and the transformation of the provinces take center stage. On the Russian/Kazakh side, however, colonization, settler-colonialism, law, statistics, and environmental transformation emerge as more prominent themes. This thesis stands precisely at the intersection of these two fields. It is because the issue is neither solely Ottoman provincial reform nor solely Russian settler colonialism. The central question is how two modern empires interpreted mobile nomadic communities, what administrative, military, legal, and discursive tools they employed to control and transform them, and what similarities and differences emerged in this process. In the existing literature, Kazakhstan and the Ottoman Empire are examined separately. Therefore, the original contribution of this study is to examine both cases in a comparative manner without treating sedentarization as either a simple outcome or a one-

sided state success. For this reason, administrative ideals, instruments of coercion, spaces of negotiation, and processes of social transformation will be addressed and compared together.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The central argument of this thesis is that the settlement policies of the Ottoman and Russian Empires toward nomadic communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries cannot be interpreted merely as administrative measures or agricultural development strategies. These policies were part of a broader transformation. This transformation is linked to the increasing capacity of the modern state to more closely control, record, classify, and intervene in society. Consequently, this study adopts a theoretical framework grounded in the state's efforts to make society "readable," bureaucratic forms of governance, center-periphery relations, and the logic of internal colonization. This approach allows for the discussion of both the Ottoman and Russian examples on the same analytical plane. Furthermore, it offers the opportunity to address and compare the distinct historical and institutional characteristics of the two empires.

The first aspect of this framework is formed by James C. Scott's approach, developed around the state's quest for "legibility." Scott emphasizes that the modern state seeks to transform complex, local, and mobile social structures into standard categories. The state has attempted to carry out this categorization using tools such as family names, population registers, cadastral maps, units of measurement, and a standardized legal language. The author particularly highlights this point in the introduction to his work. Scott argues that the state has historically been uncomfortable with mobile communities and therefore viewed sedentarization as a tool to facilitate taxation, conscription, and political control⁴⁴. As Scott also emphasizes, nomadism is not merely an economic mode of production or a sociological structure. It is also a form of social existence that does not fully fit into the state's administrative framework and

⁴⁴ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 2–3.

is incompatible with it. Therefore, settlement is not merely about transitioning nomads to a sedentary lifestyle. Settlement also involves transforming people into a form that the state can count, map, and legally fix. Scott's argument is not limited to the issue of population. He also explains the state's logic of simplifying nature and society to make them manageable, using the example of forestry. According to him, modern administration views and focuses on complex realities through an administrative lens. This selective and conscious gaze enables measurement, calculation, and intervention. But it can also render significant elements of social and ecological complexity invisible⁴⁵. This point is particularly important for nomadic communities. Because the ecological logic of nomadism relies on seasonal mobility, flexible land use, and local knowledge. The state's lack of local knowledge and its centralized structure, however, can lead to serious problems. Nevertheless, the state seeks to redefine this fluid structure on its periphery within the framework of fixed villages, defined borders, and measurable population units. Thus, settlement is not limited to a policy of simply placing people in a specific location. For this policy also involves simplifying and recoding a complex way of life.

One of the most significant studies strengthening this theoretical framework in the Ottoman context is Fuat Dündar's article on census-taking and classification. Dündar emphasizes that the state classifies the population for the purpose of governance and that the census is not merely a quantitative process. According to him, the census identifies, excludes, classifies, and hierarchizes the population. Precisely for this reason, it does not merely reflect social reality; it also reconstructs and shapes social reality⁴⁶. This approach is quite useful for understanding Ottoman nomadic settlement. Because in the Ottoman example, the issue is not merely settling nomads in a particular place. The real issue is to place them within the state's

⁴⁵ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 11–15.

⁴⁶ Dündar, "Empire of Taxonomy," 136–137.

categories in accordance with the requirements of the Tanzimat era. A countable population, taxable households, a male population subjected to military service, and administratively defined communities are a necessity and indispensable for the modern state. In other words, settlement policy can also be described as a policy of definition and reclassification. Dündar's second significant contribution is demonstrating the Ottoman state's transition from the classical tahrir logic to a modern, population-centered bureaucratic census logic. The article particularly emphasizes that the Ottoman Empire's two fundamental recording systems—tahrir and the modern census regime—correspond to two distinct political eras and two different state logics⁴⁷. This transformation is of critical importance for the research topic. This is because the settlement of nomads gains meaning precisely within this transition. The settlement of mobile communities became a prerequisite for the central state to plan and manage the population more directly. For this reason, in the Ottoman example, we cannot view settlement merely as a public order or agricultural policy. It is a more accurate perspective to evaluate the examples of the Fırka-i Islâhiye and the Kuva-yı Islâhiye as part of the process of the state's reorganization of the population.

In the Russian example, a similar logic emerges within a more explicit technocratic framework. As Peter Holquist demonstrates, the Settlement Administration of the late Tsarist period did not function merely as a bureaucratic institution managing colonization. Rather, this institution served as the vehicle for an administrative culture defined by expertise, planning, and technical knowledge. Holquist explicitly links this structure to “technocratic ideology” and argues that the settlement administration was guided by a group of people who believed that the state could reorganize society through expert knowledge⁴⁸. This is crucial for understanding Russian sedentarization policies. Because here, settlement does not advance solely through the

⁴⁷ Dündar, “Empire of Taxonomy,” 138–139.

⁴⁸ Holquist, ““In Accord with State Interests and the People's Wishes,”” 151–153.

use of force. At the same time, the settlement program is legitimized through the language of scientific land management, statistics, planning, and reform. Another key point Holquist emphasizes is that these bureaucrats viewed themselves as “specialists.” In other words, the bureaucrats saw themselves as experts capable of solving social problems through scientific knowledge and technical skills⁴⁹. This observation is crucial for understanding why the policies implemented in the Kazakh steppe were not conducted solely in military or security-oriented terms. Indeed, a technical and reformist language was also employed in these policies. The surveying of the steppe, the classification of land, the identification of surplus land, and its opening up for settler colonization were all outcomes of this regime of expertise. Thus, in the Russian case, internal colonization can be said to be the result of a technocratic vision of the state as well. At this point, Yanni Kotsonis’s work on tax reforms can help deepen the theoretical framework. Kotsonis emphasizes that, beginning in the 1860s, the Russian tax regime separated the individual from collective structures, making the individual the state’s direct subject. According to Kotsonis, the modern state’s direct taxation regime created a new administrative logic that gave rise to individual declarations and individual responsibility⁵⁰. This process undermined estate-based collective structures but made the individual administratively visible. However, this visibility is not a liberation in a liberal sense. It is more reasonable to interpret this as an increase in the state’s capacity to exercise control over the individual. For nomadic communities, the consequences of this have been even more pronounced. As intermediate structures such as the tribe, clan, or community weaken, the state gains the ability to exert direct influence over the individual. Settlement policy also becomes one of the key instruments of this very process.

⁴⁹ Holquist, ““In Accord with State Interests and the People’s Wishes,”” 153–154.

⁵⁰ Kotsonis, ““Face-to-Face,”” 221–223.

Metin Heper's approach is quite useful for understanding the relationship between the center and the periphery in the Ottoman Empire. Heper notes that the center-periphery relationship in the Ottoman political order changed in the nineteenth century, as the state sought to reshape and redesign the instruments through which central authority reached the provinces. From the earliest periods, the Ottomans sought to establish a centralized political order. The land system, bureaucracy, and legal framework were shaped by this logic of centralized administration⁵¹. For this reason, settlement policy can be interpreted not as a compromise between the state and the provinces, but as the product of a desire to observe the provinces more closely and exercise more systematic control over them.

In the Russian example, this logic can be expressed more clearly through the concept of "internal colonization." As Willard Sunderland demonstrates, in late imperial Russia, the "colonization question" was not merely a technical issue concerning peasant migration. This question covered a broader political and cultural debate regarding the empire's east, progress, the Russian peasantry, and non-Russian peoples. Sunderland also emphasizes that there is an important distinction between "kolonizatsiia" and "pereselenie." However, he carefully underlines that both concepts are tied to the project of reorganizing the imperial space⁵². This approach explains why the Kazakh steppe was viewed not only as a border area, but as an imperial territory that needed to be reorganized, classified, and opened up to a settler population. Furthermore, Paolo Sartori's work on colonial law provides an important theoretical foundation by demonstrating that, in the Russian case, the issue was not limited to land and population, but also encompassed the legal sphere. Sartori notes that the Russian administration did not completely abolish local legal institutions. However, he argues that the Russian administration transformed the authority and functioning of local legal institutions and systems by embedding

⁵¹ Heper, "Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire," 81–85.

⁵² Sunderland, "The 'Colonization Question,'" 210–212.

them within a new colonial legal regime⁵³. This point is significant, because internal colonization is not merely a transfer of land or the displacement of populations. It is also the redefinition of the forms in which local communities exercise rights, guardianship, representation, and legal agency. This demonstrates that sedentarization is not just a process of spatial reorganization, but also a legal and administrative one.

When all this literature is considered together, the most appropriate theoretical conclusion for this thesis can be summarized as follow. The settlement policies of the Ottoman and Russian empires toward nomadic communities emerged at the crossroads of the modern state's efforts to make society legible, classify it, dismantle tribal structures and individualize them, and subordinate the periphery to the center. For this reason, it is incorrect to view sedentarization as a unidirectional and completed outcome. Sedentarization should be approached as an administrative project that is often unequal, fragmented, met with resistance, and takes different forms across various regions. Such a theoretical framework makes it possible to consider both the Ottoman and Russian examples simultaneously. At the same time, it offers the opportunity to highlight the differences in the tools, languages, and institutional forms employed by these two empires. Precisely for this reason, it enables the establishment of a fertile and solid foundation for a comparative thesis.

In this thesis, these theoretical concepts are used through concrete policy instruments rather than as abstract ideas. The first instrument is legibility. This refers to population registration, cadastral mapping, statistical surveys, and the classification of nomadic communities. These practices made mobile populations easier for the state to see and administer. The second instrument is bureaucratization. This includes the creation of new districts, the appointment of officials, the extension of tax obligations, conscription practices,

⁵³ Sartori, "Constructing Colonial Legality," 420–422.

and the attempt to replace local or tribal authority with direct state authority. The third instrument is the transformation of land regimes. In both cases, sedentarization was connected to the fixing of mobility and the redefinition of land, but the results were different. In the Ottoman case, land and settlement policies were mostly linked to provincial order, agricultural production, and the integration of tribes into the state. In the Russian case, land transformation was more directly connected to settler colonization and the reduction of Kazakh access to pasturelands. The fourth instrument is the civilizing mission. Both empires associated settled life with order, productivity, morality, and progress. However, this language had different meanings in each case. In the Ottoman Empire, it was used to integrate Muslim nomads into the imperial order. In the Russian Empire, it was used to justify colonial rule and the superiority of settled agricultural life over pastoral nomadism.

These instruments make the comparison clearer. The thesis does not argue that the Ottoman and Russian empires followed the same path. Rather, it argues that both states faced the problem of governing mobile populations and used similar modern tools, such as registration, classification, land regulation, and administrative intervention. The main difference lies in the political meaning and consequences of these tools. Ottoman sedentarization aimed mainly at incorporation into the imperial core, while Russian policies in the Kazakh steppe produced colonial encirclement, land loss, and social marginalization. This distinction is central to the comparative argument of the thesis.

2. Chapter II: Ottoman Sedentarization Policies

2.1 Introduction to the Second Chapter

The 19th century was not simply a period of intensified reforms for the Ottoman Empire. It was a phase of profound transformation during which the state sought to redefine its authority over the provinces. The centralist administrative philosophy that gained strength with the Tanzimat aimed to better identify, classify, register, and control the population across the

empire's territory. In this context, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities were not viewed by the Ottoman bureaucracy solely as having a different lifestyle. They were also viewed as a structural issue that needed to be addressed in terms of tax collection, conscription, maintaining public order, and establishing legal and administrative oversight. For social structures based on mobility were in direct tension with the central state's standardizing and controlling logic. The Ottoman ruling elite's view of nomadism in the 19th century was therefore not limited to administrative concerns alone. While the Tanzimat bureaucracy equated sedentary life with order, productivity, and civilization, they classified nomadism a space outside both social discipline and state authority. Statements in official discourse that nomadic tribes lived in a "state of savagery and Bedouinism" and therefore needed to be reformed and guided toward the "path of humanity" demonstrate that the settlement policy was legitimized not only as a practical administrative tool but also through a powerful language of civilization. In this regard, settlement policies have evolved into a multi-layered sphere of intervention aimed at expanding the state's authority in the provinces, incorporating the population into a more orderly administrative framework, and integrating mobile communities into a settled social order.

One of the most visible areas of application for this general transformation was the tribe-state relations that took shape along the Çukurova, Adana, Maraş, and Gavurdağı corridor. In these regions, the problem was not limited to nomadic mobility. The influence of local dynasties and power centers that limited the central administration's authority was also a significant issue. Local powers such as the Kozanoğulları, Küçükaliogulları, and Ulaşlı Beyleri were challenging state authority. This rebellion turned the provinces into both a security and a fiscal problem from the central government's perspective. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's observations reveal that these local power centers were not limited to having actual influence; they also presented an appearance that sometimes cast a shadow over the center's political legitimacy. Indeed, the Kozanoğulları's practice of referring to their own bey succession as *culus* and their refusal to

recognize the sultan's decrees indicated an unacceptable claim to autonomy from the perspective of central authority. The lack of public order in the region emerged not only as an issue of administrative rebellion but also as a serious economic and social crisis. The inability to collect taxes regularly from the tribes, the damage to the agricultural production of the settled population, the insecurity of caravan routes, and the disruption of trade flows further highlighted the state's weak presence in the provinces. For example, the fact that the Adana province was in debt to the treasury by ten million kurush in 1852 due to the failure to collect taxes from tribes clearly illustrates the financial dimension of the problem. Similarly, the fact that the Payas road, located along the Arabian postal route and the Hajj pilgrimage route, became inaccessible due to attacks by mountain tribes demonstrates that the issue was not limited to regional security but also affected the empire's broader transportation and communication networks. The destruction of the settled population's crops by nomadic herds and the plundering of caravans further deepened social unrest in the region. The military dimension of this structural problem became particularly evident during the Crimean War. To meet the military manpower needs created by the war, conscripts were requested from the Kozan and Gavurdağı tribes; however, due to the tribes' hostile stance toward the state, this request did not result in the desired outcome. The state's inability to regularly conscript soldiers from communities within its own territory is a notable weakness, as it demonstrates just how limited military capacity remained in the periphery, despite being one of the most fundamental elements of modern centralizing reforms. For this reason, directly linking uncontrolled areas to the center after the war, incorporating tribes into tax and population records, bringing them under control, and reactivating the region's economic potential became an urgent necessity and objective for the Ottoman administration.

The most significant initiative in which these objectives took concrete form was the Fırka-i İslâhiye, established in 1865. This operation, led militarily by Derviş Paşa and

administratively by Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, should not be viewed only as a security measure or a temporary military intervention. On the contrary, this initiative constituted a comprehensive reorganization project that brought together objectives such as the establishment of new villages, the draining of swamps, the sedentarization of tribes, the promotion of agricultural production, and the establishment of a permanent state presence. In other words, the Fırka-i İslâhiye was tasked not merely with suppressing the rebellion or ensuring security, but with subjecting the provinces to a new administrative, social, and economic order.

This chapter examines the Ottoman Empire's 19th-century settlement policy precisely within this multi-layered framework. Here, sedentarization is not interpreted as a narrow population policy aimed exclusively at settling nomads into a sedentary lifestyle. Instead, settlement will be evaluated as a state practice where the objectives of modernization, centralization, military mobilization, economic transformation, and social engineering intersect. In this vein, the chapter will first discuss the relationship between Ottoman settlement policy and the modern state's vision and discourse of civilization. It will then examine the central authority's efforts to reestablish itself in the provinces, the forms of conflict and negotiation between tribes and the state, the settlement tools implemented on the ground, and finally, the social consequences of these policies. Thus, it will be argued that 19th-century Ottoman sedentarization policies were not just a series of administrative reforms but a broad-scale political project aimed at reestablishing the empire's capacity to exert influence in the provinces.

This chapter also follows the theoretical framework of the thesis by examining Ottoman settlement through concrete policy instruments. These include the registration of population, the extension of taxation and military service, the creation of new administrative units, the weakening or incorporation of local powers, and the use of a civilizing language that associated settled life with order and productivity. In the Ottoman case, however, these tools were mainly

used to integrate Muslim and largely Turkic nomadic communities into the imperial order. For this reason, the chapter does not present Ottoman sedentarization as a simple colonial project. Rather, it analyzes it as a process of incorporation, discipline, and provincial reorganization, even when this process included coercion and violence.

2.2 Mission of Modernization

The Ottoman Empire's settlement policies in the 19th century can be interpreted as a “civilizing” mission. The Ottoman centralist perspective identified state authority and settled life with “civilization.” On the other hand, it viewed nomads as “savage,” “barbaric,” and “defiant of authority”⁵⁴. For this reason, the transition of nomadic communities to a settled life was considered an important step in establishing state authority. Ottoman bureaucrats of the Tanzimat era considered it imperative for the country's social and economic development to settle nomads and transform them into modern citizens within the framework of the Tanzimat reforms. In this context, Selim Deringil uses the concept of “borrowed colonialism” to describe the Ottoman modernization discourse as a practice borrowed from Western imperialism. Deringil states that the late Ottoman administration viewed the tribes in Libya, Yemen, and the Arab provinces as “subjects that needed to be invited to civilization”⁵⁵. Similarly, Reşat Kasaba considers the Ottoman settlement of nomads as a common ground between centralization and modernity projects. According to Kasaba, the mobility of nomadic communities conflicted with the fundamental needs of the modern state, such as a stabilized population, a taxable economy, and administrative control⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ Fasih Dinç, “Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı’nın İskân Politikası: CAF Aşireti Örneği,” *OTAM* 40 (2016): 411–412.

⁵⁵ Selim Deringil, “‘They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery’: The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, no. 2 (2003): 312–315.

⁵⁶ Reşat Kasaba, *Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014): 40–43.

As mentioned, the settlement policy was seen by the Ottomans as part of the modernization paradigm. This practice aimed to increase the agricultural production of nomadic groups, raise their tax contributions, and expand the recruitment capacity of the army. An increase in agricultural production was observed, particularly in the Çukurova region, following the settlement activities of the Fırka-i İslâhiye. For example, cotton production, which began in the region with the agricultural reforms implemented by Kavalalı İbrahim Paşa, in the 1830s, showed a significant increase after 1865. One of the main reasons for this was that the fertile lands of Çukurova began to be cultivated as the nomadic people settled on the land. This situation was most clearly observed in the commercial agriculture that developed following the cotton shortage caused by the American Civil War in the 1860s. The global cotton shortage led to the expansion of production in Çukurova, thus making a significant contribution to the Ottoman economy. Infrastructure investments completed during this process, such as the Mersin port and the Adana-Mersin railway (1866), made it possible for the region to open to commercial and industrial agriculture⁵⁷. As Meltem Toksöz points out, this transformation does not merely signify economic expansion. It also constitutes one of the first major examples of the integration of the Ottoman rural areas into the capitalist world economy. Toksöz describes the transformation in Çukurova as “a new labor regime produced by nomads forced into settled life”⁵⁸. Nuri Yavuz, on the other hand, states that the activities of the Fırka-i İslâhiye in the region were “an attempt to build a new social order by establishing villages, towns, and production centers, beyond being a military operation”⁵⁹.

⁵⁷ Meltem Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton*, 41–51, 65–72, 94–102.

⁵⁸ Meltem Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton*, 135–36, 160–61, 189–90.

⁵⁹ Nuri Yavuz, “Fırka-i İslâhiye Ordusunun Özellikleri ve Faaliyetleri,” *Akademik Bakış* 5, no. 10 (2012): prefave pp. IV–VI.

The mission of modernization was not limited to the economic field. The socio-cultural field was also included in this mission. The Ottoman administration considered the nomadic lifestyle to be a sign of “backwardness.” It was seen as a necessity for these communities to transition to a settled life in order to benefit from modern state services and cooperate with the modern state. In the 19th century, the modern state's tendency to penetrate all areas of life also aimed to affect the daily lives of tribes in the countryside. Opening schools for the settled tribes and establishing legal and administrative order in the regions were among these goals. Consequently, the settlement efforts and projects during the Tanzimat period can be regarded as an extension of the Ottoman modernization project into the countryside. The state aimed to settle nomads into a sedentary lifestyle and bring them into the “circle of civilization”⁶⁰.

Başak Kale also emphasizes another reflection of this approach. Kale associates the Ottoman Empire's settlement policies towards nomadic and muhajir groups with early forms of the modern nation-state concept. She emphasizes that these policies positioned the state as an “actor that regulates and shapes the population”⁶¹. Janet Klein, on the other hand, refers to the state's policies of regulating and modernizing the population in the example of the Hamidiye Cavalries. She states that the Ottoman Empire viewed settled life as a criterion of modernity and that Kurdish tribal policies were also affected by this approach. Furthermore, she argues that tribes were classified as “elements that needed to be civilized by the state.” Klein interprets the Hamidiye Cavalries as a continuation of this ideological framework⁶². Due to such policies and practices, some have argued that the Ottoman administration applied a colonial “civilizing

⁶⁰ Fasih Dinç, “Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı'nın İskân Politikası: CAF Aşireti Örneği,”: 412–413.

⁶¹ Başak Kale, “Transforming an Empire: The Ottoman Empire's Immigration and Settlement Policies in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 2 (2014): 255–260.

⁶² Janet Klein and Renan Akman, *Hamidiye Alayları: İmparatorluğun Sınır Boyları ve Kürt Aşiretleri* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2014), 15–18.

mission” to nomads. Official sources clearly indicate that nomads, described as “living in a state of nomadism and savagery,” and clearly did not have an acceptable status in the eyes of the authorities⁶³. Furthermore, in the reports written by Cevdet Paşa on the activities of the Fırka-i Islâhiye in the Kozan and Gavur Dağı regions, the structure of the tribes, which was “far from civilization and not subject to the law,” was frequently emphasized. It was stated that it was imperative for the benefit of the state and society to transition these communities into a settled lifestyle⁶⁴. Cevdet Paşa also emphasizes that some tribes lived far from many fundamental Islamic knowledge and practices and had weak ties with the ulama. In other words, according to Cevdet Paşa, settlement is a necessity for civilization and Islamization.

2.3 The Goal of Restoring Central Authority

One of the main motives behind the Ottoman Empire's 19th century settlement policies was to strengthen central authority and reestablish state control in the rural areas. Large nomadic tribes, especially in Anatolia and the Arab provinces, were seen as a potential threat to the authority of the central administration. Therefore, the Ottoman administration viewed the sedentarization and control of nomadic tribes as a necessity for the survival of the state⁶⁵. Large tribes mostly did not pay taxes, avoided military service, and engaged in rebellion and plundering. Such activities were seen by the state as factors weakening central authority. For this reason, the Ottoman government treated the settlement of nomads as a matter of internal security and administrative centralization. As Rudi Paul Lindner pointed out, the flexible organizational forms of nomadic communities made it difficult for centralized states to control

⁶³ Selim Deringil, “They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery”: 311.

⁶⁴ Saim Yörük, *Fırka-i Islâhiye: Cevdet Paşa – Kozan ve Gavur Dağı Ahvâline Dair Lâyihâ* (İstanbul: İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık, 2017): 9a–11b.

⁶⁵ Suat Dede, “From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia: The Case of Rışvan Tribe (1830–1932)” (master’s thesis, İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, 2011): 45–46.

them. This often resulted in empires such as the Ottoman Empire forcing tribes into a settled lifestyle⁶⁶.

During the Tanzimat era, the state determined that the uncontrolled movements of nomadic tribes were among the main causes of disorder in Anatolia. As Musa Çadırcı points out, the most important innovation brought about by the Tanzimat was ensuring the safety of life and property in the countryside, which was directly related to regulating the nomads⁶⁷. At the beginning of the Tanzimat era, imperial authority was extremely weak in many parts of Anatolia, Northern Syria, and Iraq. Villages had been abandoned, and the people had taken refuge in cities due to fear of bandits. As a solution to this problem, the Ottoman central administration deemed it appropriate to force tribes into a settled lifestyle. In 1842, a regulation was issued ordering the settlement of nomadic tribes in one of the areas they used as winter or summer pastures⁶⁸. This decision indicates that the central administration defined nomadism as an administrative problem that needed to be removed. At this point, as Reşat Kasaba emphasizes, nomadism is an unsustainable structure for the state's centralizing projects because it conflicts with the state's tax regime, military conscription system, and judicial control mechanisms⁶⁹. Furthermore, Yavuz emphasizes that the Ottoman bureaucracy saw “bringing nomadism under administrative control” as a necessity in order to be effective in the rural areas⁷⁰. Therefore, in line with the goal of establishing central authority, a series of military and administrative operations were carried out in the mid-19th century. In the 1850s, military forces

⁶⁶ Rudi Paul Lindner, “What Was a Nomadic Tribe?” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24, no. 4 (1982): 690–694.

⁶⁷ Musa Çadırcı, “Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Ülke Yönetimi,” in *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 215–220.

⁶⁸ Suat Dede, “From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia: 46.

⁶⁹ Reşat Kasaba, *Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees*: 15–18.

⁷⁰ Nuri Yavuz, *Fırka-i Islâhiye* (İstanbul: Sonçağ Akademi Yayınları, 2021): 1–3.

were deployed against tribal units, particularly in Central and Southern Anatolia, and those who showed disobedience were punished. During this process, the Ottoman Empire attempted to either persuade tribal leaders to cooperate or neutralize them. The central government's mobilization of the Fırka-i İslâhiye to the Kozan region in 1865 is one example of this policy in practice. Under the command of Derviş Paşa, the Fırka-i İslâhiye entered Çukurova and Gavur Dağları in the summer of 1865, taking the tribes in the region under its control in order to restore Ottoman rule in the area⁷¹. By 1866, Kozan, Cebel-i Bereket (Gavur Dağları), and the surrounding mountainous areas came under the full control of the central government for the first time in a long time. An archival document states that the Fırka-i İslâhiye had carried out the necessary reforms in Kozan, Gavurdağı, and the surrounding areas, and had brought the local population under imperial authority⁷². This made it possible to collect taxes regularly and recruit soldiers in these regions. This operation was not merely a military operation; it was also an initiative aimed at social transformation. As Saim Yörük points out, the mission of the Fırka-i İslâhiye was not only to “reestablish state authority.” It also had multi-dimensional aspects such as “building settlements, sedentarizing tribes, establishing a tax system, and increasing agricultural production⁷³. Therefore, Paul Dumont comments that the activities of the Fırka-i İslâhiye implied the administrative colonization of the region and strengthened the Ottoman Empire's modern state capacity in the provinces⁷⁴.

Another crucial purpose of settlement policies from the perspective of central authority was to increase the military resources. The compulsory military service system introduced by

⁷¹ Yusuf Halaçoğlu, “Fırka-i İslâhiye ve Yapmış Olduğu İskân,”: 2–3.

⁷² BOA, İ.DH., 1293/101635, H. 24 Cemâziyelevvel 1282.

⁷³ Saim Yörük, *Fırka-i İslâhiye: Cevdet Paşa – Kozan ve Gavur Dağı Ahvâline Dair Lâyihâ* (İstanbul: İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık, 2017): VII–VIII.

⁷⁴ Paul Dumont, “1865 Tarihinde Güney-Doğu Anadolu’nun Islahı,” trans. Bahaeddin Yediyıldız, *İ. Ü. Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, no. 10–11 (1981): 370.

the Tanzimat was first implemented in the 1840s, and nomadic tribes showed significant resistance to this practice. During the Crimean War in 1853-1856, the Ottoman army faced a serious shortage of soldiers, which led the Ottoman government to demand soldiers from nomadic tribes. However, most of them refused to obey and evaded military service. These administrative, military, and economic problems pushed the central government to take certain steps. After the war, the Fırka-i İslâhiye was formed both to suppress the rebels in this region and to secure the recruitment of soldiers and tax revenues from the tribes in the future⁷⁵. There were certain benefits to settling the tribes. Among these benefits were the identification of the young male population, their registration in population registers, and their conscription when it is necessary. Thus, after the settlement activities, it was possible to recruit thousands of new soldiers from the region. Indeed, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa emphasized that “thousands of soldiers were registered in the population records in the Kozan and Gavur Dağı regions” following the operations of the Fırka-i İslâhiye, and this was a major military gain for the state⁷⁶. On the other hand, as Selim Deringil expresses it, due to increasing external pressures in the second half of the 19th century, the Ottoman central administration was faced with the necessity of utilizing “human sources it had not touched until then.” In this context, the nomadic population, particularly those skilled with weapons, became one of the primary targets that the state wanted to mobilize⁷⁷. This situation shows that settlement policies also overlapped with the goal of military centralization. Janet Klein's study on the Hamidiye Cavalries also shows that the Ottoman Empire's approach of viewing tribes as military sources continued in a more institutionalized form during the reign of Abdulhamid II. According to Klein, nomadic tribes

⁷⁵ Yusuf Halaçoğlu, “Fırka-i İslâhiye ve Yapmış Olduğu İskân,” *Tarih Dergisi*, no. 27 (1973): 3–4.

⁷⁶ Saim Yörük, *Fırka-i İslâhiye: Cevdet Paşa – Kozan ve Gavur Dağı Ahvâline Dair Lâyihâ* (İstanbul: İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık, 2017): 12b–13a.

⁷⁷ Selim Deringil, ““They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery””: 311.

were both a threat and a potential military force for the state. This duality can be seen as the result of a long-standing state practice dating back to the Tanzimat period and continuing until the establishment of the Hamidiye Cavalries⁷⁸.

In summary, the sedentarization policies and initiatives of the Tanzimat period were an inseparable part of the empire's centralization efforts. The state, which was seeking permanent solutions in the areas of tax collection, conscription, maintaining public order, and increasing agricultural production, saw the settlement of nomadic groups as a necessity. This policy was partially successful, and Ottoman authority was reestablished in the regions where the Fırka-i İslâhiye succeeded. However, the success of centralization policies was not equally achieved in every region. While some tribes agreed to cooperate with the state, others chose rebellion or migration. This differentiation stemmed from the fact that each tribe's economic model, migration routes, relations with the settled population, and relations with the state differed from one another. This was a common situation, since nomadic groups were never homogeneous⁷⁹. Consequently, the Ottoman Empire's settlement policy for nomads represents an area where the goals of administrative centralization and social engineering overlapped.

2.4 The Relationship Between Nomads and the State

Throughout Ottoman history, the relationship between nomadic tribes and the state has always been shaped by mutual interaction and sometimes tension. During the classical period, the Ottomans used to settle Turkmen nomads, especially in border areas and newly conquered regions, so as to benefit from their military capabilities. In return, the tribes obtained privileges from the state, such as tax exemptions or land grants. However, by the end of the 17th century,

⁷⁸ Janet Klein and Renan Akman, *Hamidiye Alayları: İmparatorluğun Sınır Boyları ve Kürt Aşiretleri*: 43–45.

⁷⁹ Rudi Paul Lindner, “What Was a Nomadic Tribe?”: 695–700. Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985): 112–115.

due to internal chaos such as the Jalali uprisings and the breakdown of the fief system, many regions in Anatolia fell under the control of local groups and moved away from state authority. By the 19th century, the new Ottoman administration, which favored centralization, decided to change this situation. Hence, the Tanzimat period can be considered a turning point in nomad-state relations. The state now attempted to directly control the tribes, but previously nomads had been allowed a certain degree of autonomy or had been governed indirectly⁸⁰. This process also signified the Ottoman Empire's transition from classical state-tribal relations to modern bureaucratic administration. Reşat Kasaba states that the early Ottoman Empire maintained a “mutually beneficial” relationship with nomads. However, he notes that by the 19th century, nomadism was perceived by the central administration as a way of life opposed to stability and order⁸¹.

In this new period, two fundamental strategies emerged in the relationship between nomads and the state: coercion and mediation. Ottoman administrators, in their process of settlement of tribes, used military operations on the one hand, while on the other hand they tried to win over some tribal leaders with various gifts, titles, and administrative appointments⁸². The application of these two methods against a tribe depended on the structure and attitude of the related tribe. For example, tribes that were geographically concentrated in a specific region and had a hierarchical structure were dealt with through compromise. In contrast, the method of direct military force was applied to tribes that lived in a mountainous region or were not united under strong leadership⁸³. Examples of this dual strategy are clearly seen in the tribal

⁸⁰ Yonca Köksal, “Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 3 (2006): 472–473.

⁸¹ Reşat Kasaba, *Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees*: 23–28.

⁸² Yonca Köksal, “Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire,”: 473–475.

⁸³ Yonca Köksal, “Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire,”: 475–476.

settlements carried out in the Ankara province during the Tanzimat period. As examined by Yonca Köksal, the four major tribes settled in the Ankara district (Yeniyıl, Cihanbeyli, Afşar, and Rışvan) accepted a settled life as a result of negotiations with the state, while the others faced harsher interventions⁸⁴. Yörük also mentions similar attitudes, as he states that during the Fırka-i İslâhiye operation, “some tribes were persuaded through negotiation, while others were brought under control through military pressure”⁸⁵. On the other hand, one dimension of the nomad-state relationship was, of course, the state's exploitation of internal tribal balances and conflicts. For example, during the Fırka-i İslâhiye campaign in the Kozan region, Dervişağazade, a member of the Kozanoğulları family, cooperated with the Ottoman forces. As a result, a part of the tribe was gained, and a balance was established against the other rebellious family members⁸⁶. Also, during the Fırka-i İslâhiye operation, it was observed that some small tribal leaders who obeyed the Ottomans were given military ranks or pensions, so that their influence and power could be directed to the state's service. These reconciliatory steps partially softened the relationship between the tribes and the state. It is known that the same strategy was applied in the Hamidiye Cavalries during the reign of Abdulhamid II. Janet Klein emphasizes that the Hamidiye Cavalries were designed as a mechanism to “manipulate inter-tribal rivalries and strengthen leaders close to the state”⁸⁷.

On the other hand, conflict remained a constant feature of state-tribal relations. Many tribes viewed the abandonment of centuries-old migration routes and the transition to a settled lifestyle as a loss of cultural identity and economic uncertainty. Tribal leaders attempted to

⁸⁴ Yonca Köksal, “Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire,”: 479–481.

⁸⁵ Saim Yörük, *Fırka-i İslâhiye: Cevdet Paşa – Kozan ve Gavur Dağı Ahvâline Dair Lâyihâ* (İstanbul: İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık, 2017): VII–VIII.

⁸⁶ Suat Dede, “From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia: 82–83.

⁸⁷ Janet Klein and Renan Akman, *Hamidiye Alayları: İmparatorluğun Sınır Boyları ve Kürt Aşiretleri*: 45–48.

undermine settlement initiatives in order to maintain their traditional lifestyle⁸⁸. In some cases, tribes that resisted the settlement order tried to avoid the state by changing their migration routes, or those in border regions tried to seek refuge in other countries such as Iran. For example, some Kurdish tribes in Eastern Anatolia chose to move to Iranian territory and escape Ottoman influence when the centralizing pressure of the Tanzimat increased. Such examples show that state policies did not always produce the desired results and that nomads also made countermoves according to their own circumstances.

At the same time, figures who mediated the tense relationship between nomadic society and the state also played important roles. Tanzimat bureaucrats such as Ahmed Cevdet Paşa attempted to integrate tribes into the state order by establishing dialogue with them. Cevdet Paşa, serving in the *Fırka-i İslâhiye*, contributed to the success of military operations and also strived to reach agreements with regional tribes to resolve settlement issues peacefully. Indeed, reports written by Cevdet Paşa himself contain important observations and recommendations regarding the administration of tribes. Some of the recommendations were the appointment of officials who are familiar with the winter-summer pasture order of the tribes, the provision of agricultural tools and seeds to the settled tribes, and the granting of tax exemptions in the early years⁸⁹. In this way, an attempt was made to create a relationship based partly on consent rather than entirely on brutal force⁹⁰.

Consequently, relations between nomadic tribes and the Ottoman state in the second half of the 19th century involved both conflict and negotiation. The state used military force when necessary to deal with tribes in line with its goal of centralization. However, it also attempted

⁸⁸ Fasih Dinç, “Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı’nın İskân Politikası: CAF Aşireti Örneği,”: 412–413.

⁸⁹ Saim Yörük, *Fırka-i İslâhiye: Cevdet Paşa – Kozan ve Gavur Dağı Ahvâline Dair Lâyîha* (İstanbul: İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık, 2017): 103–105.

⁹⁰ Saim Yörük, *Fırka-i İslâhiye: Cevdet Paşa – Kozan ve Gavur Dağı Ahvâline Dair Lâyîha* (İstanbul: İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık, 2017): 14a–15b.

to win over some tribal leaders by creating “win-win” situations. Nomads, on the other hand, sought to maximize their own interests by responding to state pressure with various reactions such as resistance, compliance, or escape. As Rudi Paul Lindner also points out, nomadic communities have never been passive actors throughout history, but they have conducted their relations with the state on the basis of “flexibility, adaptability, and opportunism”⁹¹. These variable relationships profoundly influenced and shaped the implementation of settlement policies in the field.

2.5 Settlement Policies

The Ottoman Empire's settlement policies during the Tanzimat period included a series of measures and practices. These policies were not only related to “population displacement,” but were also directly linked to the empire's centralization and modernization⁹². It can be seen that the settlement practices of the 19th century were shaped around certain common principles (security, expanding the tax base, strengthening border regions) in different parts of the empire and varied according to local conditions. The state carefully selected the regions where tribes would settle. An archival document on the settlement of certain tribes and nomadic groups from the mountains into the plains of Çukurova, together with their encouragement toward agriculture, shows how sedentarization was implemented as both an administrative and economic project⁹³. On the other hand places with water and land resources in the tribes' traditional winter or summer pastures were designated as settlement areas and the 1842 Regulation emphasized this point. For example, the Haymana region of Ankara was deemed suitable for the settlement of the Rışvan Tribe. The reason for this was that the tribe already used this region as a winter pasture⁹⁴. In Çukurova, the settlement of nomads was planned with

⁹¹ Rudi Paul Lindner, “What Was a Nomadic Tribe?": 700–702.

⁹² Fasih Dinç, “Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı'nın İskân Politikası: CAF Aşireti Örneği,”: 412–413.

⁹³ BOA, A.}MKT.MHM., 348/74, H. 22 Ramazan 1282.

⁹⁴ Suat Dede, “From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia: 46, 51–55.

the aim of opening the fertile lands in the plain for agriculture⁹⁵. During the Fırka-i İslâhiye campaign of 1865, a series of new villages and towns were established by the state in the Çukurova plains and the foothills of the Amanos Mountains. Settlements such as Kozan, İslâhiye, İzziye, Hassa, Ordu, Cevdetiye, and Dervîşiye were among the main settlements established during this period⁹⁶.

Nevertheless, land distribution and land ownership policy were key elements of the settlement process. The state tried to provide sufficient agricultural land in the settlement areas to the nomads they persuaded or forced to settle⁹⁷. With the adoption of the 1858 Land Code, regulations were made regarding land ownership, and nomads were also given the opportunity to possess land. The Fırka-i İslâhiye, in particular, distributed land to settled tribe members for cultivation⁹⁸. This was intended to keep nomads tied to the land and prevent them from returning to their old nomadic lifestyle. Indeed, in the Adana region, thanks to the efforts of the Fırka-i İslâhiye, thousands of acres of land were divided among the tribes and recorded within a year⁹⁹. Furthermore, it was common practice to grant certain tax exemptions to settled families in their first years to enable them to engage in agriculture. These policies encouraged the economic support of nomads who had settled down and encouraged them to continue living in a settled order. The example of the CAF Tribe is one of the greatest examples of how this policy worked in the real practice¹⁰⁰.

One of the important measures taken for the success of settlement policies was to establish military and administrative control mechanisms and military bases. To prevent the

⁹⁵ Meltem Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton*, 65–72.

⁹⁶ Yusuf Halaçoğlu, “Fırka-i İslâhiye ve Yapmış Olduğu İskân,”: 5.

⁹⁷ Reşat Kasaba, *Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees*: 36–40.

⁹⁸ Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914*: 146–150.

⁹⁹ Suat Dede, “From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia: 78–79.

¹⁰⁰ Fasih Dinç, “Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı’nın İskân Politikası: CAF Aşireti Örneği,”: 420–423.

settled tribes from returning to their old habits and fleeing or rebelling, outposts, castles, and barracks were built at strategic points. The establishment of permanent military outposts in critical locations in Çukurova such as Payas, Hassa, Yarpuz, and Feke after the Fırka-i Islâhiye was a result of this policy¹⁰¹. Through these outposts, the movements of the tribes were monitored and, when necessary, intervention was carried out. Ahmet Cevdet Paşa's reports and works particularly emphasize the military structures and control systems established in the region. The costs of these outposts were covered partly by the state treasury and partly by local sources. Tribes that were rewarded with tax exemptions and those who did not know the value of money were asked to provide lumber for the construction of state buildings. In this way, priority was given to maintaining the new order and security in the settled areas, and the “visibility of the state” was increased¹⁰².

Another notable practice in Ottoman settlement policy was the settlement restrictions. Certain rugged and mountainous regions, which were highly suitable for rebellions and escaping authority, were destroyed during military operations, and the people living there were relocated to more central and controllable area¹⁰³. The aim was to prevent these rugged and difficult to control areas from becoming centers of banditry and rebellion again¹⁰⁴. As the region came under control and state control was strengthened, some prohibited areas were reopened for settlement¹⁰⁵. Similar practices were also observed in the Mosul-Kirkuk region during the

¹⁰¹ Saim Yörük, *Fırka-i Islâhiye: Cevdet Paşa – Kozan ve Gavur Dağı Ahvâline Dair Lâyıha* (İstanbul: İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık, 2017): 135.

¹⁰² Saim Yörük, *Fırka-i Islâhiye: Cevdet Paşa – Kozan ve Gavur Dağı Ahvâline Dair Lâyıha* (İstanbul: İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık, 2017): 130–136.

¹⁰³ Saim Yörük, *Fırka-i Islâhiye: Cevdet Paşa – Kozan ve Gavur Dağı Ahvâline Dair Lâyıha* (İstanbul: İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık, 2017): 134–135.

¹⁰⁴ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir* 21–39, 143–145.

¹⁰⁵ Yusuf Halaçoğlu, “Fırka-i Islâhiye ve Yapmış Olduğu İskân,”: 16–17.

Kuva-yı İslâhiye movement¹⁰⁶. Cevdet Paşa's later account also shows that the problem of control did not completely disappear after the first Fırka-i Islâhiye campaign. During a later mission to Kozan, he noted that signs of unrest also appeared in Gâvurdağı and that local officials had to be warned and instructed after the Kozan affair was settled¹⁰⁷.

Finally, it is necessary to mention the practices of exile and forced migration as part of settlement policies. In order to break the resistance, some tribal leaders were taken from their homelands and subjected to forced settlement in distant regions. After the Fırka-i Islâhiye, several tribal families who continued to resist in the Kozan region were exiled to Konya, Kütahya, Aleppo, İstanbul and even Tripoli¹⁰⁸. The state also granted stipends to some exiled tribal and nomadic leaders. This suggests that exile was not only intended to distance these figures from their communities, but also to keep them under closer control by making them financially dependent on the central administration¹⁰⁹. The exile of the Kozanoğulları and İstanbul's satisfaction with this measure further show that the central administration regarded exile as an important part of the reform process in Kozan¹¹⁰. Similarly, during the Kuva-yı İslâhiye operation in the Mosul and Kirkuk areas, some of the rebellious Yazidis and similar groups were removed from the region and settled in different places. Based on the instructions given to the Islamic Faith/Belief/Aqida , "heretic" groups that refused to convert to Islam or constantly disrupted public order were removed from their locations and relocated to areas

¹⁰⁶ Nuri Yavuz, "The Activity of Kuva-yı Islâhiye in Mousul and Kerkukh," *Gazi University Journal of Education Faculty* 27, no. 1 (2007): 237–240.

¹⁰⁷ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir 40: Tetimme*, ed. Cavid Baysun, 3rd ed. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991), 174–175.

¹⁰⁸ BOA, İ.DH., 1293/101639, 2, H. 26 Cemâziyelâhir 1282., BOA, A.}MKT.MHM., 346/21, H. 9 Receb 1282., Yusuf Halaçoğlu, "Fırka-i Islâhiye ve Yapmış Olduğu İskân," 17.

¹⁰⁹ BOA, A.}MKT.MHM., 346/56, H. 22 Receb 1282.

¹¹⁰ BOA, İ.DH., 1293/101640, H. 15 Cemâziyelâhir 1282.

deemed appropriate by the state¹¹¹. This method aimed to eliminate the disorder in the region and to control and suppress groups that challenged central authority. It can also be inferred that this policy, which encouraged Yazidi groups to change their beliefs, sought to homogenize the population, at least in religious terms to Sunni Islam, which would make them easier to govern by the central administration. Similar “deportation and settlement” practices can also be found in the Eastern Anatolian policies that took shape around the Hamidiye Cavalries. Some Armenian and Kurdish villages were evacuated and their inhabitants relocated to other places for “the security reasons”¹¹². In this respect, Ottoman settlement policies were not limited to settling nomads. They also included harsher strategies such as dispersing, fragmenting, or transforming “undesirable” population elements.

In summary, the Ottoman settlement policies of the second half of the 19th century were carried out within comprehensive and similar programs. Various tools were used together, such as, land distribution, tax exemptions, and military measures, in the settlement of tribes. The implementation of these policies had to be shaped according to conditions on the ground rather than plans on paper. It has been observed that bureaucrats and soldiers familiar with the region's history, culture, climate, and geography developed the planned arrangements before the operation to suit regional circumstances. Indeed, solutions specific to the situation of each region and each tribe were sought. The attempt to achieve results through force when it is necessary and through consent and incentives when it is possible is also a result of this flexibility and the consideration of regional conditions. In the literature, this situation has been conceptualized as the duality of “coercion and mediation”¹¹³.

¹¹¹ Nuri Yavuz, “The Activity of Kuva-yı Islâhiye in Mousul and Kerkukh,”: 238–239.

¹¹² Janet Klein and Renan Akman, *Hamidiye Alayları: İmparatorluğun Sınır Boyları ve Kürt Aşiretleri*: 231–238.

¹¹³ Yonca Köksal, “Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire,”: 472–481.

2.6 The Consequences of Settlement for the State and Nomadic Communities

The settlement activities of the second half of the 19th century had multi-dimensional consequences for the state and nomadic communities. From the state's perspective, these policies resulted in the strengthening of central authority. This enabled the regular collection of taxes from tribes that had previously caused problems in taxation. Also enabled the inclusion of thousands of people who had long been excluded from the population records into state's population records. Consequently, the number of houses in the population records and tax revenues increased significantly¹¹⁴. On the other hand, it became possible to recruit soldiers from these regions, which increased the state's military capacity¹¹⁵. Therefore, settlement policies yielded beneficial and tangible results for the state. The integration of tens of thousands of people who had been living outside state authority into the empire's administrative, financial, and military systems was one of the outcomes of these policies¹¹⁶. However, this integration could not be achieved in a short-term period. A later archival record, which shows the correspondence on the repelling of attacks by the Bereket Dağı bandits against the Payas road, suggests that the region remained insecure even after the operation of the Fırka-i İslâhiye¹¹⁷.

From an economic perspective, the state also benefited. Agricultural production and trade flourished due to the opening of vast areas of empty or abandoned land for cultivation. The expansion of cotton cultivation in the Çukurova region led to the transformation of Adana and Mersin into trade centers. This economic growth contributed to the state treasury through both tax revenues and port revenues. For example, by the 1880s, Adana had become a district with a high rate of cotton exports, and the customs revenues obtained from this amounted to a

¹¹⁴ Nuri Yavuz, "Fırka-i İslâhiye Ordusunun Özellikleri ve Faaliyetleri," *Akademik Bakış* 5, no. 10 (2012): 120–122.

¹¹⁵ Suat Dede, "From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia: 38–39.

¹¹⁶ Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914*: 160–165.

¹¹⁷ BOA, A.}MKT.MHM., 386/89, H. 1 Rebiülevvel 1284.

significant sum¹¹⁸. The villages established by the tribes that settled there also revitalized the regional economy. Some of the places where the Fırka-i İslâhiye settled remained the most dynamic settlements in their provinces even during the Republican era. According to Nuri Yavuz's findings, many of the villages established by the Fırka-i İslâhiye in the Çukurova, Kozan, and Gavurdağı regions grew over time and turned into dynamic towns. The settlement of that period played a major role in making these regions one of the most active areas in the Turkish economy today. In short, through settlement, the state ensured security and order in the provinces and gained economic benefits in the long term through increased agricultural production and commercial recovery. Meltem Toksöz's study of the Adana-Mersin region shows that sedentarization in Çukurova should not be understood only as a policy of administrative control. It also contributed to the making of a regional economy in which land registration, cotton cultivation, migrant merchant networks, seasonal labor, the port of Mersin, and the Adana-Mersin railway worked together to integrate the region more deeply into commercial agriculture and the world economy¹¹⁹.

The long-term effects of this land transformation were not always limited to agricultural expansion. Complaints that Dede Paşa, the mutasarrıf of Maraş, attempted to convert lands allocated for the settlement of the Kılınçlı and Çakallı tribes in Pazarcık into his own private farm show that settlement lands could also become an object of personal appropriation by local administrators. This case suggests that sedentarization sometimes created new opportunities for local landed power and contributed to the formation of Ağalık in the region¹²⁰.

On the other hand, the results were much more complex for nomadic tribes. For some nomadic communities, settlement has brought certain benefits. Tribal members who

¹¹⁸ Meltem Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton*, 138–45, 151–52.

¹¹⁹ Meltem Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton*, 94–102, 160–61, 189–90.

¹²⁰ BOA, DH.MKT., 1546/79, H. 18 Muharrem 1306.

transitioned to a settled lifestyle became landowning farmers by taking advantage of the landownership opportunities offered by the state. Previously, nomads were unable to access services such as education and healthcare due to their constant migration, after the settlement these people began to benefit from such public services in villages and towns. For example, after settlement, tribal children attended the Rüşdiye schools opened in Çukurova, and the rights and services granted to the settled population in the region were extended to them. In addition, the state included tribal leaders in the central bureaucracy by granting official titles and salaries to those they deemed suitable. In this way, some former tribal leaders gained legal and central status as state officials or members of local administrative councils in the new era. All these changes facilitated the integration of nomads who had settled into Ottoman society¹²¹. Thus, some of the former tribal leaders found the opportunity to convert their traditional authority into official status. However, for many nomads, the settlement process was quite painful and destructive. First of all, these people, who were forced to leave their ancestral summer and winter pastures, lost the economic order they used to have. The transition from a nomadic economy based on animal husbandry to an agriculture-based economy was not always successful. Climate and environmental conditions worked against the nomads who settled in some places. For example, due to the prevalence of malaria in the Çukurova region, diseases and deaths occurred among the tribes settled there. Nomads had been protected from such diseases for centuries by living in cool summer pastures and mild winter plains. When they transitioned to a settled lifestyle, they lost this natural protection mechanism and were affected by diseases spread by swamps. In the early years of settlement, some members of the tribes lost their lives due to epidemics, unfamiliar climatic conditions, and inability to produce sufficient

¹²¹ Fasih Dinç, “Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı’nın İskân Politikası: CAF Aşireti Örneği,”: 420–423.

food¹²². These painful experiences created a negative view of settled life in the eyes of some nomads¹²³.

Moreover, economic adaptation problems also posed a major challenge for nomads. Many did not know how to farm. They lacked knowledge and experience in areas such as cultivating land, planting, and irrigation. Due to numerous geographical and agricultural difficulties, some nomads showed a tendency to return to their old way of life. Indeed, archival records document the existence of families who abandoned the villages where they had been settled and fled. Especially during the periods when state control was weak, some tribal groups collectively abandoned their villages and attempted to return to a nomadic lifestyle. When they caught, their escapes were punished, and the families who were involved this disobedience were forcibly brought back and settled¹²⁴.

The settlement of nomads has also led to social conflicts with the local sedentary population. In some regions, conflicts over land and water arose between newly established settlement villages and the old villages and also fights broke out over the sharing of the pastures¹²⁵. The state generally protected the newly established settlement villages and, when it is necessary, they redrew the boundaries of the pastures and fields of the old villages. Although this situation caused discontent among the old villagers, but the central administration prioritized the success and continuity of the settlement policies. Over time, harmony was partially achieved, but records indicate that serious conflicts occurred in the early periods¹²⁶. As a result, settlement created both benefits and problems for the nomads. They were able to

¹²² Suat Dede, "From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia: 75–76.

¹²³ Meltem Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton*, 71–72. Fasih Dinç, "Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı'nın İskân Politikası: CAF Aşireti Örneği," 423.

¹²⁴ Musa Çadırcı, "Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Ülke Yönetimi," 211–213.

¹²⁵ Wolf-Dieter Hütteroth, *Bergnomaden und Yaylabauern im mittleren kurdischen Taurus* (Marburg: Geographisches Institut der Universität Marburg, 1959): 22–24.

¹²⁶ Suat Dede, "From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia: 38–39.

settle on the land, become property owners, come under the protection of the state, and utilize the benefits of sedentary life. However, socio-economic problems arose due to the dissolution of traditional nomadic cultures, the disintegration of tribal structures, and economic adaptation problems. Some nomadic groups, particularly in the folk literature of the Avşar Turks, have poems expressing the problems experienced after settlement and the nostalgia for the old nomadic days. Such cultural and literary heritage is noteworthy because it reflects the sociological consequences of settlement policies¹²⁷. The state, meanwhile, faced certain problems arising from the settlement of tribes. Those who could not adapt to the settled order continued to cause security problems from time to time. For example, some nomads who forced to a settled life failed at farming and turned back to banditry. This situation was seen from time to time in the Osmaniye and Kozan regions in the 1870s, and it forced the state to carry out additional military operations to suppress them. Furthermore, the rapid increase in population in the new settlement areas and the distribution of all the land resulted in a shortage of land after a while. When some of the tribe members were left without land, they were forced to work as farmhands or seasonal workers for large landowners in Çukurova from the 1880s onwards. By the 1890s, it was reported that tens of thousands of seasonal agricultural workers came from Eastern Anatolia to the Çukurova region every year to pick cotton, which created a separate seasonal migration movement. These developments show that settlement produced new socio-economic consequences in the long term¹²⁸. In general, the settlement activities carried out by the Ottoman Empire in the second half of its existence served the centralizing goals of the state. However, they created certain difficulties for nomadic societies. The state succeeded in increasing the number of people and resources under its administration. In return, nomadic culture underwent major transformations and disappeared completely in some regions. All the

¹²⁷ Fasih Dinç, “Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı’nın İskân Politikası: CAF Aşireti Örneği,”: 411.

¹²⁸ Meltem Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton*, 156, 160–61, 164.

positive and negative outcomes that emerged during this process deeply affected the social fabric of the empire in its final period. Therefore, as frequently emphasized in the literature, settlement policies are not merely an administrative reform package, but one of the most visible areas of the “socioeconomical engineering” dimension of 19th century Ottoman modernization¹²⁹.

2.7 Conclusion to the Second Chapter

19th-century Ottoman settlement policies should be viewed not solely as administrative measures aimed at settling nomadic communities, but as part of a broader transformation project designed to reestablish the state’s authority over the provinces. As demonstrated in this chapter, through settlement policies, the Ottoman central administration strengthened its presence in the provinces by incorporating populations previously outside its control into tax, military service, and administrative registration systems. In this regard, settlement served as one of the fundamental tools in the state’s effort to make society more transparent and manageable. However, it would be inaccurate to claim that this process proceeded in a linear and unproblematic manner. Relations between the state and nomadic communities exhibited a dynamic structure that shifted between coercive interventions, negotiation, and compromise. While military-administrative initiatives such as the *Fırka-i İslâhiye* increased the central authority’s visibility on the ground, the alliances formed with local actors, the privileges granted, and the flexible policies implemented reveal that the state often developed pragmatic solutions rather than establishing absolute control. For this reason, settlement should be viewed not as a completed outcome but as an administrative project that did not achieve full success.

The results of these policies are similarly multi-layered. From the state’s perspective, tangible gains were achieved, such as regular tax collection, the recruitment of soldiers, and

¹²⁹ Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914*:: 160–165. Fasih Dinç, “Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı’nın İskân Politikası: CAF Aşireti Örneği,”: 411–413.

increased agricultural production. As seen particularly in the example of the Çukurova region, settlement activities facilitated the region's opening to commercial agriculture and its stronger integration into the empire's economic structure. Conversely, from the perspective of nomadic communities, the settlement process generated both opportunities and significant challenges. While some groups adapted to new economic opportunities and integrated into the settled order, others faced the dissolution of traditional lifestyles, difficulties in adapting to environmental conditions, and pressures arising from social transformation.

Consequently, Ottoman settlement policies emerge as a field that clearly reflects the tension between mobile social structures and the modernizing central state. These policies reinforced the state's centralization objectives; however, they also revealed the limits of these objectives and the practical challenges of implementation on the ground. Therefore, settlement should be evaluated not only as a population policy, but also as one of the most concrete and practical areas of implementation in Ottoman modernization.

3. Chapter III: Russian Sedentarization Policies in the Kazakh Steppe

3.1 Introduction to the Third Chapter

The imperial settlement, land, and administrative policies implemented by the Russian Empire in the Kazakh steppes during the second half of the 19th century constitute one of the most radical geographical and social transformations in Eurasian history. This process was not, as the colonialist perspective claims, the “modernization” of a passive and backward nation, nor was it merely an economic “reform” initiative. On the contrary, these policies were a strategy to make the steppe administratively “manageable and predictable” for the Russian Empire, to narrow the legal and ecological space for long-distance pastoral mobility, and to integrate the region into imperial administration¹³⁰. Russia's historical advance in Central Asia

¹³⁰ Hofmeister, “Civilization and Russification in Tsarist Central Asia,” 411–412.

began with the conquests of the Khanates of Kazan in 1552 and Astrakhan in 1556, which opened up a waterway and the gates of the steppe stretching to the Caspian Sea for Moscow¹³¹. During the reign of Peter I, the Kazakh steppes were defined as “the key and gateway to all of Asia.” Control of the steppe was integrated into the strategic vision for the route to trade with India and China¹³². Although the 1731 submission of the Khan of the Small Zhuz, Abulkhair, to Russian sovereignty was interpreted by Russia as a “voluntary union” (prisoedinenie), for the Kazakhs it was actually a temporary military alliance against the threat of their rivals, the Jungars¹³³. However, Russia interpreted these oaths of allegiance as an eternal right of sovereignty over the steppe. Thus, in the 19th century, Russia transformed this claim into a direct colonial conquest¹³⁴. This was not a continuous or coherent process: priorities and methods shifted across decades, and policies were often contested and irregularly implemented across the steppe.

This chapter applies the same analytical categories used in the Ottoman chapter, but it shows that they produced a different imperial outcome in the Kazakh steppe. In the Russian case, mapping, statistical surveys, land classification, legal reform, and religious or cultural mediation were not mainly tools of incorporation into an imperial core. They were also tools of colonial encirclement. They helped the state define Kazakh land as available for redistribution, restrict pastoral mobility, and open the steppe to Russian and Ukrainian settlers. For this reason, the chapter treats sedentarization not only as a policy toward Kazakh nomads, but also as part of a wider settler-colonial transformation of land, law, and society.

¹³¹ Kara, “19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler,” 375. Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 26.

¹³² Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 27.

¹³³ Kara, “19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler,” 373.

¹³⁴ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 85.

In the second half of the 19th century, this expansion process transformed the Kazakh steppes into a dynamic and prominent geography where the geostrategic interests of global empires overlapped¹³⁵. This period was the peak of British interest in the region. Britain extended its India-centered dominance toward the Pamir Mountains through Afghanistan and followed a buffer-zone policy shaped by “Russo-phobia”¹³⁶. In contrast, the Qing/Chinese government tried to regain control of East Turkestan (Xinjiang) through the 1881 Treaty of St. Petersburg, as part of its effort to strengthen its position in Central Asia¹³⁷. This geostrategic encirclement created the need for Russia to turn the steppe into not just a military buffer zone, but an “internal colony” that was tightly controlled administratively, legally, and demographically¹³⁸. In this context, the Kazakh steppes have become one of the most dynamic geographies in Eurasia, rather than an isolated internal region.

Within the scope of this study, these imperial policies are analyzed by treating “sedentarization” primarily as an administrative ideal and a set of instruments, rather than as a single or uniform outcome. Because of the structural tension between nomadism and the modern state the “sedentarism ontology” of Russian reformers and bureaucrats regarded attachment to the land as the sole foundation of civilization, viewing the seasonal mobility of the Kazakhs as an anachronism and a structural obstacle to the tax and military conscription systems¹³⁹. Ignoring the logic of nomadic migration, many imperial administrators and experts interpreted the steppe as “empty land” that could be opened up for Russian peasant settlement¹⁴⁰. This administrative–expert framework helped produce and legitimize the concept of “surplus land” (izlishki) with the 1891 Steppe Code, allowing Russian peasant settlements

¹³⁵ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 49.

¹³⁶ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 86.

¹³⁷ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 39, 93.

¹³⁸ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 131.

¹³⁹ Moon, *The Plough That Broke the Steppes*, 16.

¹⁴⁰ Moon, *The Plough That Broke the Steppes*, 39, 22–26, 91.

to take over nomadic pastures and transforming colonial intervention into a “scientifically based” policy of land dispossession¹⁴¹.

This chapter's analytical approach focuses on four main axes: the mapping of the steppe territory, the classification of the population into statistical categories (especially inorodtsy status), the reorganization of the land regime, and the interventions of Tatar intermediaries in the religious sphere¹⁴². Many imperial officials tried to govern the steppe through Muslim intermediaries, especially Kazan Tatar Mullahs, scholars, and merchants. They also made use of Sunni Islamic institutions, which they believed could help to bring order to nomadic society and encourage civilizing. Yet, this was not a one-sided process: Tatar intermediaries followed their own religious, educational, and commercial goals, while Kazakh communities engaged with them in selective and pragmatic ways. Over time, however, parts of the administration began to view this reliance with suspicion, warning against “Tatarization” and calling for closer imperial control¹⁴³. Different imperial actors did not always share the same priorities, since military-security concerns, fiscal goals, settler demands, and reformist civilizing agendas often pulled policy in different directions. On the other hand, sedentarization policies should not be seen as unilateral enforcement. These policies represent a multi-layered historical break, shaped by legal negotiations conducted by the Kazakh community through petitions, the transformation of dispossessed individuals into zhataq (settled workers), and ultimately the mass resistance that erupted with the 1916 Uprising¹⁴⁴. Consequently, this chapter will examine how the Russian Empire rebuilt the steppe in favor of a centralized empire and marginalized the local community on its own land through the policies implemented.

¹⁴¹ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 39.

¹⁴² Kara, “19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler,” 381.

¹⁴³ Ross, *Tatar Empire*, 43.

¹⁴⁴ Teğın, “Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism,” 32, 46.

3.2 The Administrative and Legal Integration of the Kazakh Steppes into the Russian Empire

The process of integration of the Kazakh steppes into the administrative and legal periphery of the Russian Empire was not a one-time military conquest. This process should be understood as an administrative encirclement, which is the cumulative tightening of legal, fiscal, and administrative regulations on pastoral mobility and lasted for about a century and often intensified in irregular phases, with reversals and regional variation. In this process, sedentarization as an administrative ideal and a cluster of policy instruments was not merely an economic choice or a step toward “modernization.” It was a legal mechanism aimed at making the nomadic society legible to the state, subjecting it to taxation, and reorganizing the land regime according to colonial logic. Sedentarization should not be seen as the inevitable result of a single reform. Rather, it developed through a series of regulations that gradually acquired a more colonial character and increasingly restricted the legal basis of nomadic life. Even so, these measures did not lead to total sedentarization. Many Kazakh households tried to continue seasonal mobility even into the early Soviet period, and the most radical break came only with collectivization period.

3.3 Early Statutes and Indirect Administration (1822)

At the beginning of the 19th century, the dependence of the Kazakh lands on Russia was largely symbolic¹⁴⁵. Rather than directly governing this vast and “unknown” geography, the Russian administration adopted a model of indirect governance based on cooperation with local elites. The most critical legal text of this era was the 1822 Statute on the Siberian Kirgiz which is drafted by Mikhail Speransky and applicable to the “Siberian Kirgiz” under the Western Siberian/Omsk administration: primarily to Kazakh groups along Omsk, Akmolinsk and

¹⁴⁵ Kara, “19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler,” 373.

Semipalatinsk, rather than to all Kazakh hordes¹⁴⁶. Speransky aimed to incorporate mainly the Middle Horde Kazakhs into a civil society (*grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*) by establishing the Enlightenment ideal of “civilization” within a legal framework¹⁴⁷.

In this early period, imperial law showed relative flexibility in response to the realities of the steppe. Although the 1822 Statute officially abolished the khanate system in the Middle Horde and divided the lands into *okrug* (district), *volost* (county), and *aul* (village) units, local property administrators (*sultans* and *aqsqaqs*) still retained their key roles¹⁴⁸. On the legal level, *adat* (customary law) retained its validity in civil cases, with Russian law being offered as an alternative¹⁴⁹. However, this flexibility also brought with it the first systematic incentives for settlement; for example, every Kazakh family that took up farming was promised 15 *desiatins* of free land and seeds in an attempt to undermine the nomadic economy¹⁵⁰.

3.4 Temporary Regulations and Centralization (1867–68)

By the 1860s, Russia's military operations in Central Asian cities necessitated the transformation of the steppe's administrative structure into a more centralized and bureaucratic system¹⁵¹. Temporary Regulations adopted in 1867 and 1868 marked the transition from indirect administration to direct colonial rule¹⁵². With these regulations, the steppe was divided into *oblasts* (provinces) under the governorates of Orenburg, Western Siberia, and Turkestan¹⁵³.

¹⁴⁶ Kara, “19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler,” 376.

¹⁴⁷ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 35.

¹⁴⁸ Kara, “19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler,” 377–380. Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 31.

¹⁴⁹ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 34.

¹⁵⁰ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 38.

¹⁵¹ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 85.

¹⁵² Kara, “19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler,” 380.

¹⁵³ Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 35.

The most notable change during this period was the legal status of the Kazakh society being registered as “inorodtsy” (foreigners/others)¹⁵⁴. This status separated the Kazakhs from the Russian subjects both socially and legally, confining them to the category of “backward peoples under guardianship”¹⁵⁵. In the process that followed, the 1868 regulation brought about a radical break in the land regime. Under this regulation, the pastures that the Kazakhs had used for thousands of years were declared state property¹⁵⁶. Nomads were no longer owners of their own land but were reduced to the status of custodians of land allocated to them by the state for public use. Therefore, it can be argued that this situation did not in itself sedentarize Kazakhs, but it narrowed the legal and ecological space of pastoral mobility and made settlement one possible strategy of legal defense for holding access to land.

3.5 The Institutionalization of Colonial Law (1886–1891)

At the end of the 19th century, colonial law considered Kazakh nomadism to be entirely “irrational” and an economic form that needed to be eliminated¹⁵⁷. The 1886 Turkestan and 1891 Steppe Regulations institutionalized sedentarization from the empire's perspective. The most destructive element of these regulations was the legalization of the concept of “izlishki”. The Russian administration, disregarding the nomads' need for seasonal migration, seized fertile pastures that it deemed “surplus” according to settled agricultural standards¹⁵⁸.

During this process, “scientific” statistical studies such as the Shcherbina Expedition (1896–1903) attempted to rationalize dispossession¹⁵⁹. Statistical data often underestimated the amount of land required by nomads, thereby preparing the legal ground for opening up pastures

¹⁵⁴ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 81.

¹⁵⁵ Sabol, *The Touch of Civilization*, 182.

¹⁵⁶ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 25. Kara, “19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler,” 381.

¹⁵⁷ Hofmeister, “Civilization and Russification in Tsarist Central Asia,” 422.

¹⁵⁸ Olcott, “The Settlement of the Kazakh Nomads,” 15.

¹⁵⁹ Campbell, “Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested,” 423.

to Russian peasant settlements (pereselenie)¹⁶⁰. As a result, the land rights of Kazakhs who did not settle became increasingly uncertain, and settlement to an increasing extent appeared as one of the few legally defensible strategies for retaining access to land under colonial administration.

3.6 Law, Colonization, and Crisis at the Beginning of the 20th Century

The political liberalization that occurred in Russia after the 1905 Revolution, ironically, increased the pressure of colonization in the steppes. The Stolypin reforms implemented after 1906 viewed the Kazakh lands as a safety valve to relieve the “land hunger” in Russia’s interior regions¹⁶¹. During this period, the law made settler rights unquestionable, to the disadvantage of the indigenous nomadic population¹⁶². Between 1906 and 1912, more than 17 million desiatins of land were taken from the Kazakhs as “surplus” and made available to Ukrainian/Russian peasants¹⁶³.

The legal logic of the Stolypin era aimed to destroy collective ownership and tribal ties, which were the main pillars of the Kazakh social structure. By promoting the khutor (separate farm) system, the Kazakhs were to be transformed into individual farmers, “separated from their extended families and atomized”¹⁶⁴. However, this forced transformation was incompatible with ecological realities and, moreover, led to a massive dispossession crisis. Having lost their livestock and pastures, the Kazakhs became “zhataq” on their own land or cheap labor for the colonial economy¹⁶⁵. Also, the growing need to pay taxes in cash (kibitka:

¹⁶⁰ Campbell, “Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested,”. 426. Jampeissova, “Imperial Statistical Research in the Kazakh Steppes,” 120.

¹⁶¹ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 20. Teġin, “Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism,” 49.

¹⁶² Morrison, “Russian Settler Colonialism,” 325.

¹⁶³ Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 49.

¹⁶⁴ Sabol, *The Touch of Civilization*, 195.

¹⁶⁵ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 41.

household taxation) pushed many households to look for wage work, which further limited the room for long-distance pastoral mobility¹⁶⁶.

The accumulated anger caused by this legal and administrative siege erupted in 1916 with the decision to conscript the local population¹⁶⁷. The 1916 Uprising can be seen as a comprehensive resistance against the decades-long regime of legal dispossession and the tightening constraints on pastoral mobility¹⁶⁸. Consequently, this long and difficult process, stretching from 1822 to 1917, created an expanding system of administrative encirclement, through which Russian imperial law and administration gradually shrunk the legal and ecological space for pastoral mobility and made long-distance seasonal movement harder to sustain. It can be observed that the legal process was served as a tool to enclose the Steppe in a cycle of crisis and hardships. In this context, settlement often appeared not as a clear and direct policy outcome, but as a constrained result of encirclement and of the new imperial property regime by producing uneven and contested results rather than total sedentarization.

3.7 The Logic of the Nomadic Economy and Its Misinterpretation

The pastoral nomadism that has existed for thousands of years in the Kazakh steppes cannot be considered “wandering” or a primitive stage of life, as colonial narratives claim. On the contrary, it is one of the most rational and sustainable economic strategies developed in response to the harsh ecological conditions of Eurasia¹⁶⁹. This economic system is based on an extremely sophisticated risk management logic designed to use the steppe's limited pasture and water resources most efficiently while spreading climatic risks¹⁷⁰. Kazakh nomadism is a planned movement that rotates in harmony with the seasons along winter (qïstau), spring

¹⁶⁶ Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, 60, 97.

¹⁶⁷ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 142.

¹⁶⁸ Sabol, *The Touch of Civilization*, 222.

¹⁶⁹ Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 10.

¹⁷⁰ Teġin, “Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism,” 31.

(kökteu), summer (zhaylau), and autumn (küzeu) routes¹⁷¹. These routes, shaped by the biological needs of the animal herds, protect the ecosystem by allowing the pastures to regenerate. Thus, they ensure long-term sustainability by providing animals with access to the most nutritious grasses throughout the year¹⁷². Mobility is the community's only insurance for survival in this ecosystem, particularly against the zhut disaster, which causes mass animal deaths when pastures are covered with ice¹⁷³. Within this system, traditional pasture usage rights (ata qonıs) and kinship-based mutual aid networks (sauyn беру) demonstrate that economic activity is not limited to animal husbandry but also constitutes a collective social security mechanism. This is critical for understanding nomadic Kazakh sociology and tribal structure¹⁷⁴.

However, the Russian imperial elite and the reformist bureaucracy of the 19th century viewed this ecological rationality as a structural obstacle that had to be overcome in the face of the modern state's taxation, conscription, and land regimes. Moreover, colonialists classified Kazakh nomadism as a “semi-savagery” where civilization had not yet arrived¹⁷⁵. Russian reformist discourse has consistently defined any economic activity not tied to the land as “lawlessness” and “chaos.” Therefore, it often ignored the seasonal migration logic of nomadism and labeled this lifestyle as inefficient¹⁷⁶. Within the policy of sedentarism and encirclement framework, Kazakh pastures were labeled “terra nullius” (empty land) because they were not plowed, which was considered the sole proof of land ownership under colonial law¹⁷⁷. For Russian administrators, pastures were conceptualized as “ownerless” areas without

¹⁷¹ Ferret, “The Ambiguities of the Kazakhs’ Nomadic Heritage,” 178.

¹⁷² Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 31–32. Teġin, “Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism,” 38.

¹⁷³ Olcott, “The Settlement of the Kazakh Nomads,” 19.

¹⁷⁴ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 33–34.

¹⁷⁵ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 21. Hofmeister, “Civilization and Russification in Tsarist Central Asia,” 411.

¹⁷⁶ Teġin, “Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism,” 36.

¹⁷⁷ Campbell, “Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested,” 424.

permanent buildings and therefore subject to seizure by the state at any time¹⁷⁸. This ideological distortion was legitimized by a “civilizing” mission that demanded the image of the wild horseman be replaced by that of the settled “yeoman” (farmer). This deliberate misreading of the nomadic economy was given a “scientific” basis of legitimacy through statistical studies such as the Shcherbina Expedition conducted between 1896 and 1903¹⁷⁹. The commission led by Shcherbina calculated the amount of land required by nomads not according to pastoral realities but according to sedentary agricultural standards, and behind this mask of scientificity, it gave a mathematical precision and scientificity to land dispossession¹⁸⁰. The concept of “surplus land” invented as a result of these expeditions systematically underestimated the amount of land necessary for a nomadic family's living. This deliberate stance became the legal cover for opening up pastures to Russian settlers¹⁸¹. Kazakh intellectuals objected to the claim of “surplus land” and the accusations directed at nomadism by publishing various works on the subject. At the same time, in imperial administrative and expert discourse, the nomadic economy was labeled “irrational” by most officials, even as Kazakh intellectuals contested these claims of Russian administration. As a result, sedentarization was increasingly framed as a demographic engineering strategy aimed at making a mobile society predictable and controllable for the colonial state, rather than being an economic necessity¹⁸². Consequently, settled agriculture has been equated with “culture and productivity.” However, the internal logic of nomadism has been ignored and dismissed by this very narrative of “civilization”¹⁸³.

¹⁷⁸ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 25.

¹⁷⁹ Campbell, “Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested,”. 423. Jampeissova, “Imperial Statistical Research in the Kazakh Steppes,” 125.

¹⁸⁰ Campbell, “Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested,”. 423–426. Jampeissova, “Imperial Statistical Research in the Kazakh Steppes,” 119.

¹⁸¹ Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 38.

¹⁸² Campbell, “Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested,”. 429.

¹⁸³ Hofmeister, “Civilization and Russification in Tsarist Central Asia,” 421.

3.8 Religion, Mediation, and Civilization: The Role of Tatar Actors

The Russian Empire's approach to governing the steppe, including settlement pressures, in the Kazakh steppes was not merely an effort at spatial and administrative settlement. This policy was a program aimed at restructuring the moral, religious, and cultural fabric of nomadic society according to Russian colonial interests and at comprehensive domestication¹⁸⁴. In this process, the Russian state attempted to use the Kazan Tatars as the vanguard of Russian administration and as “civilizing” agents in the steppe in order to turn the Kazakh nomads into a settled population¹⁸⁵. This policy first took shape during the reign of Catherine II. The Russian administration's goal was based on the assumption that the uncontrolled nomadic character of the Kazakhs could be disciplined through an institutional, bookish, and madrasa-centered Islam to be preached by the Tatars. Some imperial officials sought to use Islam as a moderating cultural bridge that would encourage the Kazakhs to settle down and transform them into a loyal subject population under central authority¹⁸⁶. At the heart of this religious engineering project was the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly (OMSA), established in 1788. While bringing religious life in the steppe under state control, the OMSA aimed to make this society more compliant with the Russian property and tax regime by sending Kazan Tatar mullahs to the Kazakh nomads¹⁸⁷. These Tatar actors did not merely provide religious services. They also acted as interpreters for Russian governors, served as mediators in the application of colonial law, and played an intermediary role between the nomadic society and the Russian administration¹⁸⁸. The “madrasa-imam-mullah” triangle established within this framework was an important element forming the indirect governance mechanism of the Russian administration in the steppe. Efforts were made to replace the traditional nomadic law of adat with an

¹⁸⁴ Ross, *Tatar Empire*, 2.

¹⁸⁵ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 66.

¹⁸⁶ Hofmeister, “Civilization and Russification in Tsarist Central Asia,” 424.

¹⁸⁷ Ross, *Tatar Empire*, 43–44.

¹⁸⁸ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 100.

institutional religious code of law registered by the central authority, which could be interpreted in favor of the colonial administration when necessary¹⁸⁹.

The moral dimension of sedentarization was reinforced through educational activities conducted via maktabas and madrasas established by Tatar mullahs. Some imperial officials welcomed these schools as a practical way to promote “order” and social discipline in the steppe. However, Tatar mullahs were not merely tools of the state and often pursued their own religious, educational, and communal agendas as intermediaries. These schools taught Kazakh children the skills required by a settled society, such as literacy, record-keeping, and basic legal and administrative practices linked to property and taxation¹⁹⁰. In Kazakh and broader Russian-Muslim reformist circles, education and partial settlement were often discussed as signs of “progress,” but many also warned that settlement could make land loss easier by clearing space for settler colonization. The educational process weakened the spatial flexibility of nomadism, which was seen as wandering. It prepared individuals, and especially Kazakh intellectuals, for a settled life and integration into Russian societies and markets¹⁹¹. Due to this cultural network built by Tatar intermediaries, sedentarization has been interpreted not only as an administrative necessity but also as a process of religious and civilizational development. At this point, the Tatars saw themselves as the “enlighteners” of the Kazakhs. However, as they are often criticized, they also facilitated the production of social consent that enabled the colonial state to penetrate deeply into the steppe¹⁹².

In the project to secure political loyalty and integrate the steppe elites through religious mediation, figures such as Akhun Mukhammed-zhan Khusainov undertook critical diplomatic missions. Khusainov used Islam as a tool to persuade Kazakh leaders to relinquish their khanate

¹⁸⁹ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 32.

¹⁹⁰ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 106. Ross, *Tatar Empire*, 77.

¹⁹¹ Ross, *Tatar Empire*, 109, 155.

¹⁹² Ross, *Tatar Empire*, 140.

powers and integrate into Russian administrative units. Such actors sought to draw Kazakh nobles to Russia's side in exchange for rewards and ranks. This naturally laid the moral and practical groundwork for an established colonial administration. However, this role of “civilizing mediation” led to a structural crisis within the Russian imperial logic from the mid-19th century onwards. Russian officials realized that, instead of “Russifying” the Kazakhs, the Tatars had “Tatarized” the Kazakhs by integrating them into their own commercial and cultural spheres of influence¹⁹³. In particular, the Tatars' unification of the Kazakhs under the banner of Islamic orthodoxy and their construction of a social consciousness that could rival Russian rule triggered fears of “Pan-Islamism” in the colonial administration. This security concern gave way to a harsh “de-Tatarization” policy starting in the 1860s. As part of this policy, it was deemed appropriate to educate Kazakhs directly in Russian schools¹⁹⁴. Nevertheless, during the period between 1860 and 1917, this vast network of education and religious establishments established by Tatar ulama continued to lay the intellectual groundwork for sedentarization. This “civilization” project, carried out through religious leaders, was deemed necessary for the fragmentation of nomadic life and the establishment of a settled property regime. Through this practice, the strategy of creating a submissive and controllable population became an integral part of the process¹⁹⁵. Consequently, religious and cultural activities carried out through the Tatar ulema were used by the Russian Empire as a colonial engineering device that ensured the integration of the Kazakh steppes into the empire not only administratively but also at the level of socio-cultural norms.

3.9 Settlement Policies, Land Regime, and Colonization

The Russian Empire's rule over the Kazakh steppes evolved from a purely military administration in the second half of the 19th century into a widespread form of settler

¹⁹³ Ross, *Tatar Empire*, 89.

¹⁹⁴ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 38.

¹⁹⁵ Ross, *Tatar Empire*, 89–90, 242–243.

colonialism. In this process, sedentarization was not merely a cultural “civilization” project aimed at changing the nomads' way of life. The demographic structure of the steppe was transformed in favor of Russian elements. The property regime was radically changed, and nomadism was made geographically impossible. The main argument of this section is that the Kazakh settlement process became irreversible to the extent that it merged with settler colonization, ensuring the social and political permanence of Russian colonialism in the steppe.

3.10 Legal Appropriation of the Steppe and the Creation of “Surplus Land”

The most radical move by the Russian colonial administration in the land regime was the declaration of Kazakh pastures as “state property” through the 1868 Provisional Statute and the subsequent 1891 Steppe Statute¹⁹⁶. These legal regulations reduced the pastures used by the Kazakhs for thousands of years to the status of “empty land” and relegated the nomads to the position of merely temporary “users” of their own land. The most critical concept in this process is the term “surplus land”, formulated in Articles 119 and 120 of the 1891 Regulation¹⁹⁷. The Russian administration calculated the amount of land required by nomads not according to pastoral realities but according to agricultural life. Scientific statistical studies, such as the Shcherbina Expedition conducted between 1896 and 1903, made it possible for this dispossession process to be carried out in a more orderly and legal manner in favor of the Empire¹⁹⁸. Statisticians deliberately underestimated the pastures needed to support a family of five nomads. They then registered every square foot of land beyond this biased calculation as “surplus” suitable for Russian peasant settlement¹⁹⁹. This scientific dispossession eliminated the choice of sedentarization. For the Kazakhs, transitioning to a settled lifestyle became practically the only way to hold onto land in accordance with Imperial laws.

¹⁹⁶ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 39.

¹⁹⁷ Teĭin, “Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism,” 34.

¹⁹⁸ Jampeissova, “Imperial Statistical Research in the Kazakh Steppes,” 131.

¹⁹⁹ Jampeissova, “Imperial Statistical Research in the Kazakh Steppes,” 125–126.

3.11 Russian Peasant Settlements and Geographical Encirclement

In the last twenty years of the 19th century, the steppe witnessed the mass migration of Slavic peasants. Following the 1861 Emancipation of the Serfs, the “land hunger” experienced in Russia's interior regions led the empire to begin using the Kazakh steppes for expansionist and settlement-based colonialism²⁰⁰. During the twenty-year peak period between 1896 and 1916, more than 1.5 million Slavic peasant settlers migrated to the steppe²⁰¹. This demographic rush resulted in the disappearance of the Kazakhs' seasonal migration routes and the restriction of their nomadic lifestyle to a very narrow geography²⁰².

The settlement of Russian peasants also significantly altered the physical landscape of the steppe. The most fertile riverbanks and water sources were allocated to settlers, and farms and villages were established in these areas. As a result, nomads struggled to survive in the arid and barren inland regions. The fences erected by settlers, the permanent buildings constructed, and the railways built transformed the open and flexible space of the steppe, forcing a system of settlement²⁰³. The Slavic population reaching 59% in the Akmolinsk region, in particular, is one of the most concrete proofs of the Kazakhs becoming a minority in their own lands and nomadism becoming geographically impossible²⁰⁴. This demographic and geographical encirclement led to the economic collapse of the Kazakhs, who were unable to settle down, and forced them to struggle for survival.

3.12 The Stolypin Reforms and the Ontology of Settlement

The Stolypin Reforms, enacted in 1906, made the process of colonization and sedentarization a vital issue for the empire's “internal order.” Prime Minister Pyotr Stolypin's policy, known as the “wager on the strong,” aimed to transform the steppe into an agricultural

²⁰⁰ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 106.

²⁰¹ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 19.

²⁰² Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 38.

²⁰³ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 104.

²⁰⁴ Demko, *The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan*, 79.

basin based on individual ownership²⁰⁵. During this period, collective usage rights, the basis of the Kazakh property structure, were completely rejected. The Kazakhs were attempted to be organized according to the “aul communities” (aul'nye obshchestva) system, similar to the Russian mir (village commune) system²⁰⁶. The dispossession process gained dramatic momentum during the Stolypin period. Between 1906 and 1912, more than 17 million desiatins of land were taken from the Kazakhs, labeled as “surplus,” and opened for use of Slavic peasants²⁰⁷. The logic behind these reforms was settlement policies that viewed nomadism as an “evolutionary backwardness” that needed to be overcome. Reformers such as Stolypin and Krivoshein aimed to transform the Kazakhs into settled farmers, thereby opening the pastures to Russian settlement and making Kazakh society a compliant and easily controlled subject for the imperial administration²⁰⁸. However, this policy led to major economic devastation and a massive dispossession crisis in Kazakh society because it conflicted with ecological realities.

3.13 The Political Consequences of Land Loss and Social Collapse

These radical changes in the land regime and settler colonization have left deep wounds in the social structure of the Kazakhs. With the collapse of the nomadic economy, the dispossessed Kazakhs became “zhataq” on their own land, serving as cheap labor for the colonial economy²⁰⁹. The authority of the sultans and biys, who belonged to the traditional tribal aristocracy, to distribute pasture was taken away and transferred to Russian officials. These political and administrative changes greatly weakened the local authority structure and broke the authority of the Kazakh elites²¹⁰. Therefore, land loss on the political level became

²⁰⁵ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 20. Sabol, *The Touch of Civilization*, 195.

²⁰⁶ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 40.

²⁰⁷ Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 49.

²⁰⁸ Hofmeister, “Civilization and Russification in Tsarist Central Asia,” 421. Teğın, “Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism,” 46.

²⁰⁹ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 41. Gülnar Kara, “19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler”, in *Sosyal, Beşeri ve İdarî Bilimlerde Yeni Ufuklar*, ed. Sinan Sönmez et al. (Ankara: Gece Akademi, 2019), 59.

²¹⁰ Teğın, “Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism,” 50.

the main agenda item of the Kazakh intellectual movement (Alash) that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century. Names such as Akhmet Baitursynuly and Alihan Bukeikhanuly defined land loss as a matter of “national existence”²¹¹. The seizure of land rights sparked anger in Kazakh society against Russian rule, which turned into mass resistance with the 1916 Uprising²¹². The 1916 Uprising was also triggered by a decision to conscript nomads, who had previously been exempt from military service. However, an analysis of the nature and characteristics of this uprising reveals that it was also a reaction to decades of dispossession and forced sedentarization.

Consequently, the settlement policies implemented between 1860 and 1917 transformed sedentarization into a growing pressure and an increasingly likely outcome for many Kazakh communities over the next few decades. The appropriation of pastures, the drawing of internal and external borders, and the settlement of Russian peasants on the steppe eliminated the practical basis for nomadism. As a result, imperial rule became stronger across much of the steppe, although local resistance and occasional rebellions continued. In this context, settlement became the most destructive and effective tool of colonial rule. It severed Kazakh society from its ancient way of life and integrated it into the imperial property regime. This historical break resulted in the steppe being integrated into the Russian Empire not only administratively, but also demographically and economically²¹³.

3.14 The Limitation of Pastures and Territorial Sovereignty

The most devastating structural pressure that forced the Kazakhs to become sedentary was the limitation of their pastures by declaring the land as state property. The 1868 Provisional Statute and the 1891 Steppe Statute fundamentally changed the property regime of the steppe.

²¹¹ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 131. Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 61.

²¹² Morrison, “Russian Settler Colonialism,” 325.

²¹³ Teġin, “Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism,” 48–50.

Under these regulations, pastures were considered “state property,” and Kazakhs were granted only the right of indefinite shared use (pol’zovanie)²¹⁴. This legal basis, as previously emphasized, resulted in the appropriation of pastures through the concept of “surplus land” and their opening up for use by Slavic peasants²¹⁵. Spatial encirclement was not limited to property. Practices such as the “10-verst line,” which covered riverbanks, water sources, and strategic trade routes, greatly restricted nomads' access to vital resources²¹⁶. The severing of migration routes by railways and settlements created a major obstacle to pastoral migration, which had been practiced for thousands of years. Divided by internal and external borders, nomads in the steppe were forced into more arid inland areas or narrow areas of settled agriculture. This geographical contraction led to the overgrazing of pastures, which in turn led to a decline in livestock numbers, and thus to the collapse of the nomadic economy²¹⁷.

3.15 Taxation and the Russian Market

The tax policies implemented by the colonial administration were another political tool that pushed nomads into a settled life. The cash “kibitka” (tent/household) tax per household, which began with the 1822 and 1837 regulations, aimed to break the flexibility of nomadic life²¹⁸. This tax, which rose to four rubles by the end of the century, forced the Kazakhs to sell their animals in Russian markets, despite the fact that money was merely used in the steppes for most of Kazakhs²¹⁹. This need for cash did not only make the Kazakhs dependent on colonial markets. It also transformed the poor, who could not pay their tax debts, into the cheap labor

²¹⁴ Olcott, “The Settlement of the Kazakh Nomads,” 13.

²¹⁵ Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, 87.

²¹⁶ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 62. Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 35.

²¹⁷ Teğın, “Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism,” 40.

²¹⁸ Kara, “19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler,” 376. Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 33.

²¹⁹ Olcott, “The Settlement of the Kazakh Nomads,” 14. Sabol, *The Touch of Civilization*, 184.

force of the colonial economy, the “zhataq” class, as highlighted earlier²²⁰. Thus, the tax was no longer just a source of state revenue. Taxes served as a political tool that dissolved the social bonds of nomadic society and tied the individual to the land/market.

3.16 Legal Status Inequality and the “Inorodtsy” Category

The legal position of the Kazakhs within the empire reinforced their sedentarization as a necessity. Kazakh society was consciously categorized as “inorodtsy” (foreign/other). This categorization separated them from the Russian subjects both socially and legally. This separation also confined the Kazakhs to a kind of backward people status under a kind of guardianship²²¹. The Russian legal system established a framework that considered the cultivation of land as the sole proof of civilization and property ownership and prioritized settled life²²². Consequently, nomads' rights to use pastures were always left temporary and insecure. Therefore, the promise of 15 desiatins of private property granted to those who transitioned to settled agriculture was used as a form of leverage against Kazakhs who sought to claim ownership of their land²²³. Kazakhs were forced to adopt a settled lifestyle and build permanent structures, even if they were not willing, so as to avoid losing their land under the colonial legal system²²⁴.

3.17 The Limits of the “Voluntary” Narrative

The imperial bureaucracy attempted to present settlement as a “voluntary” process through various incentives, such as free seeds and tax exemptions²²⁵. However, this was a pseudo-voluntarism that emerged in an environment where options had been eliminated by the

²²⁰ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 38. Gülnar Kara, “19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler”, in *Sosyal, Beşeri ve İdarî Bilimlerde Yeni Ufuklar*, ed. Sinan Sönmez et al. (Ankara: Gece Akademi, 2019), 59.

²²¹ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 91.

²²² Campbell, “Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested,”. 424.

²²³ Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 34.

²²⁴ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 38.

²²⁵ Kara, “19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler,” 378.

state. The Kazakhs' shift to agriculture was not due to their acceptance of the superiority of colonial civilization, but because disasters such as zhut (blizzards) left them with no open pastures to take shelter in and their pastures were insufficient²²⁶. It can be said that the transition to a settled life by the dispossessed masses, especially after the “Great Zhut” disaster of 1879-1880, was not a choice of modernization but a result of absolute poverty and hunger²²⁷. Consequently, sedentarization in the Kazakh steppes was the result of an encirclement in which the state made nomadism impossible through its instruments of land ownership, taxation, and law. “Voluntarism” in this process went no further than being an administrative cover for colonial violence. As previously emphasized, it can be argued that these structural pressures imposed by the Tsarist administration eventually led to the mass uprising that erupted in the steppe in 1916²²⁸.

3.18 Legal Negotiations and the Politics of Petitions

The Russian Empire's policies of sedentarization, demographic engineering, and property changes in the Kazakh steppes were not received with passive obedience by Kazakh society. Facing an intensifying colonial Tsarist administration in the region, the Kazakhs sought both to preserve their ancient traditions and to find ways to survive within the new legal realities.

The bureaucratic structure introduced by the Russian administration through its 1822 and 1868 regulations was not only a means of oppression for the Kazakhs, but also a forum for seeking rights against the colonial state. The Kazakhs quickly grasped the Russian bureaucracy's structure, based on written documents and hierarchical approval, and transformed the “zhaloba” (complaint/petition) policy into a defense mechanism²²⁹. Faced with pasture

²²⁶ Teġin, “Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism,” 31.

²²⁷ Olcott, “The Settlement of the Kazakh Nomads,” 22. Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 30.

²²⁸ Morrison, “Russian Settler Colonialism,” 323–326.

²²⁹ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 89–90.

losses and claims of “surplus land”, Kazakhs submitted thousands of petitions to the colonial administration. Using legal channels, they objected to the Tsarist regime's attempts to change property ownership, relying on both traditional customary law and Russian statutes²³⁰. During this process, the Kazakh elites used the rhetoric of “justice” promised by Russian laws as a weapon against colonial officials. They even complained about the despotism of local administrators to higher authorities, attempting to gain ground within the colonial hierarchy. The petition policy is an indication that the Kazakhs attempted to fight the legal system established by the colonial order by exploiting the internal logic of the Russian system.

3.19 Daily Resistance and Manipulation of the Colonial Instruments

The reactions of the Kazakhs against the colonial administration were not only limited to petitions and economic adaptation. The local authorities appointed by the colonial administration were gradually transformed internally. For example, the volost administration and official biylik authorities established by Tsarist Russia to break up tribal unity were exploited by Kazakh “atqaminers” (influential individuals) to protect their own tribal interests. Although the official biys appeared to enforce colonial law, they continued to consider the principles of custom and tribal solidarity in their decisions, which was a method employed by the Kazakhs to use the opportunities offered by the system to their own advantage²³¹. Furthermore, the act of barymta (customary retaliatory livestock seizure), which was considered a crime under Tsarist law yet it was part of Kazakh custom, continued to be practiced even in the 20th century as a form of “people's justice” and resistance in situations where the colonial justice system seemed inadequate. These everyday practices of resistance, described by James C. Scott as a “hidden script,” are crucial in demonstrating the Kazakhs' rejection of colonial

²³⁰ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 127.

²³¹ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 107–108.

identity constructs and their determination to preserve their social autonomy, culture, and values²³².

3.20 The Breaking Point: The 1916 Uprising

The Kazakhs' anger over decades of dispossession and administrative oppression reached a breaking point with the mass uprising that broke out in 1916. The June 25, 1916, decree on conscription for worker battalions was the last straw for the Kazakh community²³³. During the uprising, the Kazakhs rebelled against decades of colonial rule by attacking telegraph lines, Russian settlements, and population registration offices, which were considered as symbols of colonial administration²³⁴. Although triggered by the conscription order, the 1916 Uprising should be seen as a comprehensive response to the loss of land caused by sedentarization policies and the practices of the colonial administration²³⁵. The fact that the Kazakhs chose their own khans during this process and returned to their traditional military order is another indication that the model of obedient subjects that the colonial state was trying to construct was incompatible with the realities of the steppe.

3.21 Conclusion to the Third Chapter

The sedentarization policies pursued by the Russian Empire in the Kazakh steppes between 1860 and 1917 were not merely an economic modernization initiative, but a fundamental practice of constructing a colonial state and establishing geopolitical dominance. This process sought to restrict the ontological flexibility and mobility of nomadic society. Thus, they aimed to turn nomads into fixed units that were legible, taxable, and controllable for the imperial administration²³⁶. Sedentarization, in this context, has been one of the most critical tools for reorganizing the steppe with a colonial hierarchy and imprisoning a mobile geography within a

²³² Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 153.

²³³ Morrison, "Russian Settler Colonialism," 323.

²³⁴ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 142.

²³⁵ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 121.

²³⁶ Hofmeister, "Civilization and Russification in Tsarist Central Asia," 420–422.

static property regime²³⁷. Imperial logic coordinated the implementation of legal codes, land regimes, demographic engineering, and cultural civilizing tools. The 1868 and 1891 Regulations, which declared Kazakh pastures to be “state property,” and the statistical studies conducted through the concept of *izlishki* provided a scientific basis for dispossession. Approximately 1.5 million Slavic peasant settlers sent to the steppe transformed this spatial change into a demographic reality, weakening the traditional nomadic economy and making settlement one of the few rational ways to survive for numerous households²³⁸. This administrative and spatial encirclement was complemented by a moral and cultural reorganization mediated by Tatar clergy and educators. The Russian administration positioned the Kazan Tatars as a useful intermediaries to discipline the “unruly” character of the Kazakhs and make them a more obedient subject to imperial law²³⁹. Madrasas and mosques established through Tatar mullahs tried to instrumentalize Islam as a disciplinary tool that would ensure loyalty to the imperial order. In this way, they attempted to transform traditional customary law within the colonial bureaucracy and make it obedient and harmless to the Tsarist regime²⁴⁰.

However, Kazakh society did not display one-sided passivity in the face of this encirclement; it attempted to use colonial law to its own advantage. One of the most prominent examples of this can be seen in the petition policy that was pursued²⁴¹. The mass uprising of 1916 is a crucial turning point in that it demonstrates how these structural pressures and the deep crisis created by the colonial property regime exploded like a bomb²⁴². Ultimately, Kazakh sedentarization can be read as a major uneven legacy of the Russian imperial administration's

²³⁷ Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness*, 33.

²³⁸ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 19.

²³⁹ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 66.

²⁴⁰ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 32. Ross, *Tatar Empire*, 44.

²⁴¹ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 89–90.

²⁴² Morrison, “Russian Settler Colonialism,” 323–324.

efforts to fix and assimilate the inorodtsy subjects, as they themselves described them, both territorially and culturally²⁴³.

4. Chapter IV: Comparative Analysis of Ottoman and Russian Sedentarization Policies

4.1 Introduction to the Fourth Chapter: Nomadism in the Imagination of the Modern State

The desire of modern states to govern mobile communities living on the periphery constitutes one of the most fundamental administrative paradoxes of the 19th century. This process is directly linked to the state's desire to make society "legible". Nomadism has been viewed as a structural obstacle to the modern state's classic functions of taxation, conscription, and the prevention of rebellion. For, as Scott emphasizes, the state apparatus cannot cartograph these communities that cannot be geographically fixed, measure their property, or clarify their identities²⁴⁴. For this reason, from the perspective of both the Ottoman and Russian empires, nomadism was viewed not merely as a way of life but as a problem of governance that challenged the limits of rational administration. During the centralization efforts that gained momentum after the Tanzimat, the Ottoman bureaucracy defined nomads as elements living in a "state of savagery and Bedouinism" who needed to be reformed²⁴⁵. Following a similar logic, the Russian imperial elites also confined the Kazakh nomads to "inorodtsy" status, classifying them as communities situated on the outer periphery of civilization and requiring constant control. For this reason, settlement, in this context, does not merely mean physically moving nomads from one place to another. It must also be understood as a policy of definition and reclassification that places them within the state's categories - a countable population, a taxable household, and a military conscript.

²⁴³ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 91.

²⁴⁴ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 2.

²⁴⁵ Deringil, "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery," 317.

This chapter compares the two cases through the main instruments discussed in the theoretical framework. These instruments are population registration, mapping and statistical knowledge, the transformation of land regimes, bureaucratic reorganization, and the use of civilizing language. This method makes it possible to compare the Ottoman and Russian cases without assuming that they were the same. Both empires used similar tools to make nomadic communities more governable. However, the meaning and outcome of these tools differed. In the Ottoman case, they served mainly to integrate mobile Muslim communities into the imperial order. In the Russian/Kazakh case, they were tied more directly to settler colonization, land loss, and the weakening of pastoral nomadism.

The central argument of this chapter is that sedentarization was not merely a result in both empires, but also an administrative ideal and a strategic practice of enclosure. In the Ottoman Empire, this took the form of an effort to integrate tribes into the central bond of citizenship under the principle of “being part of the Tanzimat”, while in Russia, it took the form of a technocratic regime of dispossession operating through scientific statistics and the concept of “surplus land”. Both examples reflect the modern state’s desire to make society more governable. For this reason, settlement policies should be interpreted as an effort to transform mobile communities into elements of modern empires that are more easily identifiable, trackable, and controllable.

This common ground demonstrates strong similarities between the policies implemented by the two empires. However, it is also necessary to note that similar goals were not always pursued through the same tools, with the same intensity, or using the same political language. Therefore, the following discussion examines Ottoman and Russian sedentarization policies in a comparative manner through the lenses of ideology, administrative techniques, land regimes, intermediary actors, and forms of resistance.

4.2 Ideology and Discourse: The Boundaries of Civilization

In the second half of the 19th century, both empires viewed nomadism as a structural threat to the rational and civilized order of the modern state. Ottoman bureaucrats frequently described nomads as living in a “state of savagery and barbarism,” that is, as elements stuck at the most primitive stage of humanity²⁴⁶. Russian elites, on the other hand, viewed Kazakh nomadism as an “anachronism” and a symbol of inefficiency in the face of modernity’s advance²⁴⁷. Within this shared discourse, nomadism has been equated with “savagery,” “ignorance,” and “banditry”²⁴⁸. In contrast, settled life has been presented as the sole legitimate foundation of order and progress. Figures such as Midhat Paşa have insulted nomadism as an “animalistic” way of life²⁴⁹. Russian experts, on the other hand, depicted the Kazakhs’ winter settlements as unsanitary spaces inhabited by “semi-wild people” and viewed them as primitive. Nevertheless, despite the shared emphasis on “civilization,” the ideological frameworks of the two empires did not aim for the same goal. In the Ottoman Empire, the most prominent aim was to assimilate the subjects into the “circle of civilization” and dissolve them within the central sphere of loyalty²⁵⁰. In this sense, Ottoman settlement emerges as a more inclusive integration project aimed at incorporating mobile communities into the “circle of civilization” to transform them into tax-paying and loyal citizens²⁵¹. In the Russian example, however, the “inorodtsy” status established a legal and social distance between the Kazakhs and the Russian subjects, permanently placing them in the category of “backward peoples under guardianship”²⁵². Consequently, in Russian discourse, sedentarization operated within a

²⁴⁶ Dinç, “Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı’nın İskân Politikası,” 413.

²⁴⁷ Campbell, “Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested,” 426.

²⁴⁸ Yavuz, *Fırka-i Islâhiye*, 114.

²⁴⁹ Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*, 114.

²⁵⁰ Dede, “From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia,” 52.

²⁵¹ Dinç, “Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı’nın İskân Politikası,” 413. Yavuz, “Fırka-i Islâhiye Ordusunun Özellikleri ve Faaliyetleri,” 114.

²⁵² Khalid, *Central Asia*, 114.

framework that subordinated the nomad to a colonial hierarchy and legitimized their dispossession through the logic of surplus land²⁵³.

This difference also reveals how each empire viewed the environment. In the Ottoman example, nomadic communities were seen as elements that remained outside the central state but ultimately needed to be integrated into it. In the Russian example, however, a different perspective can be seen. The Russians systematized the Kazakh steppe as a frontier region that needed to be reorganized and placed at the bottom of the colonial hierarchy. Thus, the language of “civilization” exists in both empires. However, this language has led to different practices and ideological perspectives. The most obvious reflection of this is that in Russia, this language was used more explicitly to establish hierarchy and displace populations. Another notable instrumentalized policy tool is the use of religion. In both empires, religion has been one of the most strategic tools of this ideological construction. While settlement of the tribes, the Ottoman State used Sunni Islam as a tool for homogenization; by constructing mosques in new settlement areas, it sought to bind nomads, whose religious awareness was considered weak, to central authority through Sunni Islam²⁵⁴. For this reason, from Ahmed Cevdet Paşa’s perspective, settlement was an inseparable part of the process of Islamization and civilization²⁵⁵. Russia, on the other hand, initially used Kazan Tatar mullahs as intermediaries to discipline the Kazakhs and adapt them to a settled lifestyle through Sunni Islam²⁵⁶. However, by the end of the 19th century, this situation began to change because the agendas of Tatar actors and the Kazakhs were not fully aligned with Russian administration. This shift also triggered fears of Tatarization and Pan-Islamism. Subsequently, the Russian administration began arguing that Sunni and Scriptural Islam should be replaced by a stricter policy of Russification and Orthodox

²⁵³ Teğin, “Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism,” 34. Hofmeister, “Civilization and Russification in Tsarist Central Asia,” 411.

²⁵⁴ Dede, “From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia,” 13.

²⁵⁵ Yavuz, *Fırka-i Islâhiye*, 13.

²⁵⁶ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 106.

missionary work²⁵⁷. Consequently, in the Ottoman example, religion had been attempted to be used as a unifying civilizational cement. However, on the Russian side, religion transformed into a potential risk area that needed to be controlled. This ideological framework did not remain merely at the level of discourse but transformed into a concrete administrative practice through administrative and technical tools. The primary mechanisms enabling sedentarization also emerge at this point.

4.3 Administrative Techniques: Legibility and Taxonomy

One of the most powerful tools the modern state employs to establish dominance in the periphery is its capacity to classify and redefine society. As Fuat Dündar emphasizes, the transition from the Ottoman Empire's tahrir system to modern censuses created a taxonomic empire in which the state reclassified and hierarchically organized society to govern it. In this process, the Ottoman bureaucracy sought to make mobile tribes legible by placing them into categories of taxable households and countable populations. On the Russian side, this quest for legibility turned into a technocratic data-collection regime that reached its peak with the Shcherbina Expedition (1896–1903). Shcherbina's statistical approach classified the nomads' pastoral economy as inefficient and, through mathematical calculation, determined the minimum land required by the nomads, declaring the remaining pastures as surplus²⁵⁸. In this regard, while the Ottoman taxonomy focused on administratively stabilizing the subjects, it can be argued that the Russian taxonomy established dispossession on a scientific foundation²⁵⁹.

Administrative encirclement strategies also clearly highlight the differences in the spatial control methods employed by the two empires. The Fırka-i İslâhiye, deployed by the Ottomans in 1865, was an operation that combined military coercion with the logic of

²⁵⁷ Hofmeister, "Civilization and Russification in Tsarist Central Asia," 427–429. Sabol, *The Touch of Civilization*, 120.

²⁵⁸ Jampeissova, "Imperial Statistical Research in the Kazakh Steppes," 120.

²⁵⁹ Campbell, "Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested," 423–425. Dündar, "Empire of Taxonomy," 136–137, 151.

administrative reform²⁶⁰. The Ottoman method aimed to incorporate nomads into existing administrative units such as districts, sub-districts, and village councils, thereby integrating them into the central civic framework²⁶¹. In contrast, the Russian administration severed the Kazakh steppes from their traditional tribal system and divided them into artificial administrative units called *volost-aul*, which constituted a significant administrative and sociological difference²⁶². As Sabol notes, this rigid territorial division physically restricted the nomads' migration routes. Furthermore, it confined the traditional clan-based identities of Kazakh society within the geographical boundaries drawn by the state²⁶³. The fundamental driving force behind these administrative techniques can be seen in the difference between the “technocratic ideology” defined by Peter Holquist and the Ottoman Empire's more traditional administrative-military logic. The Russian settlement administration sought to train its officials as experts capable of resolving social issues through statistics²⁶⁴. For Russian technocrats, property was not merely a legal matter but also an administrative domain based on scientific data, and this framed the loss of pastures by nomads as a rational necessity²⁶⁵. In the Ottoman Empire, however, settlement was based on a logic driven by more traditional and pragmatic objectives—such as maintaining public order and providing soldiers for the army—rather than an abstract and specialized technocratic language²⁶⁶. In other words, while the focus of administrative techniques in the Ottoman Empire was shaped more toward integration and discipline, in Russia the same process was structured more rigidly through the language of scientific knowledge, measurement, and planning.

²⁶⁰ Halaçoğlu, “Fırka-i Islâhiye ve Yapmış Olduğu İskân,” 2. Yavuz, *Fırka-i Islâhiye*, 11.

²⁶¹ Yavuz, “Fırka-i Islâhiye Ordusunun Özellikleri ve Faaliyetleri,” 118.

²⁶² Kara, “19. Yüzyılda Çarlık Rusya'sının Kazak Jüzlerinde Gerçekleştirdiği İdarî Reformlar ve Neticeleri,” 380.

²⁶³ Sabol, *The Touch of Civilization*, 31.

²⁶⁴ Holquist, ““In Accord with State Interests and the People's Wishes,”” 152–153.

²⁶⁵ Holquist, ““In Accord with State Interests and the People's Wishes,”” 163.

²⁶⁶ Yavuz, *Fırka-i Islâhiye*, 113.

Consequently, it can be argued that Russia sought to reconstruct the steppe within the framework of a scientific colonial project. However, the Ottoman Empire followed a different path by utilizing territorial integration and administrative adaptation to transform tribes into a more legible and obedient subject population under central authority²⁶⁷. Yet this quest for legibility had its most tangible and destructive impact in the realm of land and property.

4.4 Land and Property: Legal Intervention and Economic Transformation

In the modern conception of the state, land is not merely a means of production. Land is also the physical basis upon which administrative control is established. For this reason, both the Ottoman and Russian empires sought to abolish the traditional and collective land-use rights of nomadic peoples. Consequently, both empires made the law one of the primary tools for settling mobile communities. The Ottoman Empire's 1858 Land Code retained ownership of the land (state-owned land) with the state while registering the right of use through individual title deeds, thereby rendering tribal or collective ownership legally invalid²⁶⁸. Similarly, Russia's 1891 Steppe Law declared all Kazakh lands state property, legally reducing nomads to the status of mere temporary "pol'zovanie" (users)²⁶⁹. Both regulations constitute transformative measures that disrupted the traditional property rhythms of nomadic communities. Through this legal imposition, a social and economic transformation was forced upon the nomads.

The Russian administration calculated the minimum land required by nomads for livestock husbandry based on sedentary agricultural standards using scientifically presented statistics and the Shcherbina Expedition (1896–1903) and declared the remaining fertile pastures as "izlishki". This technocratic dispossession regime aimed to transform the steppe

²⁶⁷ Dinç, "Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı'nın İskân Politikası," 414.

²⁶⁸ Dede, "From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia," 33. Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*, 115.

²⁶⁹ Morrison, "Russian Settler Colonialism," 321.

into an agricultural colony for settled Russian peasants²⁷⁰. In the Ottoman example, a similar logic of rationalization is particularly noticeable in the process of draining and opening up swampy areas considered abandoned and idle, such as the Çukurova, for commercial agriculture. The goal here was to transform the nomads' winter camps into settled villages, thereby turning the region into a production center integrated into the global cotton market²⁷¹. This similarity is significant. For both states sought to make the land more agriculturally productive, more measurable, and more formally recorded. However, in both empires, legal intervention produced unexpected and often unforeseen consequences. In Anatolia, tribal leaders exploited the law to their advantage, registering vast tracts of land in their own names and transforming into settled landlords²⁷². In Kazakhstan, however, the 1906 Stolypin reforms dismantled the collective structure in a much harsher manner, transforming a portion of the Kazakhs into a landless working class (zhataq) on their own lands²⁷³. Thus, in both states, the law was used to restrict nomadism; however, in the Ottoman Empire, this process often created space for local elites to gain power. In the Russian example, it took on a different dimension through dispossession and the influx of settler-colonialists into the steppe.

When viewed in terms of internal colonization practices, the difference between the two empires becomes much more pronounced. As Willard Sunderland notes, Russia pursued a settler-colonial policy aimed at Russification of the Kazakh steppes through Slavic peasants and the demographic transformation of the region²⁷⁴. The Russian administration, adopting an ideological, paternalistic, and racist approach, viewed and supported the Russian peasant as an element bringing civilization to the steppe²⁷⁵. In contrast, as Metin Heper also demonstrates, in

²⁷⁰ Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, 126.

²⁷¹ Yavuz, *Fırka-i Islâhiye*, 126.

²⁷² Dinç, "Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı'nın İskân Politikası," 419.

²⁷³ Teğin, "Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism," 48. Kara, "19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler," 62.

²⁷⁴ Sunderland, "The 'Colonization Question,'" 212.

²⁷⁵ Sunderland, "The 'Colonization Question,'" 224.

the Ottoman example, centralization aimed not at replacing the local population with new settlers from outside, but rather at integrating and reforming the existing subjects—tribes and their leaders—into the central bureaucracy and the bond of citizenship²⁷⁶. In other words, while colonization in Russia proceeded by expelling foreigners from the land, sedentarization in the Ottoman Empire was planned as an effort to transform the local environment into a more obedient component of central authority²⁷⁷. However, this process operated not only through central state institutions but also via local intermediaries. To understand the actual form of settlement in the field, it is necessary to separately examine and analyze how these intermediary actors were transformed.

4.5 Intermediary Actors: Between Consensus and Domination

The efforts of modern empires to extend their influence over nomadic communities living on the periphery have also brought about the transformation of local intermediaries who serve as bridges between the center and nomadic societies. In the Ottoman example, this process operated through the balance of coercion and mediation conceptualized by Yonca Köksal. Rather than completely eliminating tribal leaders, the Ottoman bureaucracy preferred to integrate them into the state hierarchy by rewarding them with ranks, salaries, and titles²⁷⁸. The appointment of Kozanoğlu Ahmet Ağa to Kütahya with the rank of “Paşa” during the Fırka-i İslâhiye operation, or the assignment of official posts such as the governorship of Gülanber to the leaders of the Caf tribe, are typical examples of making local authority dependent on central authority²⁷⁹. As Janet Klein emphasizes, particularly with the Hamidiye Regiments project, tribal leaders were transformed into a military aristocracy directly loyal to the Sultan himself. Thus, the state sought to establish administrative control in non-state spheres and the

²⁷⁶ Heper, “Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire,” 83–85.

²⁷⁷ Heper, “Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire,” 95.

²⁷⁸ Köksal, “Coercion and Mediation,” 469, 478.

²⁷⁹ Dinç, “Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı’nın İskân Politikası,” 415–417.

periphery²⁸⁰. In the Russian example, however, the role of intermediaries evolved into a colonial process of “guardianship and disempowerment” rather than a consensual integration. The Russian administration initially utilized Kazan Tatar mullahs and merchants to civilize the steppe and integrate the Kazakhs into Russian subjects. However, beginning in the mid-19th century, it began to exclude these intermediaries out of fear of “Tatarization”²⁸¹. The powers of the “Ak Suyek” sultans, the Kazakh aristocracy, began to be eroded with the 1822 Speransky Reforms, and the khanate institution was completely abolished²⁸². The Russian model redefined traditional leaders not as part of or partners with the state, but as lower-level executive officials who were directly subordinate to Russian officers, elected but with limited authority²⁸³. This situation symbolizes the transformation of local authority from a source of social legitimacy into a bureaucratic mechanism²⁸⁴.

This structural transformation of intermediaries was complemented by the individualization of the tax regime. As analyzed by Yanni Kotsonis, modern tax reforms aimed to sever the individual from collective structures and place them face-to-face with the state²⁸⁵. The cash kibitka tax implemented in Russia starting in 1824 distanced the Kazakhs from the pastoral economy and made them dependent on Russian markets. This economic dependency initially transformed those unable to pay taxes into a settled working class²⁸⁶. In the Ottoman Empire, the household-based registration system established after the Tanzimat reflected an effort to transform the tribe from a collective tax unit into countable individuals²⁸⁷. In this sense,

²⁸⁰ Klein and Akman, *Hamidiye Alayları*, 20, 130.

²⁸¹ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 106–107.

²⁸² Khalid, *Central Asia*, 68. Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 34.

²⁸³ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 51.

²⁸⁴ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 112.

²⁸⁵ Kotsonis, ““Face-to-Face,”” 221.

²⁸⁶ Kara, “19. Yüzyılda ve 20. Yüzyılın Başında Kazak Türklerinde Fakirleşen Kesimler,” 63.

²⁸⁷ Dündar, “Empire of Taxonomy,” 145. Yavuz, *Fırka-i Islâhiye*, 4.

in both empires, taxation was not merely a source of revenue. It is also a regulatory framework that led the state to separate nomads from their tribal bonds²⁸⁸.

Nevertheless, these mechanisms of control were never fully implemented without problems. Local intermediaries sometimes spoke on behalf of the state, while at other times they twisted the state's projects to suit their own interests. More importantly, nomadic communities did not remain entirely passive during this process.

4.6 Response and Resistance: The Limits of the State

In response to the territorial and administrative encirclement imposed by the modern state, nomadic communities have exhibited a range of reactions, from passive obedience to armed rebellion. The first phase of this resistance consists of forms of legal resistance in which the state's own bureaucratic tools are turned against it. In the Kazakh steppes, nomads quickly grasped the Russian bureaucracy's petition and hierarchical approval mechanisms, transforming the complaint strategy into a defensive tool. Particularly during the process of the expropriation of pastures, the Kazakhs ironically used the statistical data from the Shcherbina Expedition as evidence in Russian courts to prove their poverty and their need for land²⁸⁹. A similar culture of petitioning also developed in Ottoman Anatolia. Tribes sought to take advantage of legal options by directly appealing to the Sultan regarding the misconduct of local officials or the unproductiveness of the lands they were settled on²⁹⁰.

In situations where legal processes proved inadequate, forms of everyday resistance, which can be seen as hidden transcript, came into play. The traditional practice of *barymta* (the abduction of livestock for revenge) - criminalized by Russian law as "grabez" (banditry) - has persisted among the Kazakhs as a form of popular justice and a symbol of honor in defiance of

²⁸⁸ Kotsonis, "Face-to-Face," 223.

²⁸⁹ Campbell, "Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested," 430–432.

²⁹⁰ Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*, 87. Yavuz, *Fırka-i Islâhiye*, 115.

colonial justice²⁹¹. In Anatolia, however, tribes either abandoned the towns and villages where they had been settled and retreated to the mountains or continued their seasonal mobility by crossing the borders set by the state in order to maintain the tradition of summer pastures²⁹². Such practical forms of geographical escape have constituted one of the most effective passive forms of civil disobedience, disrupting the state's project of control.

Forms of resistance did not emerge with the same intensity or on the same scale in both regions. In both cases, it is observed that state projects did not achieve complete success. The most severe breaking points in the process, however, were marked by radical uprisings. In the Russian example, decades of accumulated dispossession and forced settlement pressure erupted with the decision to conscript the local population in 1916 and reached its peak with the 1916 Uprising²⁹³. This uprising should be interpreted not merely as opposition to conscription, but as a comprehensive rebellion against the colonial encirclement of the steppe and perhaps as an opportunity for liberation seen by the nomads. In Anatolia, the Kozanoğlu and Afşar uprisings, which emerged in response to the coercive policies of the Fırka-i İslâhiye, were not merely military events but also expressions of cultural resistance²⁹⁴. This resistance gained strength through a discourse symbolized by the folk poet Dadaloğlu's line, "The sultan's decree is his, but the mountains are ours," which viewed the state as a rival power and transformed the nomadic way of life into a political identity²⁹⁵. In conclusion, resistance in both empires demonstrated that the power of the modern state was not absolute. Sedentarization policies were constantly distorted by local dynamics, preventing the state from achieving the ideal outcomes and successes envisioned in its conception.

²⁹¹ Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe*, 140, 151–152.

²⁹² Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*, 110. Yavuz, *Fırka-i İslâhiye*, 67.

²⁹³ Khalid, *Central Asia*, 142–143.

²⁹⁴ Gürer, "The Settlement Policy of the Ottoman Empire," 9. Yavuz, "Fırka-i İslâhiye Ordusunun Özellikleri ve Faaliyetleri," 115.

²⁹⁵ Gökçe, "The Main Reasons of Dadaloğlu's Resistance to the Ottoman State," 286.

4.7 Conclusion to the Fourth Chapter

The settlement policies pursued by the Ottoman and Russian empires at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries left irreversible marks on the social and geographical fabric of Eurasia. The pursuit of “legibility” emphasized by James Scott reshaped traditional structures in both regions to align with the administrative objectives of the modern state. However, this process did not produce the same outcomes in the two empires. In Ottoman Anatolia, the most prominent sociological consequence of settlement was the transformation of the tribal aristocracy into settled landlords. The 1858 Land Code and the Tanzimat reforms aimed to abolish collective tribal ownership, yet tribal leaders exploited this process to their advantage, converting vast tracts of land into their private property. As Martin van Bruinessen also notes, this transformation turned tribal members into the “serfs” of their own leaders and institutionalized a “landlord” system that integrated local power into the state hierarchy²⁹⁶. This situation can be partially viewed as a success of the Ottoman Empire’s centralized integration. However, it must not be forgotten that upon closer examination, this also created a fragmented structure of power and authority where local power centers found a new bargaining ground with the state. Russia’s legacy in the Kazakh steppes, however, is more explicitly founded on colonial dispossession and demographic transformation. The concept of “izlishki,” derived from the technocratic data of the 1891 Steppe Law and the Shcherbina Expedition, paved the way for the opening of Kazakh pastures to over 1.5 million Slavic settlers²⁹⁷. This demographic encirclement reduced some Kazakhs to a minority on their own lands, particularly in regions like Akmolinsk²⁹⁸, and, alongside the collapse of the pastoral economy, led to the emergence of a new class known as “zhataq”. Consequently, in Russia, settlement did not remain limited to the integration of local elites into the system, as in the Ottoman Empire. It produced a legacy

²⁹⁶ Dinç, “Medenileştirme Aracı Olarak Osmanlı’nın İskân Politikası,” 419–421.

²⁹⁷ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 19.

²⁹⁸ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 185.

of “settler colonialism” in which the indigenous population was systematically dispossessed and encircled²⁹⁹. However, the difference between these two examples lies not only in the outcomes but also in the logic of the state. In the Ottoman example, settlement primarily aimed to bind the periphery more tightly to the center and to incorporate existing communities into the system by transforming them. In Russia, however, the same process took a far more radical form through the redistribution of land, the changing of the population balance, and the restructuring of the steppe as a colonial territory. Therefore, while sedentarization in both empires reflected the modern state’s fundamental desire to stabilize, classify, and control, its historical forms and social costs were not the same.

In theoretical terms, the process of sedentarization is not a finished outcome or an absolute state success in both empires. For, as Teğın emphasizes, sedentarization policies constitute a process of “administrative encirclement” that constantly encounters resistance³⁰⁰. Due to factors such as the modern state’s top-down rational plans, local resistance, and the persistence of economic rationality that sometimes continued to favor nomadism. That’s why sedentarization was not fully completed during this period. As seen in the example of the Rışvan in Anatolia, the settlement process spanned decades, and nomadic cultural memory persisted into the Republican era³⁰¹. Consequently, the sedentarization policies implemented by the Ottoman and Russian Empires in the Eurasian steppes during the late 19th and early 20th centuries did not achieve a final success or outcome in which mobility was entirely eliminated. However, this process can be interpreted as the historical reflection of the long-standing tension between the modern state’s desire to stabilize the population and the social flexibility of nomadic societies.

²⁹⁹ Morrison, “Russian Settler Colonialism,” 313.

³⁰⁰ Teğın, “Disruption of Pastoral Nomadism,” 49.

³⁰¹ Dede, “From Nomadism to Sedentary Life in Central Anatolia,” 70, 95.

5. Chapter V: Conclusion

This study examines the sedentarization policies of the Ottoman and Russian empires toward nomadic and semi-nomadic communities during the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century within a comparative framework. The findings indicate that in both empires, settlement was not limited to the establishment of a sedentary lifestyle for the population. On the contrary, the policies implemented were part of a broader administrative transformation aimed at increasing the modern state's control over the provinces.

The comparison developed in this thesis is based on both similarity and difference. In both cases, the state tried to restrict mobility, register the population, reorganize land, and extend central authority. Yet these similar tools did not produce the same political meaning. Ottoman policies were directed mainly toward the incorporation of mobile Muslim communities into the imperial core, while Russian policies in the Kazakh steppe were more closely tied to settler colonization and the marginalization of the indigenous population.

In both cases, nomadism was viewed and assessed as a structure incompatible with the state's fundamental functions. The inability to register the population, the failure to consistently enforce tax and military obligations, and the limited reach of central authority in the provinces turned nomadic communities into a direct administrative problem. Consequently, settlement policies emerged as tools aimed at restricting mobility, transforming the population into a definable and controllable structure, and strengthening central authority. In this sense, settlement policies were a concrete reflection of the modern state's efforts to make society more comprehensible in both empires.

However, both the means and the outcomes of the policies implemented in the two empires differed significantly. In the Ottoman example, sedentarization policies developed largely toward integrating the existing population into the established order and strengthening the ties between the periphery and the central administration. Initiatives such as the *Fırka-i*

İslâhiye combined military intervention with administrative reorganization, while the mechanisms of negotiation and compromise established with local actors demonstrate that these were an inseparable part of the process. In this context, Ottoman settlement policies, while containing coercive elements, can be assessed as an integration process based on the inclusion and transformation of local powers into the system. In the Russian example, however, settlement policies were much more explicitly intertwined with colonization, the reorganization of the land regime, and the expansion of the settlers into the Kazakh steppe. Legal regulations implemented in the Kazakh steppes, interventions based on statistical data production, and the concept of “surplus land” have fundamentally transformed the relationship between nomadic communities and the land. This process did not limit mobility alone. It also led to the economic and spatial marginalization of the local population and paved the way for settler colonization. Consequently, in the Russian context, settlement is characterized more explicitly by processes of land redistribution and encirclement rather than integration.

This comparison demonstrates how similar administrative objectives in both empires resulted in different outcomes within distinct historical and institutional contexts. In the Ottoman example, settlement often paved the way for the strengthening of local elites and the emergence of a new social order. In the Russian example, the same process led to widespread land loss, economic disintegration, and demographic transformation for the Kazakh people. Consequently, the outcomes of settlement policies cannot be considered as symmetrical; on the contrary, the processes evolved in different directions in each empire. Furthermore, both examples clearly demonstrate that settlement policies were not one-dimensional or fully realized processes. In both Ottoman Anatolia and the Kazakh steppes, nomadic communities responded to these policies in diverse ways. In this context, they developed strategies of resistance, adaptation, and negotiation. The role played by local actors in this process reveals that settlement policies did not function as planned on the ground and that the tension between

the state's objectives and social reality was constantly recreated. This situation indicates that settlement policies should be evaluated not as a fixed outcome, but as an open-ended process shaped by various actors and dynamics and defined by its implementation.

In conclusion, this thesis argues that settlement policies were one of the primary tools of the modern state's efforts to reorganize the periphery, yet this process did not always proceed as planned and produced different outcomes in different contexts. A joint analysis of the Ottoman and Russian examples reveals that the transition from nomadism to sedentary life cannot be explained through a single model and that this process developed in different directions in both empires. Therefore, settlement cannot be viewed merely as an indicator of modernization or as a completed transformation. Rather, this process should be viewed as one of the most visible and complex areas of tension between the modern state and mobile societies.

The findings of this study also offer various perspectives for future studies. First, examining settlement policies not only in terms of their administrative and legal dimensions but also in conjunction with their environmental, economic, and cultural impacts could contribute to a more holistic understanding of these processes. In particular, the tension between the ecological logic of the nomadic economy and the state's understanding of settled production and property is open to comparative examination across different regions. Furthermore, supplementing the Ottoman and Russian examples analyzed at the macro level in this thesis with microhistorical studies will enable more in-depth analyses focused on specific tribes, regions, or local actors. Furthermore, examining the continuity and discontinuities of late Ottoman and Tsarist-era settlement policies alongside those of the early Republican and Soviet periods constitutes an important research area for understanding long-term transformation dynamics. Finally, examining similar policies within the contexts of Iran, China, or other empires could contribute to establishing broader comparative frameworks regarding the relationship between nomadism and the state.

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