



e-ISSN: 2980-2628 | www.jomiss.com.tr

CİLT 2, SAYI 1, Haziran 2024 | VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1, June 2024

## Atıf Bilgisi | Reference Information

Bilgehan Pamuk, "Social Movements and Rebellions in the Ottoman Empire in the Period of Crisis and Change: Erzurum Province 1600-1630", *JOMISS*, C. 2, S. 1, Haziran 2024, s. 36-53.

Makale Türü | Article Type  
Araştırma Makalesi | Research Article

DOI No: 10.29329/jomiss.2024.1039.3

Geliş Tarihi | Received Date  
27 Nisan 2024 | 27 April 2024Kabul Tarihi | Accepted Date  
24 Haziran 2024 | 24 June 2024

## Social Movements and Rebellions in the Ottoman Empire in the Period of Crisis and Change: Erzurum Province 1600-1630

### Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kriz ve Değişim Döneminde Sosyal Hareketler ve İsyanlar: Erzurum Eyaleti 1600-1630

id Bilgehan PAMUK\*

## Özet

16. yüzyılın sonlarına doğru Avrupa'da gerçekleşen gerek zirai ve gerekse sanayi alanındaki gelişmeler, Osmanlı Devleti'nin sosyal-ekonomik yapısını derinden etkilemiştir. Fetihlerin durması, savaşların uzaması, nüfusun artması, tımar sistemi için yeterli arazinin olmaması ve yüksek enflasyon gibi faktörler, yönetimde ve toplumsal yapıda çözümlere yol açmıştır. Bu dönemde yaşanan Celâli isyanları, Osmanlı idaresini uzun yıllar meşgul etmiş, alınan sert tedbirler ve geniş çaplı askerî operasyonlar sonucunda isyan bastırılrsa da, toprak ve vergi sistemindeki bozulmalar, Celâlilerin ve eşkıyanın ortaya çıkmasına ve mevcut yapıda ciddi anlamda çözümlere neden olmuştur. 17. yüzyıl başlarında Osmanlı Devleti'nde yaşanan bunalımlar, stratejik ehemmiyete sahip Erzurum Eyaleti'nde de kendisini önemli ölçüde hissettirmiştir. Sürekli savaş hâli, mali sorunlar ve merkezî otoritenin zayıflaması, Erzurum'da eşkıyalık hadiselerinin artmasına sebep olmuştur. Erzurum'un coğrafi konumu, ticaret yollarının kesişim noktasında olması ve stratejik önemi, bölgenin istikrarı açısından büyük önem taşımaktaydı. Ancak, iç karışıklıkların artmasıyla birlikte, Erzurum Celâlilerin ve eşkıyanın faaliyet sahası hâline gelmiştir. Eşkıyalık, sadece güvenliği tehdit etmekle kalmamış, aynı zamanda sosyal - ekonomik yapıyı da olumsuz etkilemiştir. Erzurum'da asayiş sorununun çözümü için çeşitli adımlar atılmıştır. Devlet, yerel yönetimler ve askerî birimler aracılığıyla Celâli'lere ve eşkıyaya karşı operasyonlar düzenlemiştir. Ancak, bütün bu çabalara rağmen yapılan müdahaleler yetersiz kalmış ve sorunun kökten çözümü sağlanamamıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal Hareketler, Celâliler, Eşkıya, Erzurum, 17. Yüzyıl, Kriz, Asayiş.

## Abstract

By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, agricultural and industrial advancements in Europe had significantly influenced the socio-economic framework of the Ottoman Empire. Factors such as the cessation of conquests, prolongation of wars, an increase in population, a lack of sufficient land for the tımar system, and high inflation have led to the disintegration of the administrative and social structure. Although the rebellions were suppressed by harsh measures and large-scale military operations, the deterioration of the land and tax system led to the emergence of Celâlis and bandits, causing serious disruptions in the existing structure. The upheavals experienced in the Ottoman Empire during the early 17<sup>th</sup> century had notable ramifications in the strategically vital Erzurum province. The persistent state of warfare, financial instabilities, and erosion of central authority all contributed to the surge in banditry incidents within the region. Erzurum's geographical location, situated at the crossroads of major trade routes and bearing significant strategic importance, underscores its pivotal role in maintaining regional stability. However, the exacerbation of internal turmoil precipitated Erzurum's transformation into a focal point for the activities of both Celâlis and bandits. The scourge of banditry not only poses a grave threat to security but also inflicts detrimental effects on the socio-economic fabric of the area. In response to the escalating lawlessness in Erzurum, various measures were undertaken. The state orchestrated targeted operations against Celâlis and bandits through the coordination of local administrations and military units. Despite these concerted efforts, interventions proved inadequate in achieving a lasting resolution to the issue.

**Keywords:** Social Movements, Celâlis, Bandits, Erzurum, 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Crisis, Public Order.

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## Introduction

The agricultural and industrial changes that took place in Europe in the last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century shook the socio-economic order of the Ottoman Empire. Compared to previous periods, factors such as the decline in conquests, prolonged wars, population growth, insufficient land for the *timar* system, and high inflation led to the deterioration of the administrative structure and negatively affected the state administration. These systemic changes became one of the main problems that plagued the Ottoman administration for a long time. Although the *Celâli* rebellions were suppressed as a result of large-scale military operations, the collapse of the land and tax systems led to an increase in banditry and further deterioration of the existing order.<sup>1</sup>

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman Empire lacked the dynamism it had in the previous century. The *timar* system, which was the foundation of the empire, had been irreversibly damaged, and the structural integrity of the state had been seriously affected.<sup>2</sup> In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the fiefdom's *sipahs*, who had resisted the introduction of firearms and modern warfare tactics, were gradually replaced on the battlefields by better-equipped and better-paid soldiers. As these new military forces increased their effectiveness on the battlefield, the traditional fiefdom system weakened, leading to significant changes in the Ottoman military structure.<sup>3</sup>

In order to address the administrative and economic challenges of the Ottoman Empire, the *timar* system was gradually transformed into a system of *iltizam*.<sup>4</sup> This transition was made in order to better meet the financial needs of the state and to increase the efficiency of local administration. The *iltizam* system is a type of tax collection authority granted to individuals for the collection of a specific revenue, usually awarded to the highest bidder. This system has led to the weakening of central authority and the strengthening of local *ayans*, while at the same time restructuring the state's sources of revenue.<sup>5</sup> Certainly, the social and economic hardships caused by the protracted conflicts necessitated the reform of administrative systems in the Ottoman Empire. During this period, the need for new sources of revenue increased to ensure the financial stability of the state and to finance public services. In this context, the *iltizam* system was adopted and expanded as a more flexible model for tax collection and revenue management. This system was based on transferring tax collection rights to private individuals or groups, typically through a competitive bidding process. The *iltizam* system aimed to increase administrative efficiency and revenue collection by relieving the state of the obligation to collect taxes directly and delegating this task to third parties. However, this system also led to the empowerment of local leaders, *ayans*, and the weakening of central authority.<sup>6</sup>

Although the primary systemic changes in the Ottoman Empire aimed to alleviate social and economic problems, they also had some negative consequences that were not accepted by

- 1 Bilgehan Pamuk, *XVII. Yüzyılda Bir Serhad Şehri Erzurum*, IQ Kültür Sanat Yayınevi, İstanbul 2006, p.246.
- 2 Halil İnalçık-Donald Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1994, p.25.
- 3 Yaşar Yücel, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatına Dair Kaynaklar; Kitâb-ı Müstetab, Kitâb-ı Mesâlih-i Müslimin ve Menâfi 'il-Müminin, Hırzû 'l-Mülûk*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 1988, p. XIII.
- 4 Bilgehan Pamuk, "XVII. Asır Başlarında Erzurum ve Havalisinde Eşkıyalık Hareketleri", *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eşkıyalık, Terör ve Ayrıltkçı Hareketler Sempozyumu, 16-18 Mayıs 2008*, Samsun 2009, pp.49-50.
- 5 Ayn Ali Efendi, *Kavânin-i Âl-i Osman der Hülâsa-ı Mezâmin-i Defter-i Divân*, İstanbul 1260; Kâtib Çelebi, *Düsturü'l Amel li- İslahı 'l- Halel*, (By. Ali Can), Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 1982; Hezârfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Telhisü'l-Beyân fi Kavânin-i 'Âl-i Osman*, (By. Sevim İlgürel), Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1998; Sofyalı Ali Çavuş, *Sofyalı Ali Çavuş Kanûnnâmesi*, (By. Midhat Sertoğlu), Marmara Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, İstanbul 1992; Koçi Bey, *Koçi Bey Risalesi*, (By. Yılmaz Kurt), Ecdad Yayın Pazarlama, Ankara 1994; Eyyubî Efendi, *Eyyubî Efendi Kanûnnâmesi*, (By. Abdülkadir Özcan), Eren Yayıncılık, İstanbul 1994.
- 6 Linda Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire 1560-1660*, Brill Press, Leiden 1996, pp.81-82.

society. With the introduction of the *iltizam* system, issues such as privatization, injustice, and corruption in the tax collection process emerged, leading to discontent and social tension among the population. The growing power of local administrators and *ayans* led to the weakening of central authority and some undesirable changes in the state structure. This left deep scars in the Ottoman social structure and affected the long-term stability of the empire.

### Celâlis

The new dynamics of the last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century shook the Ottoman social order to its foundations. In the early years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the *timar* system, which was the foundation of the state, was irreversibly disrupted and damaged.<sup>7</sup> While efforts were being made to adapt to the innovations brought about by the development of firearms and modern warfare tactics, the *Celâli* rebellions emerged in the same period, further complicating the internal order of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>8</sup> These rebellions, which involved individuals from almost all segments of society such as peasants, urbanites, students, and administrators, led to prolonged social unrest and caused deep crises in the financial, political, and social spheres.<sup>9</sup>

The *Celâlis* rebellions, which spread throughout the empire in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, manifested themselves in Erzurum, a city located at the crossroads of Anatolia's north-south and east-west routes. Karayazıcı was the first *Celâli* chief to demonstrate his influence in the region, albeit indirectly. A military force led by Sokulluzade Hasan Pasha was dispatched to confront Karayazıcı, who was operating in Erzurum and its vicinity, and the *Beylerbeyi* of Erzurum, Osman Pasha, also joined the army. Although the *Celâlis* were disbanded as a result of the battle, Osman Pasha was captured by the rebels.<sup>10</sup> After the defeat, the *Celâlis* were divided, and Karayazıcı retreated to the Canik Mountains.

Within the borders of Erzurum province,<sup>11</sup> *Celâli* agitators were active in Erzurum, Erzincan, Bayramlı (Ordu), Kemah, Kelkit, and Ispir.<sup>12</sup> The incident in Bayramlı was also very interesting. *Baba Halid*, the administrator of Bayramlı *Mukataa*, was persecuting the people of the region due to his authority. He had taken it to such an extent that he acted independently and was indifferent to the orders he received. Halid had taken his ruthless behavior to a new level with his individual actions. He took advantage of the vacuum of authority and collaborated with the *Celâlis* and arrived in Bayramlı with approximately two hundred *Celâli*, he did not hesitate to attack *Kadi Abdünnebi*, who symbolized the state's authority. Halid, along with his sons Mehmet and Süleyman, and his son-in-law *Karamanî* Ali, had committed atrocities that were unbearable. Although the tyrants failed to eliminate Abdurrahman, who had previously served as a *kadi*, they unjustly killed his father, Hüssam Efendi. While the state was struggling with the difficulties caused by the wars with the Austrian and Safavid states, it also had to deal with the *Celâlis*. The *Beylerbeyi* of Erzurum was ordered to arrest Halid and his followers, who were terrorizing Ordu and its surroundings with the *Celâli* band.<sup>13</sup>

7 İnalçık - Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, p.60.

8 Karen Barkey, *Eşküyalar ve Devlet Osmanlı Tarzı Devlet Merkezileşmesi*, (By Trans. Zeynep Altiok), Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 1999, p.71-72.

9 Orhan Türkoğlu, "Sosyal Hareketler Olarak Celâli Ayaklanmaları", *Belleten*, C. LX, S. 288, 1996, pp.421-429.

10 BOA. *Kâmil Kepeci Ahkâm* (bundan sonra KKA.) 70, p.332; Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı Tarihine Ait Belgeler Telhisler (1579-1607)*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, İstanbul 1970, pp.22-23; Topçular Kâtibi Abdulkadir (Kadrî) Efendi, *Topçular Kâtibi Abdulkadir (Kadrî) Efendi Tarihi*, C. I, (By. Ziya Yılmaz), Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 2003, pp.324-325.

11 Erzurum province consisted of the following districts: Paşa (Erzurum), Karahisarı Şarki (Şebinkarahisar), Tortum, Mamervan (Narman), Kiğı, Pasin, Hınıs, Malazgird, Tekman, İspir, Micinkerd and Kız-ucan., Ayn Âli Efendi, *Kavânin-i Âl-i Osman der Hulâsa-ı Mezâmin-i Defter-i Divân*, pp.23,52.

12 BOA. KKA. 70, pp.218,586,603,611.

13 BOA. KKA. 70, p.586.

In Erzincan, Kemah, and Kelkit, the *Celâlis* caused serious problems. In response to mounting from the *Celâlis*, the *kadis* of the *Kaza* region collectively petitioned the government to promptly address the issue. The *Celâlis* did not discriminate in the region and occasionally harassed members of the military class. In Erzincan, people were forced to emigrate en masse due to the persecution by the *Celâlis*. After the government sent an inspector to assess the situation in response to the increasing pressure from the *Celâlis* in the region, the authorities were instructed to apprehend the *Celâlis* and reinstate order.<sup>14</sup>

The *Celâlis*, who generally preferred steep and inaccessible places, often made mutually beneficial arrangements with the local residents to meet their needs, even resorting to illegitimate means for survival. Those who served the *Celâlis* were under their protection, and in return, the *Celâlis* provided for their needs. Mustafa, a resident of Erzincan, was one of these collaborators. Under the protection of the *Celâlis*, Mustafa behaved recklessly and became a significant problem for the local population. Unable to tolerate the situation any longer, the local residents took action to capture Mustafa. When they failed to apprehend him, they turned their attention to his wife instead. Faced with these developments, Mustafa sought revenge and became even more aggressive. He promised the *Celâlis* horseshoes, breastplates, and camels in exchange for avenging his wife.<sup>15</sup>

The fact that the problems they encountered in social life were not resolved fairly led people to seek alternative solutions. Those who accepted any means as legitimate in the struggle for power often caused serious problems with their practices. Ambitious bureaucrats seeking positions in the administration led to the victimization of civil servants. Most of the time, appointments made based on favoritism met with reactions. Similarly, irregular appointments in Erzurum allowed some soldiers to join the ranks of the *Celâlis*.<sup>16</sup> As indicated in the archival records, it is mentioned that “some of the *za'im* and *timar* holders who had authority over *zeamets* and *timars* in the Sanjak of Karahisar-ı Şarki had become subjects of the *Celâlis*”, suggesting that they had abandoned their lands and aligned themselves with the *Celâlis*.<sup>17</sup> The abandonment of their lands and subsequent joining of the *Celâlis* by *za'im* and *timar* holders significantly disrupted the transportation of grain from Trabzon port to Erzurum.<sup>18</sup> In response to the incidents, the central government embarked on a search for solutions. Despite adopting an extremely pragmatic approach to eliminate the problem, the measures taken against the *Celâlis* were insufficient due to the lack of resources during this process. The *Celâlis*' oppression and tyranny continued.<sup>19</sup>

In 1608, after *Kuyucu* Murad Pasha defeated *Canboladoğlu* Ali, one of the powerful *Celâli* leaders, they were left without their former power. In this situation, the Safavid Sultan Shah Abbas welcomed the *Celâlis*. The Shah, approaching them with great tolerance, tried to provide all kinds of support.<sup>20</sup> Until then, the *Celâlis*, who had been an internal issue for the Ottomans, had now become an international problem. The *Celâlis* had used Erzurum and its surrounding region as a transit route while seeking refuge in Iran.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, there were *Celâlis* who did not want to go to the Iranian side. Those who stayed behind and were assisted in their settlements by those who showed them tolerance, in a way, supported them. Despite the clear directive to eliminate the *Celâlis*, who had been causing unrest for many years, it is intriguing the fact that they were protected by both civilian and

14 BOA. KKA. 70, p.603.

15 BOA. KKA. 70, p.611.

16 BOA. KKA. 71, p.23.

17 “Karahisar-ı Şarki Sancağında zeâmet ve timâr tasarruf idenlerin kimi Celâliye tabi' olub”, BOA. Mühimme Defteri (bundan sonra MM.) 78, p.192.

18 BOA. MM. 88, p.28

19 BOA. KKA. 70, p.586,611.

20 Bilgehan Pamuk, “Osmanlı İdaresinde Erzurum (XVI.-XVIII. Yüzyıllar)”, *Erzurum Kültür Eğitim Vakfı Akademi Dergisi*, S. 32, 2007, p.179.

21 Mustafa Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası*, Bilgi Yayınevi, İstanbul 1975, p.458; William Griswold, *Anadolu'da Büyük İsyân 1591-1611*, (By. Trans. Ülkü Tansel), Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 2000, pp.158-164.

military members. Mustafa Agha, the Agha of Volunteers, informed the government that the *Celâlis* were being protected in the city of Erzurum. The government decided that no one should protect the *Celâlis*, considering the possibility that they could cause serious problems again in the future, and that necessary actions should be taken against those who exhibited contrary behavior and attitudes.<sup>22</sup>

The influence of the *Celâlis* in Erzurum and its vicinity did not end abruptly. In 1610, *Celâlis* leaders who did not go to Iran, such as Hakverdi and Isa, were committing acts of aggression by blocking people's transit routes, robbing their goods, and inflicting various tortures. This situation demonstrated their ongoing aggressive and oppressive stance toward society. The *Beylerbeyi* of Erzurum was appointed to definitively eliminate these groups, referred to as remnants of the *Celâlis*. This indicates the state's determination to end the threat posed by the *Celâlis*.<sup>23</sup> *Even though the Celâlis rebels posed less of a threat compared to before, they were still a significant problem. In 1610, they were bold enough to attack the convoy of the governor-general who was being transferred from Erzurum to Diyarbakır. As a result of the attack, a string of mules and goods worth 300.000 akçes belonging to the governor-general were plundered. This incident demonstrates that the Celâlis rebels still posed a serious threat and continued to challenge the authority of the state.*<sup>24</sup>

The *Celâli* disturbances deeply shook the peace in and around Erzurum, as they did throughout Anatolia. The statements "The subjects of Erzurum have been mostly destroyed, scattered due to the *Celâli* lawlessness, the Kizilbash regions, and the extreme oppression" and "... previously, the taxes from the districts of Erzurum, Trabzon, and Georgia were collected annually at the fortunate capital, but for a few years now, due to the *Celâli* dominance, the subjects have been scattered and devastated..." indicate that particularly those residing in rural areas had to migrate to safer regions because of the *Celâlis*. This situation suggests that the *Celâlis* had a profound impact on society not only directly but also indirectly through their effects.<sup>25</sup> When the state, already grappling with an economic crisis, faced the *Celâli* uprising, it naturally struggled even more and had to contend with these difficulties for many years. The state tried to cope with both economic and social challenges simultaneously.<sup>26</sup> The peace established in Anatolia was not fully felt in and around Erzurum, and the local administration continued to struggle with the *Celâlis*. Regional disparities and challenges encountered by local governments have hindered the full realization of overall peace and stability.<sup>27</sup>

### Bandits

Since the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the prevailing conditions have fostered a conducive environment for banditry activities. Prolonged wars escalated the hardships experienced in the country. The available resources and manpower were exhausted to their limits. The Ottomans, while fighting the enemy on the front lines, also had to contend with bandits. Although local forces were dispatched to eliminate the bandits, they were insufficient in preventing bandit attacks. The brigands, without discrimination, targeted both commercial caravans and religious pilgrim groups, stopping everyone, plundering their goods, and committing massacres. The situation clearly demonstrates the severity of the socio-economic conditions of the period and the challenges faced by the state.<sup>28</sup> Economic inadequacies and the weakening of central authority led to the emergence of banditry in various regions of the empire, including the Erzurum province. Particularly, Erzurum and its surroundings, with their rugged and mountainous terrain located on the route of transit trade caravans, were quite attractive to brigands. This situation indicates that the socio-economic conditions and geographical features of the period played a significant role in the spread of banditry.<sup>29</sup>

22 BOA. KKA. 71, p.9.

23 BOA. MM. 79, p.184.

24 BOA. MM. 79, p.421.

25 BOA. Maliyeden Müdevver Defter (after that MAD.) 3260, p.120; BOA. MAD. 5568, p.204; BOA. MAD. 3260, p.120; BOA. MAD. 5568, p.204.

26 Mücteba İlgürel, "Celâli İsyânları", *Türkiye Diyânet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (after that DİA.), C. VII, pp.253-254.

27 BOA. MM. 79, pp.184, 421; BOA. KKA. 71, p.325; BOA. MAD. 3260, p.120; BOA. MAD. 5568, p.204.

28 BOA. MM. 98, pp.46-48,90,125.

29 Akdağ, *Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası*, p.434.

Banditry emerged as a phenomenon when the state authority weakened due to various internal and external factors, and economic and social difficulties reached unbearable levels. The gaps in authority that underlie banditry also became a source of injustice and oppression. This situation has led to instability and unrest in society due to the weakening of the state and social injustices. In 1601, Vizier Mahmud Pasha appointed his man Murad to collect the *zeamet* revenues in Erzincan. However, Murad, who was responsible for collecting the Pasha's goods, took advantage of the situation, stole the *zeamet* revenues, and joined the bandits.<sup>30</sup> In 1602, the newly appointed governor of Erzurum, Derviş Pasha, had previously sent the tax collector Behram to carry out the necessary procedures. Behram, who arrived in Erzurum on May 30<sup>th</sup>, completed the necessary procedures and then sought to take control of the revenues allocated to Derviş Pasha. However, he encountered an unexpected reaction. The former tax collector, along with the thugs he had assembled, exhibited a bold attitude towards Behram. He claimed that the order Behram held was fake. Subsequently, seizing the revenues Behram had collected, he had him imprisoned. The central administration displayed a strong reaction against urban banditry and attempted to address the victimization.<sup>31</sup>

The nomadic *Beni Tarik* community in and around Erzurum suffered an attack by bandits. Bandit Mustafa and his men not only plundered the tribe's possessions, provisions, and flocks but also murdered eight individuals. This event highlights the severity of banditry and the lawlessness that affected many people during that period.<sup>32</sup> In 1616, some nomadic groups, such as the *Babalu* Community of the Ulus tribe, settled forcibly in the Kuruçay district<sup>33</sup>, even though their pastures were not legally recognized. These nomadic groups did not hesitate to damage the agricultural lands of the settled population and even resorted to unwarranted violence.<sup>34</sup> The social and economic conditions of the period had a significant impact on various segments of society, sometimes driving them towards banditry. The hardships and injustices faced by various communities often drive individuals to resort to desperate measures as a means of survival or resistance against the prevailing system.

In 1604, Mehmed, the brother of Ispir's governor and also the district's steward, caused more public order issues than the *Celâlis*. Mehmed and his men plundered the people's property and forcibly detained many. Emboldened by his tyranny, Mehmed planned to murder the castle guards and seize the ammunition. When his plan was discovered, the local people and castle guards acted together to eliminate the bandit threat. Mehmed's steward, Piri, was caught looting the treasury in the castle. A notable point was the attitude of the governor of Ispir. Governor Zekeriya *Bey* defended his brother, claiming that an injustice was done to him. However, this claim was found to be baseless, and the bandit group was arrested.<sup>35</sup>

In 1609, there was a significant problem with banditry in the Kiğı district. While Ali Bey was the governor, a bandit named *Kara Omar* claimed, "This place was given to me by Nasuh Pasha." *Kara Omar* and his men raided Ali Bey's house, plundering everything of value. In Kiğı, the state authority had almost completely collapsed. The public order problem had reached a level that even disturbed the surrounding districts. The *Kadis* of Sağman and Çapakçur appealed to the imperial council for a solution. The Kiğı district had truly turned into a den of bandits. Led by Kasım, Bekir, and *Erzincanlı* Mehmed, the bandits forcibly entered people's homes to plunder their possessions. They had even seized the inheritance of Yadigâr, the deceased son of Governor Ali *Bey*. This situation

30 BOA. KKA. 70, p.604.

31 BOA. KKA. 70, p.384.

32 BOA. KKA. 70, p.411.

33 Following its incorporation into the Ottoman administration, Kuruçay, which was initially a "nahiye" (sub-district) under the Kemah district, was elevated to the status of a "kaza" (district) in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Tahir Sezen, *Osmanlı Yer Adları*, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları, Ankara 2017, p.497.

34 BOA. MM. 81, p.48.

35 BOA. KKA. 70, p.218.

underscores the extent of lawlessness and the dire state of governance in the region.<sup>36</sup> The border area of Georgia, such as Kiğı, was one of the regions with the lowest security due to bandit activities. The public order issue in the villages connected to the Ahışa and Ardahan districts has reached very serious levels. Due to the bandit attacks, the residents of these villages were compelled to migrate in large numbers out of fear for their lives and the safety of their property. This mass migration underscores the severity of the banditry problem and its impact on the local population, leading to significant demographic changes and social disruption.<sup>37</sup>

In 1610, an incident of effective remorse occurred in the Yağmur Deresi district. The bandit Kuli, regretting his actions, was pardoned after the necessary procedures were carried out. During his time as a bandit, Kuli returned the goods he had taken by force and even personally shepherded 1.800 sheep to deliver to the army in Bayburt. However, there were those who did not forget Kuli's past deeds. Residents of the Yağmur Deresi district and the villages of Bayburt district organized a raid on Kuli's house, plundering his animals and valuables. In this case, Kuli became the victim of those he had previously victimized. Ultimately, the government decided to address the grievances of the former bandit, Kuli.<sup>38</sup>

During the years 1613-1614, bandits exploited every opportunity in the districts of Erzurum, Tortum, Karahisar Şarki, and Pertekrek (Yusuf-ili). In the district of Erzurum, a notorious bandit inflicted cruelties on the people that were beyond endurance.<sup>39</sup> In 1613, the residents of Karahisar Şarki were tired of bandit attacks. A group of bandits led by individuals named Kurdoğlu Hüseyin, Hasan, Ahmed, Halil, Süleyman, and İsmail were tormenting the locals. As their activities reached a peak, orders were given to capture and chain the bandits for transportation to Istanbul.<sup>40</sup> In 1614, bandits in the Pertekrek district attacked the people and plundered their goods. During times of war and political crisis, when authority could not be fully enforced, these were the most opportune moments for bandits. As Türkdoğan also pointed out, the loss of central authority's power allowed new power centers to emerge.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, this situation illustrates the social and political dynamics of the era and the environment in which banditry flourished. The weakening of central authority, economic hardships, and the exploitation of political turmoil created conditions conducive to the rise of banditry, impacting the stability and security of the region. It's a reflection of how societal and political instability can lead to the emergence and spread of lawlessness.

### Public Officials

The people living in and around Erzurum not only faced problems with the *Celâlis* and bandits but also occasionally with public officials. Local administrators tended to use their powers for their own interests when central authority loosened. Indeed, the attitude of the Erzurum governors towards the people, although not as severe as that of the bandits, had caused social unrest. The sub-governors and their subordinates, who served under the governors, made unjust demands on behalf of the governor from the rural population. The people had suffered serious grievances due to unlawful demands.<sup>42</sup>

In 1603, when Alacaatlı Hasan Pasha was newly appointed as the governor of Erzurum, he dispatched his relative, Mustafa Çavuş, to serve as the tax collector. Arriving with a large group of soldiers, Mustafa Çavuş committed various injustices in the city. Unable to endure these events any longer, the people revolted, stormed the tax collector's house, and expelled him from the city. Meanwhile, upon arriving in Erzurum, Hasan Pasha also encountered resistance from the local

36 BOA. MM. 78, p.796.

37 BOA. MM. 79, p.178.

38 BOA. MM. 79, p.421.

39 BOA. KKA. 71, p.311.

40 BOA. KKA. 71, p.325.

41 Türkdoğan, "Celâlî Ayaklanmaları", p.437.

42 Halil İnalçık, "Adalatnâmeler", *Osmanlı'da Devlet, Hukuk, Adalet*, Eren Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2000, pp.78-79.

population. Despite agreeing to cover all of Hasan Pasha's expenses, the people never consented to his entry into the city. Consequently, the central government resolved the issue by reassigning Hasan Pasha to Şirvan.<sup>43</sup>

The governors sometimes used their authority to make illegitimate demands. For example, in 1609, a resident of Erzurum city, Seyyid Hüseyin, suffered grievances due to the treatment by the governor. Although Hüseyin's residence was exempt from the extraordinary tax, the governor's men forcibly entered his home, insulted him, and included his house in the tax account. The governor was warned about the grievances experienced by Hüseyin.<sup>44</sup> Also, Ispir district was assigned to the governor of Çıldır as a source of barley.<sup>45</sup> But Hasan, the governor of Erzurum, claimed that this district was under his jurisdiction and sent his men there. They demanded goods such as oil, honey, barley, straw, sheep, chickens and cattle in the name of the governor. This situation caused great distress to the people. Upon being informed of the situation, the central government kindly requested that the governor refrain from interfering with the Ispir district in any way, and not levy any taxes. They also advised him that if he had any needs, he should purchase them by paying their price.<sup>46</sup>

It is clear that the events of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, due to the demands of the governors, had an unfortunate impact on the already struggling populace, placing them in an even more precarious position. It is also evident that the additional burdens imposed by the governors exacerbated the difficulties faced by the people, reflecting the broader socio-political challenges of the time.<sup>47</sup> In 1610, the Governor of Erzurum, Zülfikar Pasha, had sent his men to make various requests of the rural population. The *subaşı*, under the names of "devr" and "selamlık," would impose levies on villages, requesting not only cash but also food, animals, and clothing. In some instances, they would even request that the villagers work against their will.<sup>48</sup> Despite repeated warnings, Zülfikar Pasha collected taxes from the people of the Kemah and Kelkit districts under various names, including *subaşı*, *hidmet*, *monthly*, and *selamiye*. This act of unauthorized tax collection was part of the broader historical context of his time.<sup>49</sup>

In 1615, the inhabitants of the *kaza* of Canca, who were exempt from taxation due to their mining services, were also approached with offers that may have been perceived as illegal by some. The *beylerbey's subaşı* and voivode collected money under the name of *selamlık* and transferred funds from Canca, which had been exempt from taxation for a long time.<sup>50</sup> It would be fair to say that the *Beylerbeys* were not afraid to take a stand on occasion, even intervening in the foundation lands. In 1618, Mehmed Pasha sent his representative to the land where he had his foundation in the Pertekrek and Livane (Artvin) districts, where he made some requests that could be considered to be outside the scope of the original agreement.<sup>51</sup> In response to the widespread problem across the country, justice decrees, known as *adaletnâmes*, were sent to the provinces in an attempt to prevent illegal tax demands.<sup>52</sup> Despite the best efforts of all involved, there were still instances where the tax policies of the Ottoman Empire were not fully respected. This statement reflects the challenges encountered by the Empire in enforcing its tax policies and ensuring compliance with legal standards.<sup>53</sup>

43 Akdağ, *Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası*, pp.432–433.

44 BOA. MM. 78, p.441.

45 In the Ottoman Empire, the term used for the income allocated to state officials as a salary during their service, and as a form of pension after their retirement, is a source of barley (arpalık), Cahit Baltacı, "Arpalık", *DİA*, C. III, p.392.

46 BOA. MM. 78, p.667.

47 BOA. MM. 79, p.111,605.

48 BOA. MM. 79, p.111.

49 BOA. MM. 79, p.605.

50 BOA. KKA. 81, p.62.

51 BOA. KKA. 71, p.622.

52 Pamuk, *XVII. Yüzyılda Bir Serhad Şehri Erzurum*, IQ Kültür Sanat Yayınevi, p.253.

53 BOA. MM. 79, p.109; BOA. MM. 89, p.54; BOA. MM. 100, p.109.



The abuse of power by public officials to obtain income through illegitimate means is a significant problem identified in the cases examined. Even after retirement, death, or resignation, some officials have been found to continue receiving salaries from the state treasury as if they were still on active duty. Naturally, this situation causes serious damage to the treasury and, consequently, to the financial structure of the state. In institutions of critical importance such as the Erzurum treasury, it has been determined that individuals without proper authority have been employed. Positions such as treasurer, tax collector, registrar, and accountant have been filled by individuals lacking the necessary qualifications and merit. The government, recognizing the growing trend of issues, has dispatched competent and effective inspectors to the region to address the problems on-site. The central government has announced the deployment of inspector judges to address the issue.<sup>54</sup> It is evident that the administrative gaps have created opportunities for even local officials to commit abuses. This situation underscores the significance of robust governance structures and oversight mechanisms to prevent misconduct and ensure that public servants adhere to legal and ethical standards. The presence of such gaps can lead to a lack of accountability and transparency, which are fundamental to maintaining public trust and the effective functioning of government institutions. Addressing these gaps is crucial for the integrity of administrative systems and for safeguarding the public interest.

It has been observed that the public has experienced significant grievances due to bullying by public officials. During her journey from Georgia to Istanbul, Eleni, Simon's daughter, was harassed by official personnel. Following the unfortunate incident between Erzurum and Çıldır, the government instructed the relevant authorities to allow Eleni and the accompanying Aznavurs to continue their journey freely and to take the necessary measures in this regard.<sup>55</sup> The former castle warden of İspir, Mustafa, displayed authoritarian and arbitrary behaviors that revealed a lack of authority. Not only did he engage in banditry himself, but he also gathered bandits around him. He consolidated his power to such an extent that he obstructed officials who came to Ispir to collect the jizya tax, taking over the tax collection process himself. Claiming that Ispir was under his control, he conducted tax collection through his own men. Mustafa's actions negatively affected not only the public but also the holders of *timar* and *zeamet*. By seizing the revenues of lands that had been managed as private estates for over a decade, he also plundered the people's property. Mustafa's boldest move was his alliance with the *Celâlis*. Within this collaboration, he sent the gunpowder and weapons from Ispir Castle to the *Celâlis* through his man, *Kara Mehmed*. This caused significant unrest and confusion in Ispir. Following a decision against him, Mustafa was captured but escaped with 100.000 *akçes*.<sup>56</sup> In 1613, the *sanjakbey* of Tortum made illegal proposals to the rural population, clearly demonstrating the arbitrariness and injustice in the administration. Through his men, he demanded various illegitimate payments and services from the citizens, especially those in rural areas. This situation clearly reveals the administrative deficiencies and challenges faced by the people at that time.<sup>57</sup>

In the early years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there were growing concerns about the conduct of the Janissaries, especially in rural areas and city centers. The presence of the Janissaries exacerbated the challenges in resolving disputes between the nomadic people of the Erzurum *Beylerbeyi* and the settled population. During periods of public disorder, recently deployed military units often sought refuge in what they perceived as secure locations, which occasionally led to tensions with the local population. The Janissaries constructed their residences in front of or on top of the homes of the locals, causing distress. This led the aggrieved citizens to take the matter to the *Divanı Hümayun*, where deliberations resulted in decisions prohibiting the construction of structures in front of or on top of people's homes and forbidding the oppression of the populace.<sup>58</sup> It would appear that at times, the concerns of military personnel have reached a level of intensity that could be perceived as intimidation. There have been instances where the Ahiska guardian have engaged in discussions with the Erzurum *defterdari* regarding salary disbursements.<sup>59</sup>

54 BOA. KKA. 70, p.663.

55 BOA. KKA. 70, p.332.

56 BOA. MM. 78, p.229.

57 BOA. KKA. 71, p.411.

58 BOA. KKA. 71, p.336.

59 BOA. KKA. 70, p.663.

A group of Janissaries in the Tortum sanjak had become a source of concern for the villages designated as *timar* and *zeamet*. The involvement of Janissaries between the villagers and the *sipahis* had the potential to create some difficulties.<sup>60</sup> In Erzincan, Janissaries named Cafer, Pervane, Osman, Hüseyin, and Nasuh are reported to have oppressed the city's inhabitants, plundered travelers' goods, and committed acts of violence against people.<sup>61</sup> In the Pertekrek sanjak, the fact that bandits sold some of the goods they forcibly took from the people to the Janissaries, and that the Janissaries sometimes turned a blind eye to this, is indicative of the military units' attitude towards the local population at that time.<sup>62</sup> The reckless interventions by the Janissaries sometimes escalated to such serious levels that they jeopardized the governance and financial stability of the state. Taking advantage of the current situation, this group seized control of the *mukataas*, which were crucial sources of revenue for the state. Such actions, which directly harm the state treasury, necessitated immediate intervention by the government.<sup>63</sup> The actions of the Janissaries over time clearly reveal the indiscipline within the administrative structure and the gaps in authority. This situation underscores the challenges of maintaining order and enforcing discipline within the ranks of the Janissaries, who had significant influence and autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. The government's efforts to address these issues were crucial for the stability and effectiveness of the state's administration.

In Erzurum, the social unrest caused by unruly military groups such as *levents*, *saricas*, and *sekbans* highlights the security and administrative issues of the period. These groups attacked civilians for reasons such as pilgrimage, trade, or other motives, plundered their goods, and subjected them to various forms of mistreatment. This situation highlights the challenges faced by the Ottoman Empire in maintaining order and enforcing discipline, especially with regard to semi-regular troops or irregular forces.<sup>64</sup> It would be remiss of me not to mention the *saricas* and *sekbans*, who played a significant role during the rebellion of Abaza Mehmed Pasha between 1622 and 1628. The competition between the *sekbans* and janissary groups escalated into real conflicts during this rebellion. These events serve as concrete examples of military indiscipline and deficiencies in ensuring public safety at that time.

### Measures

Since the foundation of the Ottoman Empire, it has been a long-established tradition to appoint a *kadi* as the representative of the law and a *soubashi* as the representative of the administration in the conquered regions.<sup>65</sup> This administrative structure involved the dispatch of a judge to represent judicial authority, accompanied by a *beylerbeyi* or *sancakbeyi* to represent executive authority, to regions at the level of *kazâ* or *vilâyet*.<sup>66</sup> This system allowed the central authority to be effectively represented at the local level and established a balance between administration and judiciary.

In the Ottoman administration, the judge, who was assigned matters related to "the order of the country, and the protection and guardianship of the subjects and their well-being,"<sup>67</sup> served as the representative of state authority. Meanwhile, the *beylerbeyi*, responsible for "the control and binding of the country, and the protection and guardianship of the people and subjects,"<sup>68</sup> took on the responsibility of ensuring the security of the people<sup>69</sup>. While fulfilling the duty of "preventing

60 BOA. MM. 80, p.76.

61 BOA. MM. 80, p.80.

62 BOA. Bâb-ı Âsafî Mühimme Defteri (after that A. DVN. MHM) 940, p.60.

63 BOA. KKA. 70, p.332.

64 BOA. MM. 102, p.88; BOA. MM. 110, p.547; BOA. MM. 98, p.140.

65 İlber Ortaylı, "Kadı(Osmanlı Devleti'nde Kadı), DİA., C. XXIV, p.69.

66 Mustafa Akdağ, "Osmanlı Müesseseleri Hakkında Notlar", *Dil, Tarih ve Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, C. XIII, S. 1-2, 1955, p.48.

67 "nizâm-ı memleket ve hıfz ve hurâset ve haraset-i râiyyet ve siyânete müteallik umur", BOA. KKA. 70, p.143.

68 "zâbt u râbt-ı memleket ve himâyet ve siyânet-i kul ve râiyyet", BOA. MM. 79, p.605.

69 BOA. KKA. 71, p.292; BOA. MM. 78, p.281.

and lifting oppression and injustice from the subjects and citizens,”<sup>70</sup> the *beylerbeyi* was obligated to prevent all kinds of injustice and maintain peace. Therefore, the security measures and precautions against the *Celâli* and bandit threats in and around Erzurum were the responsibility of the *beylerbeyi*.<sup>71</sup>

It is clear that the Ottoman administration employed the Janissaries with the intention of increasing its influence in the provinces and ensuring security. Initially, the Janissaries were employed as an alternative to the timariot *sipahis*, but they subsequently became a permanent military force due to ongoing issues such as the Safavid wars and the *Celâli* rebellions. In Erzurum, the deployed military units played a primary role in combating both the *Celâlis* and bandits.

Although the official authorities are responsible for ensuring public safety, they have been involved in banditry actions. These officials, whose primary duty is to oppose bandits and marauders, have engaged in harmful behavior towards the public. To prevent this situation and uphold public order and safety, judicial decrees have been sent to the provinces. These regulations aim to prevent unlawful tax demands and protect the public from harm, thereby safeguarding public security. Furthermore, it has been emphasized that public officials should obtain the materials they need by paying for them.

The Ottoman Empire had a state structure that placed great importance on the concept of justice. Administering appropriate punishments to those who committed crimes was considered one of the state’s fundamental duties. Depending on the nature of the crime, various punishments would be imposed. The judge (*kadi*) was primarily responsible for examining the case throughout the court process, uncovering the truth, and sentencing the criminals to appropriate punishments. According to archival records, local administrators or victims would report unresolved issues to the center, and the central administration generally preferred the cases to be resolved locally by the judge. Local authorities, such as the *soubashi*, *muhtesip*, and *kadi*, would apply necessary punishments to individuals who disturbed social peace. For crimes other than political offenses, local punishments were applied, including “public shaming” (*teşhir*), “discretionary punishment” (*ta’zir*), fines, the “oar penalty” (*kürek cezası*), imprisonment (*kalebendlik*), and exile.<sup>72</sup>

While the Ottoman administration prioritized addressing issues at the local level, it required that bandits who committed serious crimes be sent to the capital, namely Istanbul. This approach demonstrates the central authority’s role in addressing severe offenses and maintaining control and order within the empire.<sup>73</sup> The punishments imposed in Erzurum, such as imprisonment and exile, were part of the central government’s penal policy. Those convicted of serious crimes, such as robbery, assault, and murder, were sentenced to imprisonment by the courts. During the relevant period, individuals who victimized nomadic people were sentenced to imprisonment.<sup>74</sup> The defendant who killed a city resident and robbed numerous individuals of their property was apprehended by the *soubashi* and subsequently brought before the court. As a result of the trial, it was determined that the defendant should return the stolen goods, be exiled, and imprisoned.<sup>75</sup>

The Ottoman administration often displayed a tolerant attitude towards individuals who abandoned banditry and demonstrated genuine remorse. As evidenced by the case of Kuli from Yağmur Deresi district, who abandoned banditry and expressed sincere regret for his actions, the state was willing to pardon such individuals.<sup>76</sup> In instances where Kuli was victimized by the local population, the government’s assignment of official authorities to address his grievances indicates the prevailing understanding of justice and the importance placed on social peace during this period. Such

70 “zulme zulmin reâya ve berâyadan men ve ref’eyleyesin”, *BOA. MM. 79*, p.605.

71 *BOA. MM. 78*, p.192; *BOA. MM. 79*, p.184; *BOA. KKA. 70*, pp.218,586,603,611; *BOA. KKA. 71*, pp.9,325.

72 Pamuk, “XVII. Asır Başlarında Erzurum ve Havalisinde Eşkriyalık Hareketleri”, p.62.

73 *BOA. MM. 80*, p.115; *BOA. KKA. 70*, pp.332,586,603; *BOA. KKA. 71*, p.325.

74 *BOA. KKA. 70*, p.411.

75 *BOA. KKA. 71*, p.311.

76 *BOA. MM. 79*, p.421.

practices demonstrate that the state not only assumed a punitive role but also took on rehabilitative and protective responsibilities.

Erzurum and its surrounding areas received special attention in terms of protection. During periods of conflict, the security vacuum created by the relocation of military units in the region was filled by the continuous deployment of military reinforcements from the surrounding area. The objective was to prevent enemy attacks, as well as the activities of rebels and bandits.<sup>77</sup> One noteworthy aspect of the ongoing efforts to combat banditry is the clear stipulation that no individual or entity should provide shelter or protection to bandits. The government's efforts to address banditry were not wholly successful due to the internal unrest and political challenges encountered. This illustrates the challenges inherent in maintaining law and order during periods of instability.

### **Conclusion**

In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman Empire faced a series of challenges that had a profound impact on its social and economic structure. Factors such as the cessation of conquests, prolonged wars, an increasing population, a lack of sufficient land for the *timar* system, and high inflation led to a crisis in social and economic conditions. These crises, combined with the deterioration of the land and tax systems, gave rise to the emergence of the *Celâli* rebellions and banditry movements, which contributed to the disintegration of the existing structure. Banditry incidents were closely related to the welfare level of society, education levels, and central authority. Administrative gaps between the center and the provinces played a significant role in the increase of these incidents. The state's gradual loss of power against internal and external threats gave momentum to the *Celâli* and banditry movements, causing serious harm to both the state and society.

In regions of strategic importance, such as Erzurum and its surroundings, the Ottoman Empire attempted to implement various measures against the *Celâli* rebels and bandits. However, these measures often proved insufficient. The constant state of war created a vacuum of authority, which made it difficult to prevent banditry. Administrative gaps led to injustices by local officials, laying the groundwork for the emergence of banditry. Both the *Celâli* rebels and bandits, capitalizing on the authority vacuum and the distance from the central authority, disrupted peace and order in and around Erzurum.

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<sup>77</sup> BOA. MM. 78, p.281, BOA. MM. 79, p.74; BOA. KKA. 71, p.292.

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## Extended Abstract

At the end of the sixteenth century, there were agricultural and industrial revolutions in Europe, and these changes deeply affected the Ottoman Empire. In particular, factors such as the decline in conquests, the prolongation of wars, and population growth negatively affected the economic and social structure of the empire. In addition, economic difficulties such as the lack of sufficient land for the *timar* system and high inflation also weakened the stability of the administration. The changes that took place in the Ottoman Empire from the end of the sixteenth century shook the deep-rooted structures of society.

These revolts spread to different regions of Anatolia and triggered the rebellion of local leaders and people against the state. The *Celâli* revolts turned into major uprisings with the participation of people from all walks of life and led to long-term social, financial and political crises. Erzurum, which is an important center where the north-south and east-west roads of Anatolia intersect, was the starting point of the *Celâli* rebellions. The uprisings caused serious unrest among the people of the region and undermined the authority of the state. The state mobilized its military forces against the *Celâli* rebellions and made efforts to suppress the rebels.

The *Celâli* revolts were effective not only in certain regions of Anatolia, but also in different places such as Erzurum, Erzincan, Bayramlı, Kemah, Kelkit and Ispir. These uprisings emerged as a reaction to the oppressive rule of local leaders and became a resistance that included large parts of society. The state carried out various operations using local governments and military forces to suppress the *Celâli* rebellions. However, the uprisings continued and social unrest persisted for a long time. In this process, the state, struggling with the economic crisis, had to distribute its resources to fight the *Celâli* rebellions. The empire struggled to cope with both internal turmoil and external threats. The *Celâli* rebellions left deep scars on Ottoman society and had long-term effects on the internal order of the empire.

The Ottoman Empire was facing various internal and external challenges. Factors such as protracted wars, population growth, economic imbalances, and the weakening of central authority profoundly affected the social and economic structure of the empire. These conditions created an environment conducive to banditry. As the state struggled with both internal and external threats, banditry activities also increased. Strategically important areas, especially those on transit trade routes, became attractive targets for bandits. In geographically challenging regions such as Erzurum, banditry activities became widespread. The steep terrain and administrative vacuum in these areas made it easier for bandits to operate.

Incidents of banditry were not only closely tied to economic and social hardships but also to the erosion of state authority. The decline in internal governance resulted in injustices against local populations and a surge in lawlessness. For instance, the failure to fulfill obligations such as tax collection bred discontent and rebellion among locals. Although the state implemented various measures to curb banditry, these often proved ineffective, allowing the menace to persist. In particular, during periods of conflict, the decline in authority led to an increase in banditry. As state authority weakened, new power centres, such as local principalities and tribal leaders, emerged, further fueling banditry. Banditry is not solely a consequence of economic and social difficulties; it is a phenomenon that arises from the weakening of state control. Therefore, combating banditry requires more than just security measures; it necessitates strengthening internal governance and ensuring justice. Such measures can therefore be employed to suppress banditry, thereby fostering peace and security within society.

At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the people living in and around Erzurum had to deal with *Celâli* and banditry activities, as well as having problems with the officials from time to time. During this period, the local rulers tended to use their authority in their own interests when the

central authority was loosened. The attitude of the *Beylerbeys* of Erzurum towards the people caused social unrest, although not as much as the bandits. The officers and men in the *Beylerbeys*' entourage made illegitimate demands on behalf of the rural people and caused serious grievances. While the *kadi* served as the representative of the state authority, the *beylerbeyis* assumed the responsibility of ensuring the security of the people. The Ottoman administration used the janissaries to increase its influence in the provinces and to provide security. These military units played an important role especially in the fight against *Celâli* and bandits.

Although the officials were responsible for the security of the public, their involvement in banditry made it difficult to solve the problems. However, the Ottoman administration was concerned about ensuring justice in relation to such crimes and took various measures. In general, the state has shown a tolerant attitude towards those who have renounced banditry and repented. The aim is to reintegrate these people into society by giving them a second chance. As a result, the Ottoman administration in and around Erzurum adopted an approach that took care of the security of the people and ensured justice. However, problems such as banditry and rebellions made it difficult to control the administration from time to time and required various measures to be taken.

The Ottoman Empire was confronted with both internal and external challenges. The economic difficulties of this period were further compounded by a decline in government revenues and an increase in expenditures. The cessation of wars and conquests also undermined the traditional military and tax systems of the Ottomans. The collapse of the *timar* system had a profound impact on the structure and efficacy of the Ottoman army. The introduction of salaried and well-equipped soldiers, which replaced the traditional groomed *sipahi*, led to significant changes in battle strategies and the overall structure of the army. Furthermore, the *Celâli* rebellions and banditry activities seriously disturbed the internal peace of the Ottoman Empire. These revolts were caused not only by economic and social reasons, but also by the weakening of the central authority. The decline in the authority of the state led to the abuse of power by local rulers and the erosion of public trust. This environment facilitated the spread of *Celâli* rebellions and banditry movements.

The military measures taken to suppress the *Celâli* rebellions were insufficient. Great efforts were made throughout the Empire to combat the *Celâli* leaders and their supporters, but the rebellions were not completely eradicated. Similarly, efforts to combat banditry met with limited success. Insecurity and instability at the regional level severely challenged the Ottoman Empire's ability to deal with both internal and external threats. The crisis of the Ottoman Empire during this period had a profound effect on the future of the empire. Economic difficulties, social unrest and security threats radically changed the political and social structure of the empire. The measures and reforms taken in this process were an important turning point in the history of the Ottoman Empire, and what happened in this period formed the basis of the events in the later periods of the Empire.



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<b>Yazar Katkı Oranı</b> ----- <b>Author Contribution Percentage</b>	Eşit  Equal
<b>Makale Adı</b> ----- <b>Article Name</b>	Social Movements and Rebellions in the Ottoman Empire in the Period of Crisis and Change: Erzurum Province 1600-1630  Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kriz ve Değişim Döneminde Sosyal Hareketler ve İsyanlar: Erzurum Eyaleti 1600-1630
<b>Geliş - Kabul Tarihi</b> ----- <b>Received-Accepted Date</b>	27 Nisan 2024 - 24 Haziran 2024  27 April 2024 - 24 June 2024
<b>Hakem Sayısı</b> ----- <b>Reviewers</b>	<b>Ön İnceleme:</b> Beş iç hakem (Editör, Yayın Kurulu, Alan Editörü, Türkçe ve İngilizce Dil Editörleri) <b>İçerik İnceleme:</b> İki dış hakem <b>Preview:</b> Five internal reviewer (Editor, Editorial Board, Field Editor, Turkish and English Language Editors ) <b>Content review:</b> Two external reviewer.
<b>Etik</b> ----- <b>Ethic</b>	Bu çalışmada etik ilkelere uyulmuştur.  Ethical principles were followed in this study.
<b>Benzerlik Taraması</b> ----- <b>Plagiarism Checks</b>	Yapıldı - iThenticate  Done - iThenticate
<b>Çıkar Çatışması</b> ----- <b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Çıkar çatışması yoktur.  There is no conflict of interest.
<b>Finansman</b> ----- <b>Grant Support</b>	Herhangi maddi bir destek alınmamıştır.  No financial support was received.
<b>Etik Beyan</b> ----- <b>Ethical Statement</b>	
<b>Etik Kurul İzni</b> ----- <b>Ethics Committee Approval</b>	
<b>Telif Hakkı</b> ----- <b>Copyright</b>	Yazarlar dergide yayınlanan çalışmalarının telif hakkına sahiptirler.  Authors retain the copyright of their article.

