

REVIEW ARTICLE

The Ottoman post-imperial migrations issue

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Abstract

In recent years, there has been a growing body of scholarship that distinguishes post-colonial and post-imperial migrations from other forms of migration. However, because this literature largely excludes non-European cases, it remains predominantly Eurocentric. This review article seeks to demonstrate how these studies can be further enriched by incorporating Ottoman migrations (*muhacir*) as a distinct form of post-imperial migration. To this end, the article evaluates four recently published works on Ottoman migration: İpek's *Migration in the Imperial Territories (Memalik-i Şahanede Muhaceret)*, Frattantuono's *Governing Migration in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Hamed-Troyansky's *Empire of Refugees*, and Oktay Özel's *Katamizes In Pursuit of the Blue (Kiske Kuşunun Peşinde Katamizeler)*. Through a comparative analysis of these works, the article explores the potential contributions of Ottoman post-imperial migration studies to the broader literature on post-imperial migration. In particular, it addresses issues such as the role of official historiography in shaping migration histories; debates over whether migrants were framed as returnees or repatriates; the effects of different imperial structures; and the ethnic and religious composition of both host societies and migrant populations.

Keywords: Eurocentrism; historiography; identity history; Muhacir; post-colonial migration

Nedim İpek, *Memalik-i Şahanede Muhaceret [Migration in the Imperial Territories]*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2022. 456 pages, ISBN: 978-975-17-5196-6.

Ella Frattantuono, *Governing Migration in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Edinburgh University Press, 2024, 288 pages. ISBN: 9781399521857.

Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, *Empire of Refugees: North Caucasian Muslims and the Late Ottoman State*, Stanford University Press, 2024, 360 pages. ISBN: 9781503637740.

Oktay Özel, *Kiske Kuşunun Peşinde Katamizeler (1835-1981) [Katamizes In Pursuit of the Blue]* Jay, Istanbul: iletişim, 2024, 376 pages. ISBN: 978-975-05-3632-8.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in studies distinguishing post-colonial and post-imperial migrations from other types of migration. Most of these studies, which are predominantly “Europe-centered,” focus on population movements from “overseas empires” that collapsed after the Second World War, i.e., the French *pied-noirs*, Portuguese *retornados*, Italian *rimpatriato*, German *aussiedler*, Dutch *repatrianten*, and Russian *repatriatsiya/sootchestvenniki*. These works demonstrate that such migrations, which occurred for compulsory, large-scale, and non-economic reasons, differ both from refugees arriving from third countries for similar reasons and from voluntary, individual, and

economically motivated migrations.¹ Although some of the refugees arriving in Europe have fled internal conflicts in states formed during the post-colonial period – such as Algerian migration to France – there are several factors that distinguish these migrants from others beyond their status as former colonists. These include previously held rights to metropolitan citizenship or relatively easy access to such rights, as well as cultural, linguistic, or religious affinities and kinship ties established with the metropolitan population. The characteristics summarized by Gert Oostindie as a “post-colonial bonus” for Dutch repatriates played a significant role in facilitating their integration.² Indeed, these migrations were evaluated by the “metropole” not as movements from a foreign country but as forms of “homecoming” to an old and/or one’s own “homeland,” or as (“return”) migrations directed toward the imperial core (heartland, metropole). For this reason, the naming of the policy of European states towards these immigrants differed from that of other immigrants; repatriate, resettlement, or return migration.

These studies also argue that post-imperial and post-colonial migrants of European empires remained “invisible” until quite recently – and in two distinct senses. First, unlike racialized migrants, they did not “stand out” visually. Second, they were not viewed as “foreign” migrants but rather as citizens who needed to be repatriated. These migrants were often poorly received in their supposed homelands: they were ignored, excluded, and, for the most part, embraced only by a narrow segment of political rights. Among them, those who belonged to colonized populations – such as Black *retornados* from Portuguese colonies – encountered reactions verging on racism.³ The homeland they fled, as well as the homeland to which they sought refuge, remained foreign to them. Because, unlike the Japanese *hikiagesha* (repatriates, returnees), the *retornados* constituted a heterogeneous group that included “local collaborators” (members of the African local population). This situation resembles that of the *Harkis* – those labeled as “collaborator Arabs” – who migrated from French colonial North Africa to France after the independence war. A similar process was experienced by the *rimpatriato* migrants returning from Italian colonies. Japanese *hikiagesha* were likewise ignored, even erased from collective memory.⁴ To speak of or commemorate the *hikiagesha* was, in effect, to recall Japan’s dark colonial past and its severe and humiliating defeat.⁵

The Ottoman post-imperial migrations, which this literature also neglects, were received in a similar fashion. Despite their quantitative and qualitative significance, Turkish academia showed little interest in these migrants until the 1990s. They were generally embraced by right-wing and religious segments of society. The secular policies of the nation-state did not wish to remember those who had migrated for religious reasons. As in Japan, the end of the “Cold War” increased interest in historical migrations. The age of ideologies had given way to the age of identities. As in the rest of the world, growing attention to (religious and ethnic) origins in Turkey led to a rise in interest in historical migrations as well. For groups whose roots were migrant, “migration history” functioned, in a sense, as “identity history.” The interest of Turkish citizens – many of whom are themselves of migrant origin – in migration research responded to their search for geographic, cultural, and ethnic origins.⁶ Another factor increasing this interest was the opening of the Ottoman archives. However, the arrival of millions of Syrian asylum seekers in Turkey after 2011, moreover, created – so to speak – a “baby boom” effect in Turkish migration studies. There were two reasons for this: the perception (at least among some segments of society) that Syrian asylum seekers constituted Turkey’s most significant problem, and the availability of European Union funding. Although most of the growing body of migration research has focused on contemporary migrations such as that of Syrians, interest in historical migrations has also increased markedly.

¹Dubois and Miège (2012), Bosma et al. (2012), Smith (2002). Buettner (2016), Etemad (1998), Bull and Paichadze (2023), Tendayi (2019), Mayblin (2014), Heleniak 2004.

²Bosma et al. (2012).

³Lewis and Williams (1985), Lubkemann (2002), David (2015), George (2021).

⁴Ipsen (1996), Triulzi (2006), Ballinger (2020).

⁵Watt (2009), Nishizaki (2016).

⁶There are those who claim that today one-third to one-quarter of Turkey’s population are descendants of migrants. See Hütteroth (2008, esp. pp. 276–79).

The question of studying Ottoman migrations and four examples

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in studies focusing on Ottoman post-imperial migrations. To illustrate both the traditional and the revisionist approach, four recently published works will be examined. These studies differ in terms of archival use, methodology, migration causes and outcomes, and the terminology used to describe settlement policies. Two of them (Fratantuono and Hamed-Troyansky) were submitted as doctoral dissertations at universities in the United States, while the other two (İpek and Özel) were published in Turkish by scholars who have long taught historical migration and produced numerous migration studies in Turkey.

Although the Ottoman Empire's archival materials constitute the primary shared source of these works, they differ considerably in the ways they employ these materials. Nedim İpek, in his study "Memalik-i Şahane'de Muhaceret," bases most of his work on Ottoman archives; however, it does not include highly significant archival collections such as Migrants Commission Papers (*Muhacirin Komisyonu Evrakı*), which have been accessible in the last decade. Moreover, he does not use Russian archives for any of his claims concerning Russia's policies of expelling its Muslim populations. Like İpek, Ella Fratantuono bases her dissertation (Governing Migration in the Late Ottoman Empire) on Ottoman archival documents, yet she interprets official records in a fundamentally different manner. By contrast, Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, in his work "Empire of Refugees: North Caucasian Muslims and the Late Ottoman State," employs official documents from multiple states in addition to Ottoman archives. He further utilizes personal petitions, letters, land registry records, and court registers. In terms of the diversity and richness of sources, it may be regarded as the most comprehensive study ever conducted on Circassian migration.

Oktay Özel's *Kişke Kuşunun Peşinde: Katamizeler 1835–1981*, given the nature of its subject matter, relies primarily on oral history, field research, and family documents, though it also draws upon Ottoman and Republican archives as well as Georgian and Russian sources when necessary. Methodologically, these four studies also diverge. İpek's work addresses the question of "what?" and describes the technical aspects of settlement. Fratantuono directs the question of "why?" to the same archives and similar documents. Hamed-Troyansky's study, in a manner responding to the question "how?," examines the migration process together with its antecedents and aftermath. Finally, Özel's work concentrates on the question "who?" portraying who the migrants were and with "whom" they interacted.

Before examining these four works in detail, a general framework for Ottoman migrations, which should be evaluated as a form of post-imperial migrations, needs to be presented.

Ottoman migration history

Beginning in the eighteenth century, when systematic territorial losses commenced, the Ottoman Empire confronted the problem of immigration. To borrow the motto of official Turkish historiography: "the retreat of Ottoman soldiers was accompanied by the migration of the civilian population." However, migration became massive and systematic after the 1853–1856 Crimean War. The immigration toward the Ottoman Empire was from three regions: Crimea, the Caucasus, and the Balkans, and was accompanied by the dissolution of the Empire. The first two regions, excluding their coasts, were under the vassal rule of the Crimean Khanate. The mountainous interior of Circassia, however, had a more independent character. Unlike the European empires, a portion of these migrations – which spanned an extended period (1856–1923) – occurred during or immediately after (Ottoman-Russian) wars. These were, in a sense, "internal migrations." The remainder consisted of negotiated and mutual migrations. The overwhelming majority of migrants were Sunni Muslims who had been the Empire's (former) subjects but now found themselves on the other side of shifting borders due to war. They were Sunni Muslims fleeing lands lost to Christian empires (Romanov and Habsburg) and newly established Balkan nation-states. These migrations were post-imperial migrations, for they would not have occurred had the empire not collapsed.

The Ottoman Empire followed an open door policy for these Sunni Muslims migrating from lost territories. Unlike European states, it did not view them as “foreign migrants” but as its (former) subjects who needed to be resettled. Unlike European and Japanese empires, the Ottoman Empire did not use the term repatriate (Ottoman Turkish: *tavattun*) for its policy. Although the Ottomans called their policy “resettlement” (*iskân*), its policy in practice resembled a repatriation policy. This is because the Ottoman provided substantial assistance – land, housing, provisions, and transportation expenses – to its returning Sunni Muslim subjects and granted them long-term exemptions (from military service and taxation). Moreover, it received them as its subjects. For these reasons, Ottoman settlement policy resembled the repatriation policies of other empires. Another reason for defining these migrations as post-imperial migrations is that the migrants did not experience (or produce) integration problems severe enough to generate a crisis. Most shared a common history and set of beliefs. Thus, these were desired and favorable migrations from the perspective of the Ottoman state. Above all, Ottoman migration policy was fundamentally a settlement-based policy.

Nedim İpek’s *Memalik-i Şahanede Muhaceret* and the official historiography of post-imperial migrations

Nedim İpek’s *Memalik-i Şahanede Muhaceret* was published in 2022 by the Turkish Historical Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu), a state institution. İpek is one of the foremost scholars associated with migration studies in Turkey and an expert who has examined nearly all internal and external migrations that occurred during the Ottoman period – excluding the Ottoman government’s forced and genocidal migrations targeting non-Muslims. His extensive body of work, addressing different periods and regions, covers Balkan, Crimean, Caucasian, Cretan, *Çürüksu* (Georgian), and North Tripolitania and Benghazi (Libya) migrations. Even in the bibliography of the book under discussion, seventeen of his own works on migration are listed. Because it includes all migration-related legislation and the entire legal framework, this book is essential reading for anyone working on Ottoman–Turkish migrations.

In fact, this book is essentially identical to *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler*, which was published in 2006 by Serander publishing house, except that two chapters (“Refugees” and “Emigration”) have been removed. Yet, neither the publisher nor the author indicates this, despite the work being effectively a second edition. The author not only avoids stating that it is a “second edition” but even writes, “we decided to compose the work in your hands” (p. ix), suggesting that it is an entirely new book. Such an implication is not only ethically problematic but also creates a significant academic problem. By republishing essentially the same book after sixteen years (2006–2022), İpek ignores all migration-related studies published during that period – including those written by his own students. One might presume he considered his work to have settled the matter definitively. Yet, scholarly inquiry requires dialog with new archival materials and new research.

For example, in one of the works he disregarded, I argued that one of the aims shaping Ottoman migration and settlement policy was Turkification.⁷ By reissuing the same work fifteen years later without engaging with this argument – an argument that could have represented an important turning point in the literature – İpek not only overlooked this study but also refused, or deemed unnecessary, to engage with the rapidly expanding literature and the new perspectives it offered. Furthermore, the Turkish Historical Society – Turkey’s leading official historical institution – republishing a book from 2006 as if it were a new work in 2022 raises its own set of questions. Perhaps TTK, as the institution that constructs and defends the official Turkish historical thesis, sought to reassert the state’s official position on historical migrations. Another possible reason may have been a desire to remind segments of the Turkish public who oppose Syrian refugees of their own migrant past.

⁷Dündar (2001, p. 284).

İpek, who frames “Turkish historiography” on migration, states in the preface that his study begins in 1774 (p. ix), yet the book in fact examines migrations from the period 1856–1923. Moreover, although the concept of migration appears in the title, the book essentially focuses on settlement (*iskân*). It centers on the humanitarian and technical assistance provided by the state to migrants. While the first two chapters are organized geographically (“The Caucasus: War and Migration”; “Rebellion, War, and Migration in the Balkans”), the third chapter adopts a period-based approach (“The First World War and Migration”). The final chapter is devoted to “Migration and Its Impact.”

Another structural issue is the disorganized nature of the chapters as well as the lack of chronological coherence across them. Repetition also appears frequently. For example, the wars of 1828 and 1878 and their impact on migration are discussed in both the first and second chapters. The subsection titled “The 1828–1829 Ottoman–Russian War and Migrations,” found in the first chapter, is strikingly inadequate; only a few pages are devoted to the significance of this war and its effects on migration. Most notably, the book gives very little space to Crimean migrations, which constituted one of the three major migration waves toward the Ottoman Empire – alongside Caucasian and Balkan migrations.

The author attributes the causes of Muslim migrations to the Ottoman Empire to the policies and atrocities of “Christian states” such as Russia and Austria-Hungary toward Muslim populations. However, he does not use a single Russian archival document to substantiate these claims, nor does he use studies based on Russian primary sources. He also completely ignores the new information and perspectives provided by modern research drawing on these archives (e.g., Michael Reynolds, Peter Holquist, Ryan Gingeras⁸). It is noteworthy that the same institution that published this book, the Turkish Historical Society (TTK), publishes studies in its journals (e.g., *Bellesten*) and books that insist on the importance of the Ottoman archives (thus a prerequisite of Ottoman Turkish) for historians. For instance, Yusuf Sarıınay, who served as the head of the Ottoman Archives for a period of 2000–2012, stated that “a regional and world history written without research in Turkish archives, especially regarding the Armenian question, will be incomplete.”⁹

İpek repeatedly asserts that Russia pursued policies of exile, repression/persecution, massacre, colonization, assimilation, and Christianization, yet he does not use a single Russian source or a study based on Russian materials. Moreover, while implying that Russian policy followed a single and unchanging trajectory, he fails to explain the reasons for the different policies he himself mentions at various points in the book. For instance, he claims that “when the Russification policy failed until 1878, the Russian Empire ‘forced Muslims to migrate’” (p. 72). Yet, this explanation contradicts the causes of the Crimean migrations in the 1850s and the Caucasian migrations in the 1860s.

This contradiction becomes even more apparent in other sections. While he argues that the Russians “welcomed” the outward migration of Caucasian Muslims, implying that Muslims migrated of their own accord, elsewhere he asserts that Russia did not permit migration after 1860. The author claims that “the local population would be forcibly kept in the Caucasus,” and that those who opposed the Christianization policy “would be annihilated” (pp. 42–43). He identifies the cause of the post-1864 migrations as “the decision of Turks and Muslims to migrate to the Ottoman Empire” (p. 49). Such mutually contradictory and overly simplistic statements obscure the issue rather than clarifying Russian policy. If Russia did not permit migration, then he ought to have asked who was responsible for the 1864 migrations – known today among Circassians as genocide. As I noted in my 2021 study¹⁰, the 1864 migrations were, in fact, the dramatic result of an undeclared population exchange initiative that unfolded unexpectedly and without preparation.

Another problem in the book is the author’s avoidance of identifying the ethnic backgrounds of non-Turkish Muslims who migrated to the Ottoman Empire. Even though these identities appear in Ottoman archival documents, he refrains from mentioning groups such as Georgians, Kurds, and Pomaks. One likely reason is his reluctance to portray non-Turkish Muslims as victims; another is his

⁸Gingeras (2009), Reynolds (2011).

⁹Sarıınay (2006, p. 289).

¹⁰Dündar (2021, 321).

adoption of the Turkish nationalist official ideology dominant in TTK publications. Thus, this is not a simple example of self-censorship but rather a voluntary embrace of the state's official position.¹¹

For example, in the Serander edition, the author uses expressions such as “the Turkish inhabitants of the places occupied by Russia during the War of 1877–78 and afterward . . . migrated” (2006, p. 55) and refers to “the Turkish population among the eastern refugees” (2006, p. 133). Yet even Ottoman bureaucrats of the period noted that many of those forced to migrate were Kurds. This desire to Turkify everything leads to results that contradict themselves, often inadvertently. He refers to the Ottoman government as the “Turkish government” (2006, p. 174), to the Ottoman Empire as “Turkey” (2006, pp. 222–24), and to the Ottoman consulate as the “Turkish consulate” (2006, p. 224). However, prior to 1923, the Ottoman state did not define itself as a Turkish government or state. İpek does not use migration-related terminology consistently; indeed, even within the same paragraph, he may refer to the same migrant group as both “Turkish refugees” and “Turkish migrants” (2006, p. 178). In line with official historiography, he also writes that migrants “were settled in the dwellings abandoned by Armenians.” Yet Armenians did not abandon these dwellings; on the contrary, they were expelled under the 1915 Deportation Law – that is, they were “forced to abandon them” (2006, p. 138).

Another major problem in the book is the analysis of Ottoman migration policy. Out of 456 pages, only a six-page subsection (2022, pp. 341–347) is devoted to Ottoman migration policy. Moreover, not even the entirety of this subsection is relevant: only half of it (pp. 2–3) directly addresses the issue, while the remainder is devoted to unrelated topics and empirical information about settlement and migrant populations.

Yet a work of such scale, dealing with migrations to the Ottoman Empire spanning more than a century, should have examined why the Ottoman state accepted migrants; whether its policies and practices varied across regions and periods; the institutions responsible for migration management; the reasoning behind the regulations issued; and the effects of these policies on migration flows. In my view, the author's omission of Ottoman policy is not due to an academic rationale but rather reflects a political choice. In doing so, he implicitly suggests that the Ottoman Empire was passive in the face of these nearly century-long migrations and bore no responsibility whatsoever.

By devoting a substantial portion of the book to settlement, provisioning, and assistance, he constructs a portrait of the Ottoman Empire as a “benevolent” state that provided technical aid yet assumed no agency in the migrations directed toward it. However, although the main cause of the migrations was indeed Russia's expansionist policy, the Ottoman state's migration and settlement policies also had significant effects on migration processes. First and foremost, its open-door policy toward its former Sunni Muslim subjects played a major role in shaping migration flows. Moreover, it not only welcomed these migrants but actively encouraged migration – at times to the point of “recruitment” (*celb*). The most important reason behind the Ottoman state's pro-migration stance was its policy of increasing the Muslim population and mobilizing idle economic potential (agricultural lands).

The author makes no reference whatsoever to the population policy that I term passive homogenization. On the contrary, he denies it. Under the subsection titled “Ottoman Population Policy,” he claims that the Ottoman Empire considered migration as one of its methods for increasing population, but that it “abandoned this policy once a massive wave of migration to Rumelia and Anatolia began after 1864” (2022, p. 341). This assertion directly contradicts the Ottoman archival documents that constitute nearly the sole source base of his work. Numerous official documents, for example, show that Abdulhamid II issued pro-migration orders aimed at increasing the Muslim population.

Another unfounded claim made by the author is his statement that Ottoman state officials “attempted, through diplomatic initiatives, to eliminate the causes of migration in the countries concerned” (2022, p. 342). He does not provide a single Ottoman official document to substantiate this

¹¹ Belleten was founded to lend a scientific basis to the construction of Turkish nationalism. In fact, at one point, it published articles “to prove that Turks are the true Aryans.” See Sivrioğlu (2015, 7).

claim. On the contrary, numerous Russian and Great Power officials argued that the Ottoman state encouraged Muslims to migrate to its territories and that a large number of agents – including imams – were active among Muslim communities for this purpose.

Ella Fratantuono's "Governing Migration in the Late Ottoman Empire" and revisionist history

Another study that, like İpek, encompasses all migrations of the Ottoman Empire is "Governing Migration in the Late Ottoman Empire," a book based on Ella Fratantuono's doctoral dissertation. Unlike İpek, Fratantuono does not examine what the state did, but rather why it did so. Instead of enumerating the assistance provided to migrants as İpek does, she analytically addresses the empire's migration policies and investigates the mentality underlying these policies. In this way, she demonstrates how migrant institutions, instructions, and regulations can be interpreted in multiple ways.

Fratantuono offers a completely different analytical framework by defining the policy that İpek refers to as *iskân* as "internal colonization," and the population policy that İpek denies as "population engineering." With this approach, she demonstrates that migration is not an ordinary population movement, but rather a comprehensive issue with administrative, political, identity-related, economic, social, and technical (mapping, census) dimensions. At the same time, by emphasizing the variability of the categories constructed around migration, she shows that these concepts are neither fixed nor static. All of this, by making visible the multidimensional and multilayered nature of migration, once again reveals that migration studies are an indispensable necessity for the social sciences.

Fratantuono's book consists of six semi-chronological and thematic chapters, one of which had previously been published as an article: Muhacir as Colonist, Muhacir as Problem, Muhacir as Victim, Muhacir as Failure, Muhacir as Muslim, and Muhacir as Possibility. In the first chapter of the book, "Muhacir as Colonist," the author demonstrates that migrants were not used as "repatriates" who were protected and whose basic needs were met, but rather as Western-style colonists. According to Fratantuono, Ottoman officials viewed migrant settlement as "a tool for developing agriculture," and Ottoman statesmen, consuls, and potential migrants evaluated the relevant regulations within the framework of Europe's trans-Atlantic migrations.

The author argues that the empire opened its doors to migrants with the Migrant Regulations (*Muhacirin Nizamnamesi*), which she claims to be dated 1857 (in fact, dated February 1856), and contends that the purpose of this regulation was to include migrants in the process of reform and development. She states that migrants were settled both in line with economic concerns aimed at increasing arable lands and agricultural production, and with the goal of creating a loyal population.

In my view, the decisive regulation was not the 1857 Ottoman Migrant Regulations, but rather the May 1856 instruction directed at Crimean and Caucasian migrants in Silistre. In my 2021 study, I stated that the regulation on which Fratantuono relies remained in effect only for a short time and that the number of "foreigners" who arrived on the basis of this regulation was limited. The regulation that had an actual impact was the May 1856 instruction, to which migrants frequently referred when asserting their rights.

The second chapter, titled "Muhacir as a Problem," is devoted to the first migration commission (1860), which oversaw two of the three largest mass migrations in Ottoman history (Crimean 1860–1861 and Caucasian 1863–1865). The author notes that this commission redefined mass migration as a field of governance for the central state. Within this framework, she examines how Nusret Pasha, a decisive figure in migration management for decades, conducted the settlement of approximately 120,000 migrants in Rumelia between 1860 and 1864. Fratantuono draws attention to the fact that, during the settlement of such a large population, an unprecedented scale of mapping, quantification, and category production was carried out in Ottoman history. According to her, this process was not merely a settlement policy; it was also a turning point that demonstrated the transformation of the Ottoman Empire's administrative capacity and accelerated the state's opening to Western techniques. In summary, migrant settlement is presented in this chapter as one of the key

elements of the Ottoman Empire's encounter with modern administrative techniques and its adoption of these techniques.

The third chapter, titled "Muhacir as a Victim," examines the intervention of the great powers other than Russia in the migrant issue through the lens of health problems, focusing on the 1878 Balkan migrants. Long journeys and unsanitary conditions led to the spread of epidemic diseases among the migrants. After migrants departing from Russia on overcrowded ships transmitted diseases to the local population, the Ottoman Empire developed various techniques to limit migrations and manage them in a "healthier" manner. This chapter, covering the 1878 Ottoman–Russian War and its aftermath, also provides the opportunity to observe the historical development of the process. The experiences gained in the 1850s–1860s were further refined during the 1877–1878 migration waves. In addition to the involvement of external powers, the author also examines the increasing institutionalization efforts and the impact of the instructions.

The fourth chapter, "Muhacir as a Failure," examines the efforts to create land for migrant settlement through the example of Muzaffer Pasha's work in the 1890s. As the number of migrants increased, the amount of available land decreased, and accordingly, the designated settlement areas also changed. While the Balkans and the coastal regions of Anatolia – particularly port cities – were initially preferred, by the late nineteenth century the settlement policy had shifted toward the central and eastern regions of Anatolia.¹² In addition, "land distribution became a component of sustainability, and officials developed human/land ratios to determine the most suitable plot size for agricultural production." It was assumed that each household consisted of one to five adult males, and it was determined that each household should be allocated seventy to one hundred dönüms of arable land. The author emphasizes that the categorization of land and population was a parallel process. This most original chapter of the book successfully reveals the relationship between science and technique on the one hand, and politics on the other.

In the fifth chapter, titled "Muhacir as Muslim," the author discusses the interaction between Abdülhamid II's Islamist policies and migration policies, as well as the impact of the concept of *dârü'l-İslâm* on migrations. Taking the 1857 regulation as her point of reference, Fratantuono argues that the identity of migrants was not considered until the Abdülhamid era. She then asserts that Muslim migrants "forced Sultan Abdülhamid to shift from promoting an intercommunal understanding of Ottomanism to embracing Ottoman Islamism." According to her, this transformation also shaped the ways in which migrants were utilized: "The Hamidian government's adoption of Ottoman Islamism led to the official promotion of Muslim immigration and influenced administrators' use of settlement as a means to increase Muslims' control over the economy. Hamidian immigration policies relied on a 'logic of facilitation' and a 'logic of constraint' (Chapter I).

However, as I previously noted, the 1857 regulation to which the author refers had a highly limited impact and became obsolete within a few years. Moreover, the number of non-Muslims who arrived and were settled under this regulation was so small that it would not exceed the fingers of one hand. Second, even before the reign of Abdülhamid II, the overwhelming majority of migrants who arrived in Ottoman territories were Muslims, and in fact, attention was often paid to ensuring that they were predominantly Sunni. What distinguished Abdülhamid from earlier periods was his explicit articulation of this policy and his personal direction of it. Indeed, he was the first and only sultan to establish a Muslim Migration Commission and to preside over it himself. Third, although it may resemble a chicken–egg relationship, I believe that the Ottoman Empire's Islamist policy increased the migration of Muslims toward the state. Undoubtedly, the migrants themselves would also become an element that gave tangible form to Islamism.¹³

The sixth chapter, titled "Muhacir as Possibility," analyzes the new migration policies implemented within the political system transformed by the 1908 Revolution and during the Balkan and World War periods. The author emphasizes that the transition from sultanate to a constitutional and parliamentary

¹²Jpek (1994, pp. 165–167).

¹³Karpat (2001).

system led to a shift from Islamic policies to ethnic policies, and that this transformation directly influenced migration policies. She attributes one of the reasons for this to the fact that migrants – particularly and predominantly those of Balkan origin – became far more visible and far more active compared to Crimean and Caucasian migrants.

The newspapers (i.e., *Muhacir*) and associations (i.e., the 1909 Society for Rumelia Muslim Migrants, the Circassian Unity and Mutual Aid Society, the Society for the Protection of Migrants) that emerged during this period enabled migrants to organize in the public sphere and also provided a platform for them to debate both the necessity and the inevitability of migration.

Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky's "Empire of Refugees" and Dar al-Islam concept

In contrast to İpek and Fratantuono, who center on state policies, Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky's "Empire of Refugees: North Caucasian Muslims and the Late Ottoman State" centers on migrants. Because it places the migrant at the center, it examines both the pre-migration and post-migration processes, e.g., both Russia's expulsion policies and the Ottoman Empire's settlement policies. In this respect, it differs from many migration studies that focus solely on departure, migration routes, or the moment of arrival. Another feature that makes the work original is its writing style. Throughout the narrative, Hamed-Troyansky frequently references other migrations and does not hesitate to use flashforward (or prolepsis). This narrative technique, rarely encountered in academic works, does not diminish the academic quality of the book; on the contrary, it successfully demonstrates how historical texts, which often progress in a dry and heavy manner, can be made more engaging through creativity. In his perspective and analyses, Hamed-Troyansky, like Fratantuono, positions himself in opposition to İpek. However, he argues that the Ottoman migration policies, which Fratantuono likens to Western colonization, were in fact different from them: "The nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, struggling mightily with European annexations, created its own nonwestern and nonsecular system of categorizing, sheltering, and resettling refugees" (p. 3).

The term "refugee" in the title of the book is, in fact, an ahistorical term, but at the same time, a very "contemporary" one. This is because, contrary to the carelessness found in most Ottoman migration studies, the Ottoman Empire classified most Muslims who migrated to its territories as *muhacir*. Ottoman state officials referred to those migrants whose arrival they desired as *muhacir* (immigrants), and to those they did not want as *mülteci* (refugees). In other words, the distinction between *muhacir* and *mülteci* was not based on the "push" factors of migration, but on whether the migrant was suitable for the empire. Moreover, *muhacir* was a status – one that was "privileged," as it involved rapid acquisition of subjecthood, as well as land and subsistence aid, and long-term exemptions from military service and taxation. Refugees, on the other hand, were deprived of these privileges.

The study examines the migrations – which, although the majority occurred between 1863 and 1865, continued for half a century (1850–1914, totaling 1 million) and led to a 90% decrease in the population of the region (Abkhazians, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Karachays, Ossetians, Avars, and Lezgins) – in three stages. The book is divided into main sections according to the stages created by each mass migration: Refuge, Settlement, and Diaspora/Return.

In the "Refugee Migration" section, he discusses the push factors (e.g., the Romanov Empire) and pull factors (e.g., the Ottoman Empire) of migration. First, he examines the Russian policies – along with their historical transformations – that constituted the primary cause of the mass migration of Muslims from the North Caucasus to the Ottoman Empire between the 1850s and World War I. To begin with, during the destruction of the "Caucasus Imamate (1828–1859)" and "Circassia (1861–1862)" (p. 28), two states established in Chechnya and Northern Dagestan after the Ottoman withdrawal from the region, the return of Caucasians who had previously migrated to the Ottoman Empire was prohibited. In 1862, the "Commission for the Resettlement of Mountaineers in Turkey" was established, and the migrations that would take place until 1864 were – at least partially – financed (p. 31). After Russia declared the conquest of the Caucasus on 21 May 1864, it prohibited the emigration of Muslims from the Kuban region in 1864 and later from the entire region in 1867 – most

of these departures being intended for pilgrimage. In 1876, it once again allowed pilgrimage, and in 1885, it lifted the ban on emigration (pp. 42–45).

The author notes that during the Caucasus War, Muslims were viewed as people who could never become loyal subjects of Russia and were even seen as rebellious and religious fanatics; whereas after 1864, they were regarded as peasants misled by Ottoman propaganda, whom the government had to persuade to stay and become productive Russian subjects (p. 43). Following his analysis of Russian policies, the author examines Ottoman policies. He successfully frames the Ottoman migration regime (policies, institutions, instructions, experience, and practices) that Caucasian migrants encountered upon arrival. He demonstrates how the “refugee regime,” which guaranteed acceptance to Muslims, and the Refugee Commission reflected the political objectives of the Ottoman government. He identifies two laws as playing significant roles: the 1857 Migration Law and the 1858 Ottoman Land Code (*Kanun-i Arazi*). He notes that following the enforcement of the Migration Law, the humanitarian crisis on Russia’s Black Sea coast worsened even further.

While addressing the causes of migration, the author does not refrain from giving due importance to the role of Islam – and particularly the concept of *dar al-islam* (literally abode of Islam) – in shaping migrations. Unfortunately, despite its great significance, this dimension has not received adequate attention in Turkish migration studies – as is the case in İpek’s work. This is because discussing the influence of *dar al-islam* on migrations could be interpreted as downplaying the impact of Russian and Christian persecution (that is, the push factors). It could also give rise to the belief that migrations were voluntary and that pull factors played a role.

The author defines the migrations that took place in the early nineteenth century, after the fall of the Caucasus Imamate, and following the 1877 Chechnya/Dagestan uprisings as *hijra* (religious migration). The personal documents he has uncovered – such as letters demonstrating that migrants left for religious reasons – are valuable contributions in this respect (p. 24). However, the author places religiously motivated migrations into the category of forced migration with the argument that none of the migrations from the Caucasus “was ever voluntary.” He reinforces his view by invoking the historical reminder that the *hijra* undertaken by the Prophet Muhammad, and taken as a reference, “was a permanent displacement born of persecution.”

Can we evaluate it as a “forced migration” that took place for religious reasons? This question is not only one the author must answer, but also one that scholars working on Muslim migrations from Russia must grapple with. Regardless of the answer, the following points must be added as unchanging historical truths: Islam and the concept of *dar al-islam* played significant roles in these migrations, and Ottoman officials benefited from this. Moreover, Ottoman officials never issued any statements aimed at stopping the migrations, as seen in the case of Eastern Rumelia after 1878.

In the second chapter, titled “Refugee Resettlement,” he examines the settlement of migrants in three geographical regions. Noting that the Danube province – especially Dobrudja – served as a Circassian and Abkhaz refugee zone between 1860 and 1878, the author adds that these migrants created major problems because they were not provided with sufficient economic and disciplinary support. During the 1877–1878 Russo–Ottoman War, nearly all Caucasian migrants fled the Balkans together with the retreating Ottoman army. After this second forced migration, their return was prohibited by the newly established Balkan national governments.

The section in which the author examines resettlement in the Levant region – primarily Syria and Jordan – focuses especially on Amman, the southernmost village built for Caucasians in 1878. He demonstrates how Caucasian migrants transformed this village into one of the largest cities in Jordan. Drawing on Islamic court records and Ottoman land registers, he explains Amman’s Circassian origin story, including real estate investments and the development of trade with Bedouins as well as Syrians and Palestinians (p. 118). The following fifth chapter is devoted to Anatolia, where approximately 250,000–400,000 Caucasians settled, with particular attention to the Sivas–Uzunyayla mountain valley. It centers on the Circassian Khutat family, who created this snow-covered Central Anatolian mountain valley in which the refugees built their own “Little Caucasus.” The narrative opens a discussion of the conflicts with the nomadic Afşar tribe of the Turkmens, as well as the preferences of the Sublime Porte.

It also examines the contributions made to the region through horse breeding up until the Republican era.

In the final part of the book, titled “Diaspora and Return,” Hamed-Troyansky examines the life struggles of North Caucasians between the Ottoman and Russian Empires in two sub-chapters. In the first sub-chapter (Chapter 6), he seeks to demonstrate that although some Caucasians followed the trajectory migrant > adaptation + assimilation > Turk, a significant portion formed a diasporic community. He shows that, through Circassian-language newspapers, schools, and associations established in Istanbul in the early twentieth century, Caucasians experienced a renaissance. At the same time, he notes that they fulfilled the requirements of their multiple identities (Circassian, North Caucasian, Muslim, and Ottoman). He also demonstrates that Circassians – for the first time – opened up debates on the necessity of migrations from Russia, and that similar discussions were taking place on the Russian side as well.

In the second sub-chapter (Chapter 7), which examines return migrations and constitutes one of the least-known and most original parts of the book, he studies the returns. Among the three types of return – “voluntary” returns (the other two being “those organized by a third party” and “forced returns of the push-back type”) – he analyzes the 1865 and 1880 cases of Caucasian returns that he classifies as voluntary. The Ottoman Empire and Russia – quite surprisingly – were more opposed to returns than to migrations. “They had been captured by Ottoman forces and taken to the Ottoman Empire against their will,” he writes, and Russia wanted them to be accepted (pp. 234–235). Russia handed over the fugitives it captured to the Ottoman Empire. However, those who were apprehended far from the Ottoman border, in the interior regions, were not returned because of the economic burden; instead, they were accepted as if they were first-time migrants. Thus, they were not given back their pre-migration property and belongings.

The author estimates that approximately 40,000 refugees returned despite all obstacles. Among the four works we have discussed, the topic of “returns” – addressed only by this author – is a dimension that migration studies in Turkey have largely ignored. This original aspect also encourages us to question the post-migration lives of other migrants, especially “Georgian Muslims,” within the pendulum between adaptation/assimilation and becoming diasporic/returning. This line of inquiry not only helps us understand which identity – ethnic or religious – was more dominant among migrating communities, but will also allow us to assess the long-term effects of migrations. Indeed, a fundamental question, such as why Circassians exhibited a “diasporic and return character” while Georgian Muslims did not (even if they did not entirely forget their identities) is one that can enrich both the nationalism literature and the migration literature.

Hamed-Troyansky reminds us that a country’s “return policy” is just as important as its migration policy. This is the only method that allows us to test push and pull factors. As the author demonstrates, Russia was unwilling to readmit those who had migrated to the Ottoman Empire. But considering that the Ottoman Empire displayed a similar policy, this reluctance must be attributed not only to Russia’s anti-Muslim sentiment but also to the “economic rationality” of the state. For example, it opposed returns because they brought a significant burden. Russia did not allow the entry of Jews and Muslims, nor did it permit those returning from the Ottoman Empire to re-enter. Likewise, the Ottoman Empire did not allow the return of Armenians, and after a few years of the migration invitation issued in 1856 to anti-Russian Europeans, it did not permit the immigration of Christians and Jews. It even opposed the return of Russian Muslims who had taken refuge in the empire and did not hesitate to take military measures in this regard.¹⁴

In short, in an era of intensified population movements independent of the state, governments became selective rather than attempting to prevent them completely. They determined who could emigrate and who could immigrate not only for political reasons but also out of concern over burden (economic and bureaucratic).

¹⁴Dündar (2021, pp. 124–128).

Oktay Özel's "Kiske Kuşunun Peşinde: Katamizeler (1835–1981)" and privatizing migration history

Oktay Özel's study titled "*Kiske Kuşunun Peşinde: Katamizeler (1835–1981)*" (İletişim Publishing, 2024) examines the 150-year history of migration and its aftermath experienced by the Georgian Muslim Katamize family (the author's own family). Focusing on the four-generation story of a family that migrated from the Batum/Çürüksu region – located within the present-day borders of Georgia – to Ordu, the work can be considered a first in its field. In the Turkish migration literature, unlike studies on North Caucasian (Circassian) migrations, there are very few works that address the migration of South Caucasians. The most significant originality of the book is that it spans at least four generations, as migration studies generally do not extend beyond two generations.

The book enables us to observe not only migration and settlement, but also the transition to a sedentary life after settlement, the pattern of property acquisition, and the processes of adaptation and assimilation across generations. In doing so, it allows us to test many migration theories: second-generation adaptation, the impact of migration networks, push–pull factors, post-settlement integration, and so on. The book also undertakes the difficult task of entering the family's private sphere. The author uses not only family documents and oral history, but also *tahrirs* (premodern records), censuses, and other state records. Among the family documents are materials obtained from those members of the family who did not migrate at the time but remained in place, and who later returned to Christianity under Tsarist and Soviet Russia.

The work was written after long and repeated interviews with many members of the family – spread across decades and dispersed throughout Turkey. Moreover, although it focuses on the story of a migrant family, it successfully establishes connections with local and national political developments: the 1878 Ottoman–Russian War, World War I, the 1915 Armenian deportation and massacres, paramilitary violence, the National Struggle, (mandatory) Turkish-language policies and the Surname Law, the 1950 introduction of multiparty elections, the politicization after 1960, and others. The book does not merely recount the family's story; it also conveys Ottoman–Turkish political history, situating the family's subjectivity within the broader context. It successfully combines microhistory and macrohistory.

The book divides the family story into eight chapters, some of which run parallel to national periodization. The first chapter, titled "Origins," is devoted to the "homeland" of Çürüksu (Kobuleti, in Georgian), to the Katamize family, and to its elders (the great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers). The author believes that his family converted to Islam during the 1770–1830 period, when the Georgians of the region "became fully Muslim" (p. 37). These were the years when Russia's century-long expansion at the expense of the Ottoman Empire pressed into Georgian territories. One significant reason for Islamization in the lands that the Ottomans gradually took from the Georgians in the sixteenth century was the transformation of the region into a frontier zone. For the Ottomans, it became an area that needed to be strengthened with a loyal population. The Ottoman state mentality was to reinforce borderlands with Muslims or to ensure the Islamization of existing Christians.

Oktay Özel notes that one reason for Islamization was that one branch of the Tavgirize family – the ruling bey family of the region – sided with the Ottoman Empire rather than Russia in an "intra-family" struggle for influence. Indeed, the leader of the faction that converted to Islam, Maksime, took the name Süleyman (p. 53). This family was also at the center of the lucrative white slave trade that extended from Çürüksu to the Ottoman Palace (p. 42).

The second chapter focuses on the migration that took place between 1879 and 1884 from Çürüksu, which had fallen into Russian hands in September 1878. Within five years, 4,254 people in 1,034 households (p. 86) migrated from the Çürüksu region, which the Ottoman Empire ceded to Russia after the 1878 War. These migrants were settled in 26 villages. However, because the author is unable to sufficiently address the family's pre-migration life (due to a lack of sources), we cannot access information about the decision-making process behind the migration or, for example, details regarding the property they left behind.

The person who encouraged and led the Muslim population of the Batum-Çürüksu region to migrate was Ali Pasha of Çürüksu, the leader of the Tavgirize family. He brought his fellow townspeople to the region (Ordu) where he had served as district governor about fifteen years earlier, settling them there. He was also officially appointed by the state as an “immigration officer” to organize the migrations and settlement (p. 98). Thus, while Ali Pasha became the most critical actor in the process by encouraging and persuading Muslims from the newly occupied region to migrate, he simultaneously increased his own influence within the Ottoman Empire.

This is a pattern observed in migrations to the Ottoman Empire. A significant portion of migrants – especially from the Caucasus and, to a lesser extent, from Crimea – migrated under the leadership of tribal chiefs and/or religious leaders and after negotiations with the Ottoman government. This situation reveals, in all these migration processes, the relationship between population and influence in its full clarity.

The arrival in, and settlement process within, the province of Ordu – the family’s place of resettlement – are addressed in the third and fourth chapters. The households of the migrant Katamize family, the distribution of land among family members, their relations with the locals whom they called Gudyani (while they themselves were referred to as Çveneburi – Georgian migrants – p. 108), are narrated in a ‘fictionalized’ style through the voice of the great-grandfather Recep Ağa (1880–1915), but primarily through that of his sister Yıldız Hanım.

These chapters demonstrate that although the official date of settlement was fixed on paper, “social settlement” – along with social integration – took much longer. The family, which was “not satisfied” (p. 107) with the land allocated by the state, purchased new lands. This shows that the migrants regarded the settlement as permanent; they did not keep their earnings in cash, nor did they consider returning.

The chapters also address tensions with the local population, which at times escalated into armed conflict. The problems generally stemmed from disputes over land and the “sharing” of women. Indeed, during the collection of the aşar tax, a verbal quarrel grew rapidly into a conflict resulting in two deaths, which the government attempted to quell by exiling both the local and migrant family leaders from the town (p. 111).

Lasting peace was achieved when two families (the Şiho and Paşo families) exchanged brides (pp. 111 and 286). The priority given to the Katamizes for receiving brides brought from Batum, aimed at strengthening *asabiyyah* (literally tribal/social solidarity), gradually shifted into marriages with local notables as a means of acquiring power. In-group marriages gave way to marriages with locals. These mixed marriages also served the function of creating a homeland.

The fifth chapter (pp. 181–232) addresses the years of World War I and the period of the National Struggle – the years in which anti-Christian hatred reached its peak and the Ottoman Empire’s Unionist government directly targeted innocent civilians. The Katamizes, on the one hand, took sides by joining the volunteer militia bands formed by Ali Pasha’s sons or by entering the Ottoman army, while on the other hand, in more specific local contexts, they protected the Christian inhabitants of Ordu – the women and children left behind. It should not be forgotten that participation in World War I also, in a sense, created an opportunity for the family to avenge the 1878 War.

The sixth chapter (pp. 233–282), “Final Stop: Eski yurt/Kızılhisar (1925),” recounts how Burhanettin “threw off his migration” (“*göçünü attı*”) by moving from the first settlement area to Eski yurt (p. 234). It shows how the second generation, after attaining material prosperity, relocated from the place where the first migrant generation had initially settled. This new migration was short-distance, but it would be the final migration of the Rıza Efendi branch of the Katamize family.

The seventh chapter, titled “Life in the Foreign Land” (pp. 283–314), depicts through a genealogical narrative the expansion of the Rıza Efendi family line – the increase in population (nine children) and their marriages – which, in a sense, filled the vast lands with descendants. It discusses the replacement of the Katamize name with the Özel surname due to the compulsory Surname Law. This chapter is conveyed largely through the stories of the family’s women, some of whom were of Christian Armenian and Greek origin (Muzaffer, Emine, Lütfiye, Vasilin/Ayşe).

After the departure of non-Muslims, the chapter turns to how the Katamize family – like the rest of Turkey – was affected by the onset of linguistic and cultural assimilation once the population became entirely Muslim. In this chapter, however, there is a structural issue inherent to the nature of the book: although a family tree is provided, as a reader who is not a member of the family, I found it difficult to follow the social and generational relationships.

In the final chapter, titled “Toward the New Order,” he examines the post–World War II period. The defining characteristic of this era is the movement of the new generation out of the village and city due to education, employment, or marriage. The migrant village population – which numbered in the hundreds in 1878 (in Burhanettin and Kızılhisar) – had grown and now numbered in the thousands. The land and agricultural production had become insufficient for the expanding population. By the 1960s, the majority of the Katamize family was living outside the village. This development ran parallel to the internal migrations that peaked throughout Turkey in the 1950s. As health services expanded and infant mortality declined, the resulting population growth, combined with the displacement of peasants by modern agricultural machinery such as tractors, led to migration to the cities.

Although the book is a “photographic story... and historical narrative,” the heaviest use of photographs appears in the final chapter. This not only shows that the phenomenon parallels the spread of photographic technology but also reminds us of a fundamental rule in all historical research: “The further back one goes, the fewer the documents.” For example, at this point, one would have expected more than two photographs belonging to Çürüksu.

Oktay Özel concludes his study with the death of his grandfather, Rıza Efendi (“Katamize Hacı Mustafa Ağazade Recep Ağa oğlu Hacı Rıza Özel”) in 1981. This demonstrates the importance of lineage (genealogy) for migrants who were uprooted from their homeland. What is remarkable is that the migration history of one migrant family, dispersed across Turkey and consisting of tens of thousands of people with diverse professions, is written directly by a historian from within that very family. Furthermore, the author conducts this work at a critical historical moment when producing such a study through oral history and fieldwork may no longer be possible in the near future. He activates living memory just in time. It should also be noted as an interesting paradox that the migrant family remembers its migration history at the very moment it becomes localized.

Conclusion

Ottoman post-imperial migrations, which have not yet received the attention it deserves within the post-imperial migrations literature, are, as these four studies show, a case that must be considered. It may even be argued that without considering the Ottoman migration example (together with the Meiji *hikiagesha*), the post-imperial migrations literature cannot move beyond a Eurocentric framework and cannot become global. This is because the migrations of the Ottoman Empire, one of the two empires that aspired to be “Western” but were not truly Western (the other being the Meiji Empire of Japan), will also help us understand the distinctiveness of Western empires and their migrations. In addition, Ottoman post-imperial migrations are significant in terms of their scale. As one of the two most massive and tragic cases – after the 9 million Japanese *hikiagesha* – the Ottoman post-imperial migrations, with at least 1.5 million migrants, corresponded to a considerably large proportion relative to its era and the empire’s heartland (at least 25 percent of Anatolian Muslims). Another reason is that Ottoman post-imperial migrations constitute one of the earliest examples of the modern period. The Ottoman case can offer the post-imperial migrations literature the opportunity to observe the circumstances of migrants 100 to 150 years later. It may particularly help us measure the impact of the accommodation > adaptation > assimilation chain. Indeed, Özel’s study discussed above provides a valuable contribution in this regard.

In addition to the particularities of Ottoman migrations, their differences can also contribute to the post-imperial migrations literature. As the four studies demonstrate, Ottoman migrants differed from European post-imperial migrations in terms of population composition. Ottoman migrants were not colonists returning from the colonies, as in the French, Portuguese, and Italian examples. The Crimean

and Crimean migrations can be compared to the Sudeten German migrations. Only a portion of the Balkan migrants described themselves as *evlad-ı fatihan* (literally, son of conquerors) and as people who were returning. Those who migrated in masse to the core territories (Anatolia, Rumelia/Thrace, and Northern Syria) were essentially the indigenous peoples of the lands and countries lost by the Ottoman Empire. In other words, they were not Ottomans, such as Turks, who had gone to those regions during Ottoman expansion.

They were the non-Turkish peoples of the Balkans and the Caucasus who had gradually Islamized (i.e., Bosnians, Muslim Albanians, Pomaks, Muslim Georgians, Torbeşi . . .) as well as the partially Turkic post-Chinggisid semi-nomadic and warrior Muslim populations of the North Black Sea steppes, often referred to collectively as “Tatars.” Considering that the Balkans – especially the regions known as Rumelia, corresponding to present-day Bulgaria, Northern Greece, and Macedonia – were among the regions that sent migrants, a significant number of these populations were descendants of Turkmen groups who had moved there centuries earlier as colony-soldiers with their families during the Ottoman expansion, or of Muslim communities who had been exiled (*sürgün*) at different times for various reasons. Those included in this group were generally regarded as *evlad-ı fatihan*.¹⁵

The most important additional difference is that, unlike European migrations, Ottoman migrations contributed to homogenization. As the four studies above demonstrate, Ottoman society, which was ethnically and religiously heterogeneous, became religiously homogenized through the migration of Muslims. By contrast, the European metropolises, which were relatively homogeneous, became heterogeneous through migration. With the inclusion of the Ottoman case in the post-imperial migrations literature, the impact of migrants will also be better understood.

A final note concerns the Ottoman post-imperial migrations literature. It is evident that three of these four works adopt a revisionist perspective. Most importantly, two of them were written by historians outside Turkey. This roughly reflects the state of migration studies in Turkey as well. It cannot yet be said that critical migration historiography has sufficiently developed. The main reason for this is the mindset that dominates Turkish social sciences. Turkish academia does not evaluate the Ottoman Empire as a colonial power, nor even as an imperialist power.

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¹⁵See, for instance, Barkan (1953).

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