

# **PART I: RANDOM OR DESIGNED: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF PATTERNS AND DRIVING FORCES OF MÜSADERE**

## ***CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION***

This is an excerpt from my thesis. The müsadere practice was an extra-legal practice of property confiscation exercised by the Ottoman sultans circa between 1453 and 1839 usually but not necessarily after the death of individuals. Concentrating on its latest period, my thesis combines qualitative and quantitative methods to explain its functions, driving forces, as well as persistence and abolition. In doing so, I contribute to the general economic historiography of so called state predation. For information, part 2 of the thesis deals with strategic interactions between the state and wealth-holders, employing a game theoretic framework and a micro-historical study of long-term patrimonial strategies of provincial families in respective chapters. Part 3 examines why this practice has persisted for so long and why it was abolished specifically in 1839 from an institutional perspective. The present chapters (chapters 2 and 3) constitute the quantitative part of the study. In this text, you might want to skip a reasonably long discussion of sources (pages 3-13) if not interested. Also, unfortunately, I did not have time to turn these chapters into a separate paper. So, please ignore occasional references to other chapters.

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# 1 SOURCES OF DATA AND PATTERNS OF CONFISCATION

This chapter introduces the sources of the data used in part 1 of the thesis and their limitations, while presenting general patterns of confiscation with the help of descriptive statistics. The constructed microdata include 1017 cases of confiscation undertaken by the Ottoman sultans during the period 1750-1839. The data was constructed mainly out of confiscation inventories located in the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives in Istanbul. Despite their historical value, these sources have certain limitations. In addition to introducing their content, the first part of the chapter addresses these limitations at both general and study-specific levels.

The second purpose of the chapter is to understand the profile of the prime targets of confiscation. This question is of fundamental importance as it sets the ground for the rest of the thesis. Although *müsadere* is one of the topics yet to be studied systematically, the historians continuously make remarks on it, which are often squeezed into a single paragraphs or footnote in their works. One of these remarks is that its prime targets were high government officials, joined by local elites in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> However, as noted in the previous chapter, the long-18<sup>th</sup> century has its own realities not quite fitting into this generalisation. Confiscations not only became more frequent and arbitrary in this century, but they were shaped by different motives than in previous centuries. It has also been argued in the literature that the legal-religious community (*ulema*), the merchants (especially non-Muslims), the ordinary subjects (*reaya*) and the women were generally immune from confiscation.<sup>2</sup> In addition to testing these hypotheses using the constructed dataset, this chapter answers an entirely neglected question of if confiscations followed any spatial and temporal patterns.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see: Halil İnalcık, "Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of Economic History* 29, no. 1 (1969): 107.

<sup>2</sup> Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 33, 55-56, 95-96.

<sup>3</sup> As to the lack of temporality in the study of *müsadere*, Rifa'at Abou El-Hajj noted that '...Twentieth century researchers ... take an ahistorical approach to the *müsadere* practice claiming that it was retained unchanged over time.' Rifa'at Abou El-Hajj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Binghamton: SUNY Press, 1991), 48. The only exception is often repeated argument that the number of confis-

Moreover, the chapter presents statistical evidence on how the central government justified the practice of confiscation. The other often repeated claim in the literature, which is related to the profile of the targets, is that the kind of wealth confiscated by the government was that accumulated through imperial grant that was considered bound to return to the public treasury once they died or were dismissed from office. This is also a problematic approach especially within the context of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when we observe different forms of justification. Most frequently emphasised in the literature, one of these justifications was major crime committed against the state usually accompanied by execution, dismissal or exile.<sup>4</sup> However, these are also yet to be subjected to a systematic analysis.

The lack of such an account stems primarily from the lack of quantitative analysis and thus from technical difficulties of data construction on the subject. This difficulty has been recognised by at least one historian who presented it as a reason for his choice of case-study approach.<sup>5</sup> Others also rely on either case studies or contemporary chronicles to generalise on these aspects of müsadere. The chapters in this part relax the study of müsadere from potentially biased chronicles and restrictiveness of case studies. The descriptive statistics presented here adds not only to the historiography of müsadere but to the broader understanding of property rights abuses by early modern sovereigns. The logic adopted here is driven by the hypothesis that confiscations are inherently selective or unevenly distributed. The rest of the chapter is organised as follows.

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cations mounted in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and especially after the 1770s because of fiscal distress, political turmoil and, following these two, centralising attempts. Yavuz Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım Ve Değişim Dönemi (XVIII. Yüzyıldan Tanzimat'a Mali Tarih)* (İstanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1986), 110-111. Murat Çizakça, "Was Shari'ah Indeed the Culprit?," in *MPRA* (2010), 29.

<sup>4</sup> Halil İnalçık, for example, wrote that '...although Islamic law strictly forbids confiscation of private property from either Muslims or non-Muslims, the property of the tax farmer or any government related fortunes were always suspect as to their origin and were therefore subject to confiscation.' Halil İnalçık and Donald Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 213. Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 14.

<sup>5</sup> Yavuz Cezar, "Bir Ayanın Muhallefatı Havza Ve Köprü Kazaları Ayanı Kör İsmail-Oğlu Hüseyi (Müsadere Olayı Ve Terekenin İncelenmesi)," *Belleten* XLI, no. 161 (1977).

Section 2.1 addresses the scope and limitations of confiscation inventories as source materials, while touching upon how these limitations were mitigated in the study. The rest of the chapter aims to set the ground for econometric analysis in chapter 3. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 provide temporal and spatial patterns of confiscation respectively. Section 2.4 deals with the justification of müsadere and the profile of the prime targets in terms of religion, gender and occupation. The final section concludes.

## 1.1 Confiscation Inventories and Data Construction

### 1.1.1 Scope and General Limitations

In recent decades, probate inventories have increasingly been used in many areas of Ottoman studies from cultural to economic history.<sup>6</sup> In part 1 of the thesis, which is a quantitative analysis of patterns and driving forces of confiscation, I use a sub-category of probate inventories, which I call ‘confiscation inventories.’ It is therefore necessary to make a distinction between two types of probate inventories. Most inventories were produced for division of inheritance purposes when the heirs of the deceased have taken their disagreement over inheritance to the court. These records are called ‘tereke defterleri’ Those employed in this study belong to a different category of probate inventories known as ‘muhallefat defterleri.’<sup>7</sup> Both concepts of muhallefat and tereke have similar lexical meanings: possessions left behind by the deceased. However, the term muhallefat has traditionally been used by official records and modern historians of the Ottoman Empire to denote inventories recorded for confiscation. In addition to the reason of preparation, these two categories of probate records differed in the person who prepared them. That is, while terekes were prepared by court experts called *kassam*, muhallefats were prepared by a certain individual called *muhallefat mübaşiri* (hereafter: confiscator), an agent (often a low or mid-ranking public servant from the

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<sup>6</sup> Halil İnalçık was the first historian to draw attention to probate inventories in the 1940s. Halil İnalçık, "Osmanlı Tarihi Hakkında Mühim Bir Kaynak," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil, Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 1, no. 2 (1942). For a review of studies using probate inventories, see: Hülya Canbakal, "Barkan'dan Günümüze Tereke Çalışmaları," in *Ömer Lütfi Barkan Türkiye Tarihçiliğine Katkıları ve Etkileri Sempozyumu* (İstanbul: 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Tahsin Özcan, "Muhallefat," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Ansiklopedisi* (2005).

central bureaucracy) commissioned by the centre for the sole purpose of confiscation.

It must be noted, however, that they are similar in form. Although the content might vary, they typically contain three parts. The introductory protocol of a muhallefat register includes a summary of the case including the name, occupation and location of the wealth-holder as well as the names of the third parties involved in the process of confiscation. The second part gives a list of assets (full or partial depending on the number of inventories) owned by the deceased or the punished is provided. Ranging from a single page to tens of pages, these lists come either with or without property categories. As will be detailed below, the third section, which lacks from some inventories, includes a brief calculation of net value which is a deduction of debits from claims. In fact, one of the outcomes of this process was partial confiscation, meaning confiscation of a fraction of assets. Typically, though, confiscation covered any moveable and immovable property owned by the targeted individual without leaving even a tiny piece unregistered with the inevitable exception of hoarded property. Thus, confiscated property could be anything from houseware, jewellery and cash to big farms, livestock and gardens.

There exists more than one inventory for some individuals. This is often the case when the confiscator was ordered to make a further search when the centre was not satisfied with the confiscator's estimation. Moreover, in some cases, the confiscator might have wanted or has been ordered to send inventory in parts rather than all in one. That is, for example, initially a list of possessions was sent followed by a list of debtors and creditors. Depending on the complexity of case, these procedures could be more detailed than this simplified narrative.<sup>8</sup>

Although the study of confiscation has so far been the primary area of use of muhallefats, their potential areas of use are the history of prices, consumer culture, living standards and credit relations. Like terekes, muhallefats are subject to certain limitations when used in these fields. One of these limita-

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<sup>8</sup> A detailed examination of these complexities is provided in chapter 4.

tions is the wealth bias that these records tend to underrepresent the relatively less wealthy social strata as the likelihood of a case to be taken to the court increased with the size of inheritance.<sup>9</sup> When it comes to confiscation inventories, this problem gets even more serious as the size of the inheritance tends to be higher in those considered for confiscation by the central government. This problem, however, is barely an issue for the present study as its main objective is to analyse confiscations facing the wealthiest, thereby intentionally leaving the rather poorer parts of society out of analysis.

Another limitation to the use of muhalledats is potential inaccuracy of valuations found in them.<sup>10</sup> The accuracy of these valuations depends on the nature of confiscation process. If there was an auction, they often reflected the prices for which assets were sold in locally held auctions led by confiscators and local administrators. Such inventories with auction prices even consist of the name of the purchaser written next to the item he purchased. For assets transported to the capital in kind, these values indicate the estimates of confiscators. To what extent these estimates represent the actual prices is a question that needs attention. There are convincing historical reasons to believe that they were not quite different from market prices. First, either confiscators or local administrators had experience of price estimation. Second, confiscators sometimes worked with a local expert to help him with it. Nevertheless, any estimated price can and will often be different, though slightly, from the actual one. Even though it was potentially so, I am mainly interested in another aspect of these valuations, which is the government's gains and not the prices themselves. Potential inaccuracy can distort the value of revenue acquired through confiscation. This distortion, however, would not be as much as that in the findings of a price historian. In addition to these general limitations of probate inventories and those specific to confiscation inventories, there are also limitations specific to the current study. These are addressed in the next section within the context of data construction.

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<sup>9</sup> Hülya Canbakal and Alpay Filiztekin, "Wealth and Inequality in Ottoman Lands in the Early Modern Period," in *AALIMS Political Economy of the Muslim World* (Houston: 2013), 3.

<sup>10</sup> For a methodological article detailing the problem of valuation, see: Pınar Ceylan, "Ottoman Inheritance Inventories as a Source of Price History," *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* 49, no. 3 (2016).

### 1.1.2 Data Construction and Study-specific Limitations

How representative is the constructed dataset and what are the limitations of sampling? This section answers these questions within the context of data construction process. It must be stated at the outset that inevitable barriers make a ‘perfectly’ random sampling difficult. It is nearly impossible to know the entire population ( $N$ ) and its features as we do not know if a muhallefat was prepared for all confiscations. Therefore, we do not know the crucial ratio of  $n/N$  where  $n=1017$ . Even if one could estimate the value of  $N$ , this estimation would still be subject to survival bias, that is, whether all relevant archival documents have survived up to day. Below discussion details how the sample was filtered out of existing sources.

I started my archival research by determining the location of muhallefats in Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives -hereafter BOA) in Istanbul where a high majority of them are preserved. Most muhallefats in the BOA are located under a collection called *Başmuhasebe Muhallefat Halifeliği Defterleri* (Books of the Bureau of Confiscation –hereafter BMHD).<sup>11</sup> This collection consists of some 1381 documents dated to the period 1601-1839, majority of which belong to post-1750.<sup>12</sup> This first step has shown me that there were also muhallefats located, though in much smaller numbers, under other collections in the BOA, in uncatalogued folios in the BOA and in the Topkapı Palace Archives.

For reasons listed below, I have decided to limit the quantitative analysis to catalogued muhallefats either in the BMHD or other collections. The first reason is rather practical. Since uncatalogued muhallefats are not searchable neither in digital nor in paper catalogues, they must be searched for one by one in certain uncatalogued folios. This would be an indispensable task for a historian working on a single case of müsadere or writing a biography of an individual whose wealth was confiscated. However, it would possibly

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<sup>11</sup> This bureau functioned as a branch of the Ministry of Finance and was in charge of carrying out confiscations on behalf of the sultan.

<sup>12</sup> Yusuf Sarınoy, *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi* (İstanbul: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 2010), 147.



require a few years of archival work for one constructing a large dataset out of confiscation inventories. I have also excluded muhallefats in the Topkapı Palace archives for they are biased to Istanbul muhallefats and they mostly constitute a fraction of inventories of the assets sent to the public treasury located in the palace and so usually have a copy in BOA. Those with a copy in BOA have been used if they passed other tests of elimination below.

The elimination process did not end there. The dataset contains 1017 cases of confiscation and why this number is even lower than the number of documents preserved in the BMHD is as follows. First, the analysis employed in Part I is restricted to the period 1750-1839, which made me immediately exclude those from the previous 149 years for which there are existing muhallefats, though much lower in quantity. The practical reason of this choice is that the number of existing muhallefats is much higher during this period. Furthermore, as the introduction chapter has demonstrated, most of it was marked by a fiscal and political crisis. The fact that the first 20 years of it was relatively more peaceful allows exploring the relationship between the crisis and confiscation. Second, I have immediately found out that not all documents under the collection were confiscation inventories. Thus, the miscataloged documents such as confiscator reports seeking for a decision what to do next were also ruled out. Third, I have not included those that were terekes produced for division of inheritance rather than confiscation purposes. Fourth, some muhallefats were left out since they missed an introductory protocol without which it would become almost impossible to know nothing but some numbers. Fifth, I have eliminated some because items were recorded only in numbers rather than with their worth.

As it will be seen in the next chapter, information on how the process of confiscation ended is crucial for my econometric analysis. Confiscation inventories, however, are not always informative on if it was full confiscation, no confiscation or inheritance tax that reflects a deal between the central government and the family.<sup>13</sup> Where possible, I have resorted to a large pool of

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<sup>13</sup> The outcome of inheritance tax was first identified by Ali Yaycıoğlu: Ali Yaycıoğlu, "Wealth, Power and Death: Capital Accumulation and Imperial Confiscations in the

supplementary documents (over 7000) to complete this missing information. These documents include reports, notes and decrees. A few cases for which I could not identify the confiscation outcome were removed from the dataset. But this elimination did not apply to data items with a missing value of a relatively less important variable. For example, an item in which occupation was missing was still included in the dataset in which case this observation was simply treated as missing in the analysis.

In addition to the eliminated cases, there have been made some additions. It turned out that some documents in the BMHD included more than one inventory. Where I could identify to whom these inventories belonged, I added them to the dataset as individual items. Moreover, I have included those inventories catalogued under collections other than BHMD accessed through a digital catalogue search.

This summary of the process of data construction made it clear how I ended up with a sample consisting of 1017 cases of confiscation.<sup>14</sup> As I emphasised in the beginning, constructing a 'perfectly' random dataset was not possible due to the limitations listed above. At times, the obstacle was simply a worn-out document in which case I had to leave that case out. Perhaps, one positive point about the representativeness of the data is that BMHD where most muhalledats used in the data come from shows a reasonable degree of diversity in terms of space, social groups, and period and met my expectations on where and when it should be more intense. For example, as expected, share of Istanbul was reasonably higher than other locations.

What information was gathered from confiscation inventories? The introductory protocol provided identity and location of wealth-holders. Titles present in official sources are quite telling especially when it comes to the elites that constitute the focus of this study. From one's title, the historian can tell his or her gender, religion, secular title, social group as defined in Ottoman po-

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Ottoman Empire (1453-1839)," in *New Perspectives in Ottoman Economic History* (New Haven: Yale University: 2012).

<sup>14</sup> A full list of sources used in the data construction is provided in primary sources section of the bibliography.

litical thinking, family affiliation and whether he completed pilgrimage.<sup>15</sup> For example, the full title '*Karaosmanoğlu el-Hac Mehmed Ağa*' informs us about all these characteristics of this person.

**Karaosmanoğlu:** He was a member of a prominent family located in Manisa in the Aegean coast of Anatolia.

**El-hac:** A religious marker for a pilgrim male.

**Mehmed:** A Muslim male name.

**Ağa:** A secular title given to most provincial elites in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

A wealth-holder's occupation was mostly affixed to the title too. For women, however, occupation was invariably missing. The protocol occasionally gives the justification for *müsadere* as well (for 390 cases).

In addition to identity, the protocol almost invariably specifies one's location. Normally, the location is in the most detailed form down to village level. But a high majority of confiscation targets lived in urban areas. I have faced two difficulties in collecting spatial information. First, identifying the present-day equivalent of historical settlements whose name changed in the last two centuries was cumbersome. This was especially the case for those in the Balkans where Ottoman names of towns and cities are generally not used by post-Ottoman nation states. Second, it was difficult to identify the province they were part of, which was necessary for province-level visualisation, because province borders were frequently redrawn due to territorial changes or administrative arrangements. Fortunately, these changes were not significant during the period of concern. These difficulties were largely overcome

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<sup>15</sup> Working with Ottoman titles is tricky. For example, it could well be someone was mentioned with more than one title in different sources. When it comes to social class, I mean the one identified in Ottoman political terminology, primarily the dichotomy between *askeri* and *reaya* (military-administrative and ordinary subjects). For more on the interpretation of Ottoman titles, see: Metin Coşgel and Boğaç Ergene, "Dispute Resolution in Ottoman Courts: A Quantitative Analysis of Litigations in Eighteenth-Century Kastamonu," *Social Science History* 38, no. 1-2 (2015): 182.

by the help of *Osmanlı Yer Adları Sözlüğü* (The Dictionary of Ottoman Settlements).<sup>16</sup>

The date of confiscation is the other important element of the dataset. Confiscation inventories typically include the data in 'day, month, year' format. Depending on if inventory was final or preliminary, the date of confiscation in the dataset reflects the end date of the confiscation process. Some, however, would not specify the first two, namely day and month. Inherently, this study is interested in years and months only. Years are indispensable as time-specific variables of the statistical analysis are in annual terms. Months are used to examine the effect of seasonality. Thus, although the absence of the day of confiscation did not affect my analysis, that of month did. In case month was missing, it was simply coded as missing in the data.

One of the driving forces of confiscation can be the size and distribution of wealth. Accordingly, I have collected information on certain features of confiscated wealth. As mentioned above, confiscation inventories often give the value of each asset included in confiscation and the calculation of the net value of wealth. The net value was calculated by subtracting the total value and debts owed to wealth-holder from debts owed by him and direct costs of confiscation such as commission paid to the agents in charge, costs of auction and transportation where available. Not all inventories were that detailed. They were then coded as missing value. The most time-consuming of the process of data construction was to calculate the share of liquid assets, namely cash, jewellery, watches and slaves with the purpose of finding a liquidity ratio, i.e. the proportion of liquid assets to the total value. This ratio could be calculated only in 361 cases.<sup>17</sup> The focus of this section was on the most important details and problems of data construction, leaving issues of econometric methodology to the next chapter, I shall now proceed to the patterns of confiscation.

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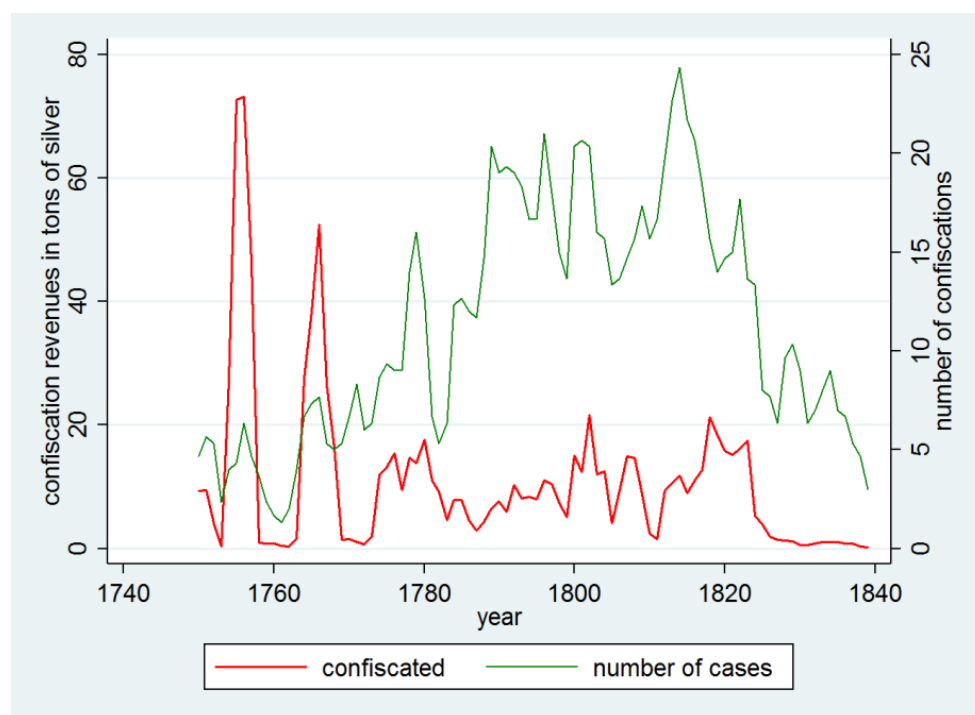
<sup>16</sup> Tahir Sezen, *Osmanlı Yer Adları Sözlüğü (Alfabetik Sırayla)* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> This is why econometric analysis conducted in chapter 3 considers the impact of liquidity in a separate model with less number of observations.

## 1.2 Time

This section looks at temporal patterns of confiscation. Despite the generally static approach to the *müsadere* practice taken in the existing literature, the historians claimed that its frequency mounted during crises and wars especially from the 1770s until its abolition in 1839. This period was also a period of lots of costly reforms undertaken by Selim III and Mahmud II. Before subjecting the data to econometric analysis, the present section shows how frequencies of confiscation fluctuated in the period 1750-1839 and what the potential implications of its temporal patterns are.

**Figure 2.1** *Frequencies of Confiscations/Annual Confiscation Revenue (in tons of silver), 1750-1839*<sup>18</sup>



**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

Figure 2.1 is the main temporal figure. The right-axis of it shows the annual number of confiscations while the left-axis represents the value of confiscation revenues expressed in tons of silver. In spite of the years with dramatic falls, the green line representing the number of confiscations follows a gen-

<sup>18</sup> Values are given in 3-year moving averages to normalise the data.

erally increasing trend after the 1770s, coinciding with the destructive Russo-Ottoman war of 1768-1774 deteriorated state finances. Intensifying during the period 1770s-1820s, a falling trend begins nearly after 1820, continuing until the abolition in 1839. Since the 1810s, the centre has managed to eliminate major provincial elites through confiscations and some reconciliatory methods. The red line displays temporal patterns of annual revenues of the central government from confiscations. I am more interested in fluctuations of the red line than its actual values because this is a sample.

**Figure 2.2** *Contributions of Confiscation Revenues to Total State Revenues, 1750-1839*



**Source:** Pamuk and Karaman (2010) and see bibliography for data sources.<sup>19</sup>

These fluctuations do not appear to be as interesting as those shown by the number of confiscations mostly due to outliers in the dataset. For example, in 1755, the inheritance of Yahya Paşa, the governor of Tırhala (modern day

<sup>19</sup> Şevket Pamuk and K. Kıvanç Karaman, "Ottoman State Finances in European Perspective, 1500–1914," *Journal of Economic History* 70, no. 3 (2010).

Larissa, Greece) district was confiscated.<sup>20</sup> His wealth was so immense that it distorts the results. Perhaps the green line showing the number of confiscations gives healthier results for this reason. However, even with confiscation revenues, we can see clearer rising trend in the period 1780s-1820s and harmony with the number of confiscations if four outliers are removed from the data.

The other aspect of temporal distribution is the contribution of confiscation revenues to total state revenues. How much did the central government gain from confiscations? This is a question with little room for speculation as the data on state revenues is quite scarce during this period. The data prepared by Pamuk and Karaman (2010) include only three years covered by the present study: 1761, 1784, 1785.<sup>21</sup> With respect to these three years, figure 2.2 illustrates the contribution of confiscation revenues to revenues of the central government with respect to these three years. Starting from a tiny share of 0.28% in 1761, it goes up to 6.85 and 6.83% in 1784 and 1785 respectively. It is clearly seen that the contribution was marginal with reference to these years.

One word of importance here is that this ratio was probably much higher in the years with an outlier. As state revenues are not expected to change a lot during much of this period, one can expect the contribution of confiscations to be much higher in years with an outlier. However, if it rises to, say 20% in such a year, it would not mean that the central government extracted much less tax compared to the previous year. This is for the Ottoman budgets typically do not reflect confiscation revenues since they were extraordinary and irregular sources of income.<sup>22</sup> In relation to this, arguing that revenue contribution of confiscations was marginal does not mean that these revenues were unimportant. Although they could be negligibly small, serving as an irregular source of revenue was the exact fiscal function of the practice of con-

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<sup>20</sup> DBŞM.MHD 12639, 12635, 13668.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 603-609.

<sup>22</sup> Mehmet Genç and Erol Özvar, *Osmanlı Maliyesi Kurumlar Ve Bütçeler* (Istanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2006).

fiscation.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the marginality of contribution leads us to consider political functions of *müsadere*, which shall remain as a question mark to be answered in the following chapters.

### 1.3 Space

This section looks at the spatial patterns of confiscation. The basic intuition behind the spatiality is that the capacity and motivation to confiscate of the central government was spatially uneven. This uneven distribution is linked with the distance from Istanbul and administrative status of physical location of assets. Proximity to Istanbul matters as it influences direct costs of confiscation, namely agency and transportation costs, whereas administrative status affects the degree of state presence in the location.<sup>24</sup>

This section addresses these aspects of spatiality by providing three maps at settlement and province levels.<sup>25</sup> Map 2.1 displays spatial frequency of confiscations at both settlement and province levels. The map illustrates that the largest number of confiscations took place in Istanbul followed by such cities as Bursa, Antalya and Manisa. The common feature of most cities with a higher number of confiscations is that they are either coastal or very close to the coast. This finding leads to two alternative hypotheses. First, coastal regions were more appealing since they were relatively developed because of greater commercial exchange stemming from port presence and favourable climate. Second, undertaking confiscations in the coasts was less costly as sea transport was historically cheaper than inland transport. In addition to these hypotheses, an alternative reasoning could be that the wealthy of the coasts were relatively capable of exiting the relationship with the centre by

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<sup>23</sup> The reason, apart from the lack of state revenue data, why I do not speculate much on the issue of contribution is that we do not know the value of  $N$ , being the entire population, which would allow to calculate the ratio of  $n/N$  where  $n$  is 1017.

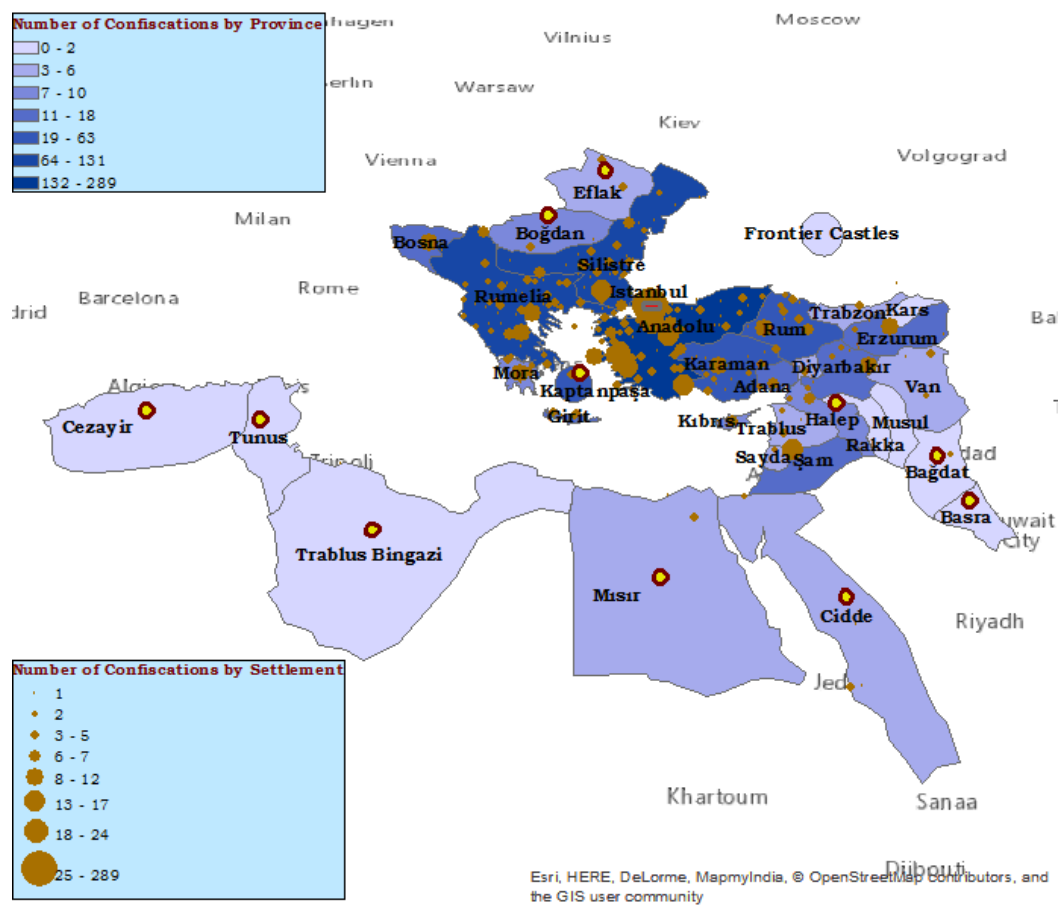
<sup>24</sup> For more on spatiality of confiscation, see the section of theoretical background in chapter 3.

<sup>25</sup> When entering the spatial data into Geographic Information Systems (GIS) each case of confiscation had to be assigned to a dot in the map. Since it is not possible to know the each coordinates of the location of assets, which would be multiple anyway, I had to decide where to assign confiscations conducted in a settlement. While doing so, I have chosen the best possible solution by assigning all confiscations in a certain settlement into a dot chosen from its present-day centre. This does no harm to the general purpose of mapping in this study which is simply to visualise spatial distribution.



being involved in commercial activity from which acquisitions had relative immunity from confiscation.<sup>26</sup> In such reasoning, however, one would see the opposite trend, less confiscation in the coasts, which is not supported by the descriptive spatial data. What was driving this picture is left as an open question to be answered in the next chapter.

**Map 2.1** *Frequencies of Confiscations in Ottoman Settlements and Provinces, 1750-1839*<sup>27</sup>



**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

<sup>26</sup> This is in line with Albert Hirschman's well-known terminology of exit, voice and loyalty. Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in in Firms, Organizations and States* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1970).

<sup>27</sup> Provincial borders shown here are approximately drawn based on a geocoded map created by Harvard Geospatial Library accessed at <http://hgl.harvard.edu:8080/opengeoportal/>. This map displays provincial borders of the Ottoman Empire, circa 1790. The Kaptanpaşa province is shown in the middle of Aegean Sea as it did not have clear-cut territories. Similarly, those confiscations conducted in frontier castles are shown at the top of the Black Sea under the name of 'Frontier Castles.'

One would also realise that areas proximate to Istanbul have a high number of confiscations, arguably caused by the role of lower transportation costs and the greater power of the centre. Map 2.1 also illustrates provincial distribution of confiscation. This is expressed in per square kilometre instead of per capita because of the lack of population data at province level. Areal distribution makes it clear that the highest number of confiscations was conducted in Istanbul, which was treated as a separate province in the data. Istanbul is followed by its three neighbours, i.e. the province of Anadolu (Anatolia) in Western Anatolia, the province of Rumeli (Rumelia or eastern Balkans) lying on the western side of Aegean Sea and the province of Silistre (Silistra) lying on the north of Istanbul along the Black Sea. This also emphasises the importance of distance from the capital. Last but not the least, province-level data shows low intensity in indirectly ruled regions (with red-yellow circles). For example, Tunisia in North Africa, which was autonomously ruled by Husaynid Dynasty and the vassal states of Wallachia and Moldavia in the Balkans were not the prime spatial targets of confiscation.

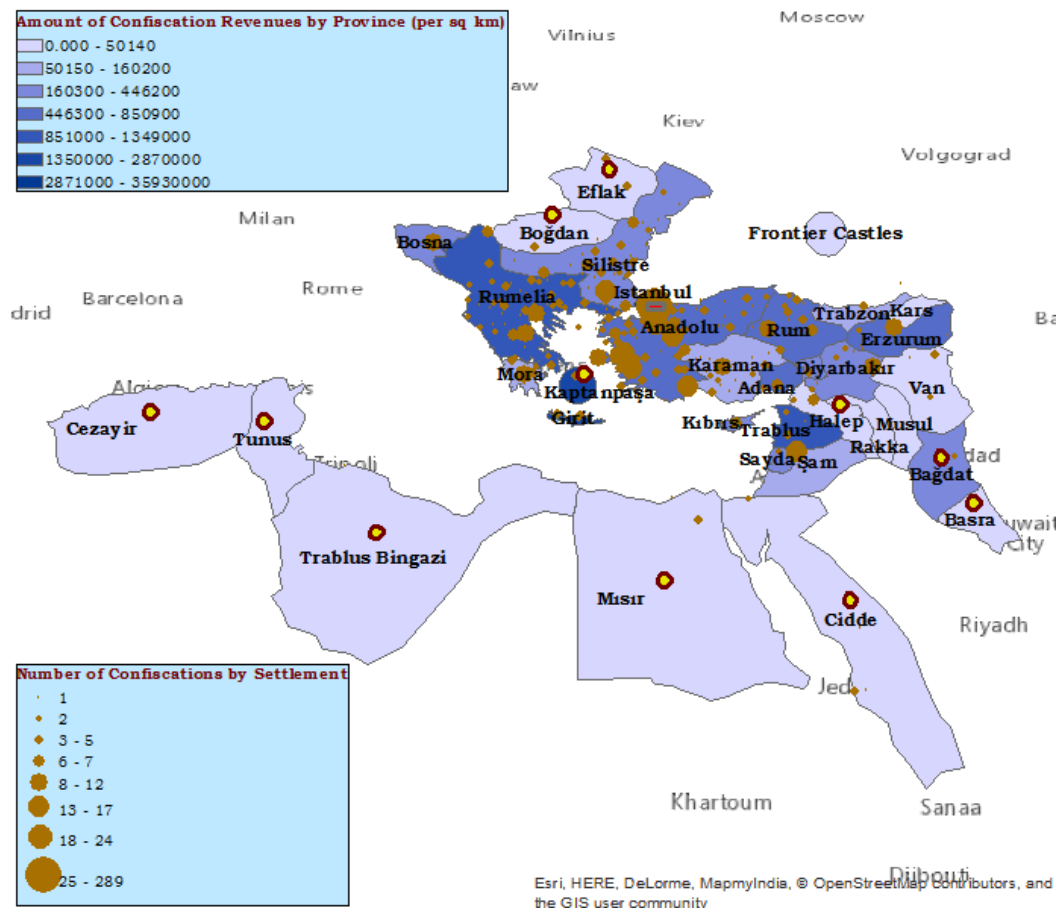
The other striking finding is the high density in the islands of Crete and Cyprus together with the province of Kaptanpaşa (including Aegean islands).<sup>28</sup> As this is not tackled in the regression analysis, it is worth giving further details on potential reasons of this. It could be well be the result of abovementioned low transportation costs in the coasts that would apply to the islands too. But it is important to note that the islands were traditional places of exile where many officials had been deported to live till they died or they were pardoned. So, their inheritance was in their places of exile when they died.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The Kaptanpaşa province shown in the maps in the middle of Aegean Sea was a fragmented province including the most of Aegean islands and some coastal settlements on both Anatolia and Greek coasts of the Sea. The province was under the administration of the Kapudan Paşa (the commander-in-chief of the Ottoman navy). Its capital was Gallipoli.

<sup>29</sup> The Grand Vizier Memiş Paşa was one of such officials. After staying in the office for one month and nine days, he was dismissed as a result of a Janissary revolt in January 1809. He was then deported to Chios (Sakız) island where he died in July of the same year. His wealth was immediately confiscated. HAT 518/25292.

**Map 2.2** *Provincial Densities of Confiscation by Revenues (per sq. km), 1750-1839*



**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

Map 2.2 answers the question how this picture changes when we use confiscation revenues instead of frequency. It shows that certain provinces such as Baghdad and Tripoli that were previously coloured with lighter tones of blue are found to have provided higher average amount of confiscation revenues to the central government. This finding, however, does not tell much as it stemmed from four outliers shown that can be seen from figure 2.1.

With few exceptions, proximity to Istanbul and administrative status seems to matter within the context of map 2.2 too. But the descriptive spatial analysis used in this section does not fully explain to what extent spatial forces shaped the decision to confiscate. Before the role of spatiality is considered in more details, we need to understand who confiscation victims were and why they faced confiscation in the official jargon of sources.

## 1.4 Justification and Identity

This section first looks at how the central government justified confiscations and then occupational, gender and religious patterns by presenting descriptive statistics and, where needed, by time and justification. As I noted above, the existing literature has often claimed that enrichment by royal grant was the main reason of existence of *müsadere* and that prime targets were office-holders except for the legal-religious community, and tax farmers, thereby excluding specific groups such as merchants, artisans, peasants and women.<sup>30</sup> The aim of this section is to explore whether the data lends support to these claims.

**Table 2.1:** *Frequency of Justifications, 1750-1839*

<b>Justification<sup>31</sup></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
<b>Death Without Heirs</b>	43	11.03	11.03
<b>Enrichment by Royal Grant</b>	56	14.36	25.38
<b>Affluence</b>	39	10.00	35.38
<b>Indebtedness</b>	46	11.79	47.18
<b>Crime</b>	206	52.82	100.00
<b>Total</b>	390	100.00	

**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

Surviving sources of confiscation occasionally state a justification explaining why the confiscation of concern was carried out. Table 2.1 shows these justifications based on 390 cases for which I could identify justification. There are five categories of justification, namely death with no heirs, indebtedness, crime, enrichment by royal grant and affluence. The crime category is actually a pooled category, including five sub-categories of crime. Yet, although I was confidently able to identify a crime committed, I could not always identi-

<sup>30</sup> İnalçık, "Capital Formation," 107.

<sup>31</sup> Corresponding words in official sources are as follows. Death without heirs: 'Bilavaris fevt olmak,' Enrichment by Royal Grant: 'Serveti miriden olmak,' Affluence: 'Servet ve yesar sahibi olmak,' Indebtedness: 'Miriye ve saireye borcu olmak,' Crime: Vary depending on the type of crime.

fy what type of crime it was.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, instead I examine these with qualitative evidence provided later in this section.

One word of caution is necessary here. Official justifications of confiscation admittedly cannot be taken as granted since they are not fully reliable due to their biased nature.<sup>33</sup> Even if they were so, they would not help to explain why only a select group of people faced confiscation of their wealth and not others who could easily have fallen under one of these categories of justification. It is the same bias, however, which makes them worth-examining. That is, they are valuable in manifesting the official mind-set behind *müsadere*.

Arguably the least disputable of all categories of justification was one's dying without any heirs. Death with no heirs constitutes 11% of the sample. These cases should be distinguished from others in the sense that the motives of the state behind confiscating the wealth of an individual without heirs were barely fiscal or political but simply to prevent plundering of inheritance.<sup>34</sup> Out of 43 cases falling into this category, 20 belong to Istanbul that is higher than the capital's share in total number of confiscations (28%). This is arguably because the wealth of some who died without heirs were confiscated by local authorities without documents having reached to the Imperial archives. One of the striking features of confiscations carried out with this justification is that once one's inheritance was sealed; some came forward with claims on inheritance in which case their claims were inquired before witnesses. If these claims have proven legitimate, the inheritance could have been returned to those who showed up unless other confiscations shown in table 2.1 did not accompany death without heirs.

The second least questionable category of justification is indebtedness that also forms 11% of the sample population. This means that the failure to pay

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<sup>32</sup> Most frequent types of crime are: (1) corruption, (2) oppression of subjects, (3) fake claim of ayanhood, (*ayan*, in this context, refers to elected local representatives) and (4) rebellion.

<sup>33</sup> Therefore, regression analysis in the next chapter does not use justification as a variable.

<sup>34</sup> One document, for instance, makes it clear that confiscating the wealth of those who died without heirs was a norm. It writes that "because confiscating the wealth of those who died without heirs and children from the subjects of the Kehlivanlı tribe and those subject to them, it was ordered to confiscate the belongings, cereals etc. of Cameleer Emir Ömer who died in Thessaloniki." CML 355/14558.

debts could be a justification. Many prime targets of müsadere were tax farmers who had to pay annual instalments to the treasury. It appears that some defaulted on their debts. In other cases, the creditor was other people and not the central government. At times, confiscation was used as a tool of threatening the debtor to expedite payment. This could be indeed an effective strategy from the central government's perspective unless the reason of non-payment was not bankruptcy. When threatened this way, it could also be rational for the debtor to make the payment if his debts did not exceed his credits.

Another way of justifying müsadere was broadly defined, crime, constituting more than 50% of the sample. In this case, the practice of müsadere takes the form of punishment though without any judicial process.<sup>35</sup> As mentioned above, crime as a justification was pooled in the above statistics. So, I shall examine five sub-categories of crime here. The first one is corruption including both bribery and embezzlement. This inherently applied to office-holders as they were those with access to government funds. Confiscation following alleged corruption was often accompanied by another form of punishment, namely execution, dismissal and exile. One might argue that from a political economy perspective, it is not arbitrary to confiscate the wealth of a corrupt official. Perhaps, what makes it arbitrary is the fact that there was no judicial process involved, meaning that the decision was on the sultan's will.<sup>36</sup>

The second type of crime that typically resulted in confiscation was oppression of the subjects. This is easy to understand within the context of political economy of tax farming. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Ottoman provinces were increasingly under the control of provincial elites who were mostly tax farmers and collectors (on behalf of grand tax farmers). As fiscal entrepreneurs, they signed a contract in either primary or secondary markets of tax farming,

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<sup>35</sup> In one of such cases, for instance, the wealth of a certain Ahmed Zero who was a merchant from Egypt was confiscated probably on a temporary basis by the government due to his debts to the treasury. After he discharged the debts, the confiscated properties were returned to him. C.DH 60/2958.

<sup>36</sup> Yaycioğlu, "Wealth, Power and Death."

making them liable to make prefixed payments to be followed by annual instalments. Whatever revenue above that amount they could collect was their profit. The natural outcome of this setting was that many entrepreneurs did their best to squeeze tax payers. From the central government's point of view oppressing the subjects meant damage to tax base by lowering the ruler's legitimacy among them.<sup>37</sup> Knowing this, the subjects used the right to send a petition to the sultan which was a unique way of communication between the sultan and his subjects. These complaints seem to have worked at times as they could lead to confiscation of the wealth of those who were supposedly overtaxing. This too was usually accompanied by execution or exile.

The third kind of crime is the fake claim of ayanhood (*ayanlık*) Ayans were the representatives of cities and towns elected by the local population though with some government intervention until 1768.<sup>38</sup> The centre generally respected this mutually beneficial relationship with the elected ayans and prevented others from claiming ayanhood. Therefore, people who declared themselves as the ayan were often punished with confiscation almost invariably accompanied by execution.

Even the less tolerated is open rebellion against the authority of the sultan, which was considered a major disobedience against the 'faith and government' (*din ü devlet*), as the traditional coupling suggests.<sup>39</sup> If a rebel could be caught sometimes with the help of local elites, he was most often punished with execution and confiscation. However, the doors were occasionally not entirely closed to rebels as some were eventually pardoned either through request, or, if they had enough bargaining power, reconciliation. Related to that, *müsadere* also applied to office-holders who did not obey the government's orders that were predominantly war-related such as sending troops or foodstuff to warzones. Depending on the bargaining position of the disobedient, their life and property could have been put under risk. As in the

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<sup>37</sup> The legitimacy is argued to be one of the determinants of the capacity to tax of a ruler: Margaret Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 17.

<sup>38</sup> Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions (1760-1820)* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 17.

<sup>39</sup> Halil İnalçık, "Islam in the Ottoman Empire," *Cultura Turcica* 5, no. 7 (1968-1970).

case of indebtedness, confiscation was at times a means of threatening the disobedient or its very existence deterred them from disobedience and oppression.

The following type of justification was enrichment by royal grant. For many historians, one's enrichment by royal grant was the single cause of existence of confiscation. The sources use two types of statement to imply enrichment by royal grant: (1) being a member of the *askeri* class that often meant holding an office, and (2) having an account with the state that was again related to the use of state resources. An imperial order to confiscate the wealth of a high bureaucrat in charge of foreign affairs well explains this justification:

Although this confiscation was waived before, it is now legitimate with the legal opinion that the possessions of the late *Reis'ül Küttab Seyyid Efendi* shall be confiscated by leaving a decent amount to his heirs because he has no heirs but a mother, two wives [or sisters as the word *hemşire* is used for both] and two grown-up children and because he accumulated his wealth not through trade but public office.<sup>40</sup>

It is clear from the end of this passage that the central government regarded the gains from an office as non-heritable. The question is whether his wealth was going to be confiscated if he was not holding an office. One would never give a convincing answer to this question. But, by thinking more generally, we must emphasise the fact that there were office-holders who never faced confiscation of their wealth inherited rather smoothly by heirs. Nevertheless, it appears that enrichment by royal grant was used to justify confiscations in the imperial language.

The most curious type of justification is affluence. Some sources explicitly state that *müsadere* was carried out 'because of the fame of being affluent.' A document, for example, mentions this justification as such: '*while the centre should necessarily be informed on the death of a wealthy individual, we somehow did not know that Pasinoğlu Mustafa of Crete died and it is now or-*

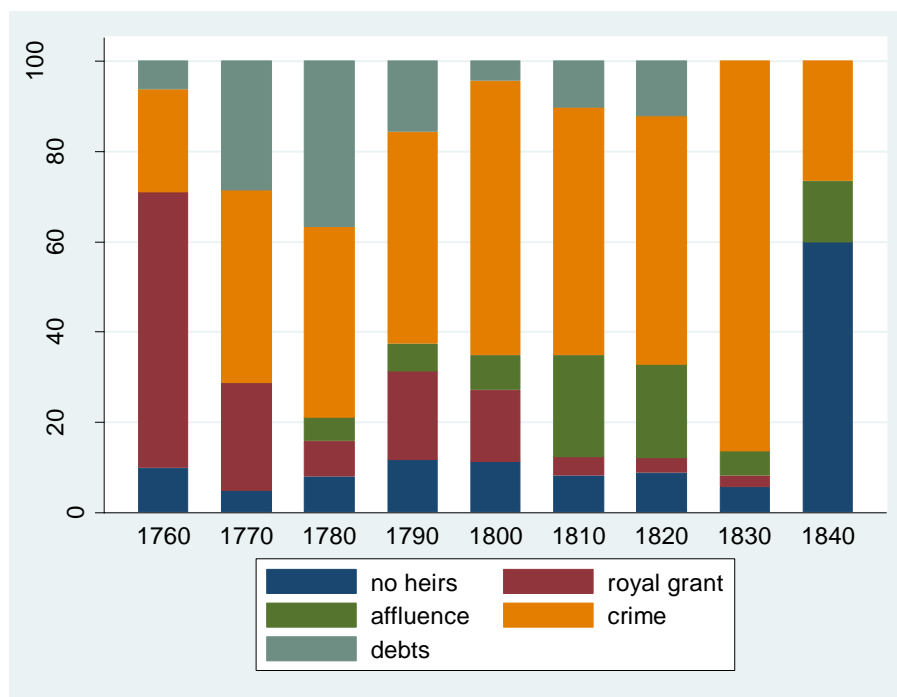
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<sup>40</sup> C.ML 477/19445. At first glance it seems contradictory that the existence of heirs is presented as a reason for re-confiscation. This, however, implies that the deceased has no vulnerable heirs who would be affected so badly from it. As will be seen later in this part, many confiscations were given up just because of the existing of needy heirs.



dered that his real estates, farms and possessions shall be confiscated.<sup>41</sup> One clue may be that this was sometimes linked with suspiciously rapid accumulation of wealth, implying uncertainty of sources of one's wealth. One final remark must be made here. The justifications of death without heirs, indebtedness and crime were most likely to be mentioned in archival documents. So, 628 cases for which no justification was given are more likely to fall into the categories of affluence and enrichment by royal grant. This means that although affluence constitutes 10% of all identified justifications, these may well be a fraction of those practised with the same motive.

**Figure 2.3:** *Proportional Frequency of Justifications during 1750-1839*



**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

It is finally necessary to make some remarks on temporal patterns of justification shown in figure 2.3. Most strikingly, there is a falling proportion of enrichment by royal grant, a very high share of crime between 1820 and 1830, and affluence appears as a justification only after the 1770s. Based on these observations, we can argue that during this period the practice of *müsadere* has been justified less and less with enrichment by royal grant,

<sup>41</sup> C.ML 166/6959.

which was once the only way of justifying confiscations, and more and more with accusation of crime against the state and with curious justification of affluence. A very high proportion of crime in the period 1820-1830 can be attributed to two developments. First, at the time, the central government was struggling to curb the power of provincial elites for which one of the methods was confiscation. The second development is the ongoing Greek rebellion at that time, which led to an increase in the category of crime in the 1820s.

**Table 2.2** *Occupational Distributions of Targets of Confiscation by Justification, 1750-1839*

<b>Occupation/Justification</b>	<b>No Heirs</b>	<b>Royal Grant</b>	<b>Affluence</b>	<b>Debts</b>	<b>Crime</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Military Officials (Askeriyye)</b>	4	29	4	15	42	173	267
<b>Administrative and Palace Officials (Kalemiyye-Saray)</b>	13	8	4	11	23	172	231
<b>Legal-religious Officials (İlmiyye)</b>	1	0	1	0	2	7	11
<b>Provincial Tax Contractors (Ayan)</b>	5	16	18	18	97	195	349
<b>Merchants (Tüccar)</b>	4	3	8	0	12	20	47
<b>Artisans (Esnaf)</b>	4	0	1	0	1	3	9
<b>Moneychangers (Sarraf)</b>	2	0	0	0	6	5	13
<b>Peasants (Köylü)</b>	2	0	3	2	21	19	47
<b>Missing</b>	8	0	0	0	2	33	43
<b>Total</b>	43	56	39	46	206	627	1017

**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

This discussion of justifications helps to understand categorical patterns of confiscation. Table 2.2 confirms that government officials and tax farmers were the occupational groups that faced confiscation by far the most. The first three categories represent government officials expressed in three categories, i.e. military, administrative and legal-religious officials. The fourth category displays provincial elites who were involved in the business of governance as tax contractors, yet were not officially affiliated with the centre.<sup>42</sup> Merchants and peasants stand at 4% of the sample population. The shares of artisans and moneychangers are quite marginal, both around 1%. Among these findings, the most surprising is the relatively high proportion of peasants. To figure out why the wealth of ordinary peasants was being confiscated, we need to look at how these were justified. It appears that 21 of 28 confiscations of peasant wealth for which I could identify justification, out of a total of 47, were crime-related. These were invariably due to their participation in rebellion as the only type of crime they could commit against the central state.

These findings get even more interesting if we relax an assumption that had to be made at the time of data construction. That is, all first four categories are, one way or another, beneficiaries of the tax revenue system as either tax collectors or farmers, though of varying levels. Some of private tax contractors also held administrative offices as a new practice in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. To highlight their later incorporation into the bureaucratic hierarchy, they were treated as private contractors.<sup>43</sup> Likewise, office-holding typically came as a package combined with revenue farms. Even retired ones were granted such farms as retirement pensions (*arpalık*).<sup>44</sup> This leads to argue that 88% of the targets of confiscation were those benefiting from the fiscal system. In other words, people engaged in productive economic activities such as commerce and industry were not under direct threat. There is, unfortunately, no pre-

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<sup>42</sup> I have detected some individuals who had multiple occupations. These few cases were coded as either officials or private fiscal contractors as one of their occupations was always one of those four categories.

<sup>43</sup> Ariel Salzmann, "An Ancien Regime Revisited: 'Privatization' and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *Politics and Society* 21 (1993).

<sup>44</sup> Madeline Zilfi, "Elite Circulation in the Ottoman Empire: Great Mollas of the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 26, no. 3 (1983): 353-354.

cise occupational data which would allow making this argument more confidently. However, according to the rough estimation of Ariel Salzman, the number of people in the fiscal business was 1,000 to 2,000 in Istanbul, and 5,000 to 10,000 in the provinces.<sup>45</sup> This contains moneychangers, which I did not include in the first four categories of the statistics presented in table 2.2. The number of merchants surpassed these figures. Only under the protection of the Austrians, there were some 200,000 merchants by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

A glimpse into occupational distribution by justification reveals further results. As displayed in the table, death without heirs could apply to any occupation groups. As for enrichment by royal grant, it is no surprise that it applies to the office-holders and private tax contractors because they were those who had financial connections with the central government. In this respect, three merchants stand out as exceptions. They were potentially suppliers of the state that was the largest purchaser in the market. In the same vein, indebtedness stands as a justification primarily for office-holders and contractors. Among all categories, merchants are the occupation group for which affluence constitutes the highest proportion, standing at 30% of all existing justifications for confiscation of merchant property. Last but not the least, crime as a justification applied to 63% of tax contractors primarily due to the conflict between the central government and provincial elites during this period.

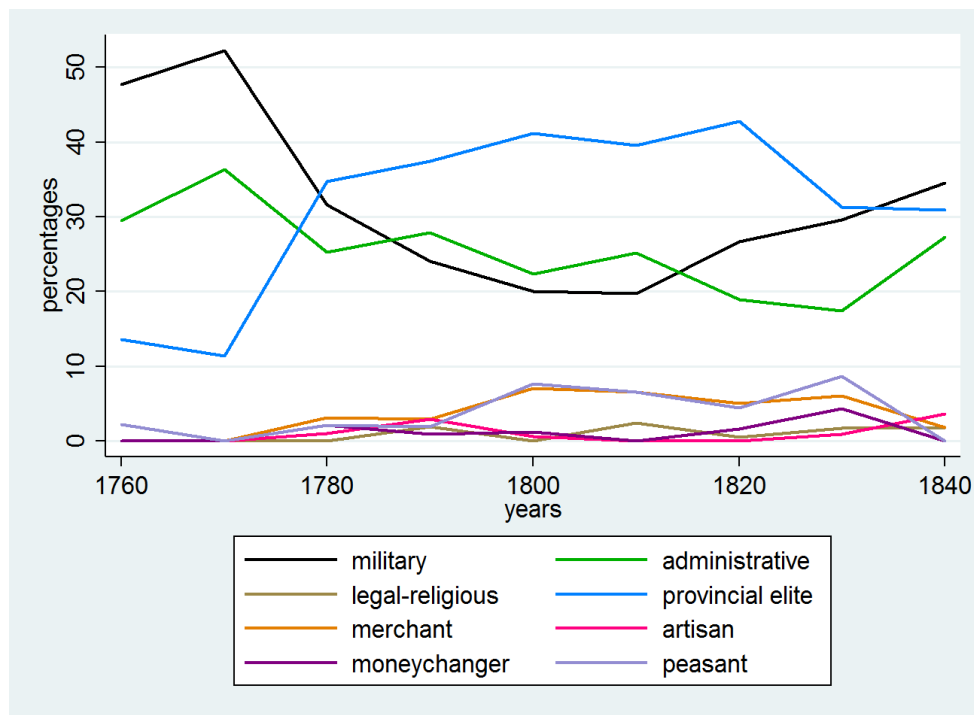
Figure 2.4 demonstrates the temporal changes in the frequencies of occupational distribution of confiscation expressed as a percentage of total number in decades during the period 1750-1839. There is no considerable change in the percentage of artisans, moneychangers, and legal-religious community. What is most striking in this figure is that it shows a boom in the number of provincial elites compared to the other groups. The figure reveals that starting from 13% in the 1750-1759 the share of provincial elites travels around 40% between 1780 and 1820. It starts to fall after 1820, continuing until the abolition. In the meantime, the ratios of military and administrative officials

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<sup>45</sup> Salzman, "An Ancien Regime Revisited," 402..

fall when the ratio of provincial elites rises. Precisely the period 1780-1820 was a time of centralising efforts. Major provincial power-holders were eliminated by the 1820s. Yet this issue is also left as an open question mark for the econometric analysis.

**Figure 2.4** *Distributions of Occupational Groups, 1750-1839*

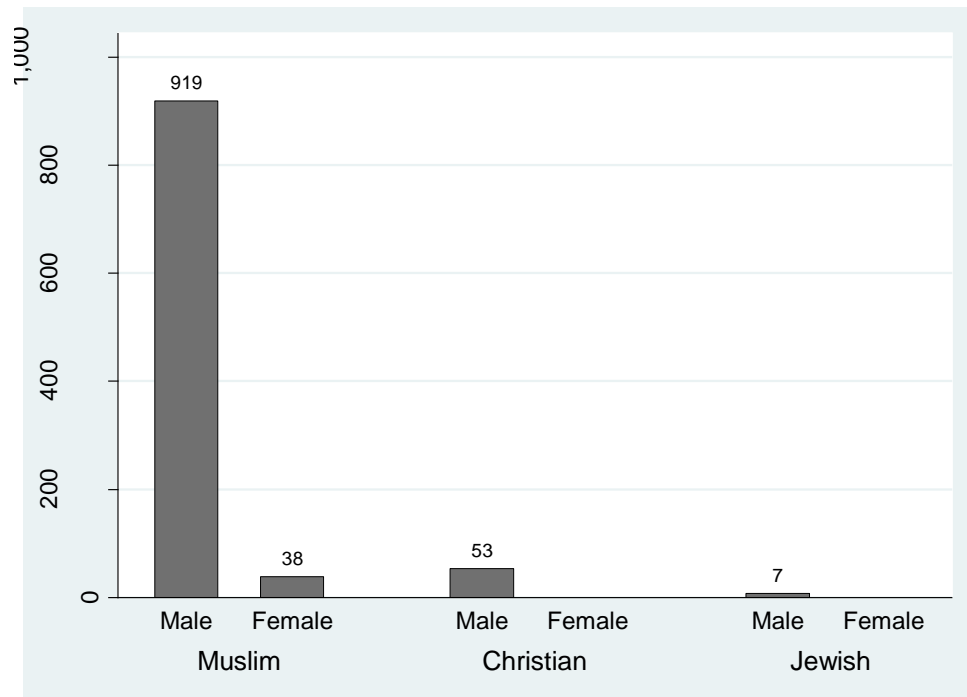


**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

The prime targets of confiscation, namely tax farmers and government officials, were almost invariably Muslim men. This, to a large extent, explains the religious and gender distribution displayed in figure 2.5. The figure reveals that Muslim men constituted 919 out of 1017 people, while the central government confiscated the wealth of only 38 women. If this is again combined with the basis of justification, it turns out that 8 out of 9 women for whom I could identify justification were those who died with no heirs. Even though not specified by official sources, some were arguably the wives of office-holders whose wealth was previously confiscated. This is probably because many people under high risk of confiscation seemingly transferred a fraction of their assets to their wives and children. The qualitative sources inform us that the central government has mostly respected the personality

principle in confiscations by not touching those properties owned by family members.<sup>46</sup> Upon their death, their inheritance could have been confiscated too.

**Figure 2.5** *Distributions by Religion and Gender, 1750-1839*



**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

The religious distribution is more interesting. As shown in figure 2.5, Muslims form a high majority of those under the threat of confiscation though there were many wealthy non-Muslims. This is firstly related to occupational structure given above, that is, non-Muslims could not take up most governmental positions except for those employed in translation services and minting. They were not allowed to bid in tax farming auctions either, though they were involved in the fiscal system as financiers who lent capital to tax farmers in need of it. To explain fully why those financiers and non-Muslim merchants, who we know were not few, it is necessary to resort to commercial diplomacy at the time. Non-Muslim merchants mostly operated as protégée merchants under the protection of major European powers. Their consulates

<sup>46</sup> This raises the question of why not all did so. First, there was an inspection process in which transfers were detected by the agents. Second, death not necessarily comes expectedly.

in the Ottoman lands sold property rights protection to Greeks and Armenians who were then hired as dragoman (translator) only in name.<sup>47</sup> Austrians only protected some 200.000 merchants, most of which were non-Muslims, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, whereas there were 120.000 merchants under Russian protection in 1808. Regardless of European protection, the Ottoman centre too recognised the role of trade for prosperity and developed accordingly a new institutional framework guaranteeing security of property and life and including its own intervention.<sup>48</sup>

Non-Muslims holding a government office were less likely to escape. Armenian Düzöğlü family, which oversaw the royal mint in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, is a noteworthy example. When the family was blamed of deliberately damaging the imperial economy, the entire wealth of all prominent members of the family was confiscated. Another exception is the case of rebels. If the effect of the Greek Rebellion of 1821-1829 that resulted in Greek independence is removed from the data, the share of non-Muslims would have been less. 17 out of 53 confiscations of the Christian property are indeed from the period 1821-1823. Some of these 17 cases are collective confiscations labelled, for example, as ‘the Greeks of Izmir.’<sup>49</sup> These confiscations applied to the wealth of either the executed rebels or those who fled to join the rebellion by leaving their property abandoned.

This section has found that the potential targets of müsadere were office-holders and private tax contractors who were overwhelmingly male Muslims. Over the course of the chosen period, the latter seem to have been targeted more than the former. This is line with the increase in the use of crime as a justification as opposed to enrichment by royal that we see more in the case of office-holders. There were exceptions to this rule yet they never became a norm to confiscate, say, the wealth of merchants.

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<sup>47</sup> Timur Kuran, *The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 199.

<sup>48</sup> Said Salih Kaymakçı, "The Sultan's Entrepreneurs, the Entrepreneurs' Sultan: Berath Avrupa Tüccarı and Institutional Change in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Empire (1835-1868)" (Boğaziçi University, 2013), 16-36.

<sup>49</sup> DBŞM.MHD 13371, DBŞM.MHD 13719, DBŞM.MHD 13336.

## 1.5 Conclusion

The first part of this chapter has discussed the sources of data employed in the next chapter and their limitations. Confiscation inventories constituted the backbone of the constructed data. These inventories were recorded usually after the death or occasionally after a non-execution punishment. They are rich in terms of information they include on the identity of the individual as well as certain characteristics of his wealth. Yet working with confiscation inventories, I have recognised some limitations like missing information and time constraints of collecting more material. Nevertheless, the present study is the first of its kind in collecting such a large-scale data out of these inventories.

The descriptive statistics presented in the second part set the ground for regression analyses done in the following chapter. Apart from giving a general quantitative outline of the application of state confiscations in the Ottoman Empire, this chapter has posed important questions concerning apparently complex nature of their driving forces. Its temporal patterns show some kind of positive relationship with fiscal distress and centralisation. I have also argued that its role as a source of revenue was marginal. As for its spatial patterns, the maps provided refer to the role of proximity to Istanbul and to the coasts. Then, I have argued how the government justified confiscations and linked this with categorical patterns of confiscation. Beneficiaries of the fiscal system were the main targets with seldom attempt at productive classes.

Yet these insights remain at descriptive level. The question remaining to be answered is which tax farmers and office-holders were most likely to be targeted or who were more likely to circumvent. In other words, why did not all people who shared the above characteristics fall victim to *müsadere*? In addition to their reflection of official ideology, the state justifications provide us little sense about this question. Moreover, the basic statistical principle applies here: correlation is not causation. These hypotheses and many others need to be subjected to econometric analysis. This is necessary not only for the complexity of the issue but also for the present chapter has deliberately not touched upon what was the outcome of confiscation process as it would



have made it unnecessarily complex given its purposes. Instead, I add this crucial piece of information to the analysis in the next chapter to shed light on the driving forces of state behaviour of confiscation.

## 2 DRIVING FORCES OF CONFISCATION

This chapter investigates the driving forces of the practice of confiscation in the Ottoman Empire with an emphasis on the period 1750-1839. The previous chapter the selective nature of the practice. Yet its selectivity remains a largely underexplored issue in the existing historiography. The period under question presents a favourable ground as it was arguably the most arbitrary and intense period of it, thereby reflecting a variety of motives. The findings of this chapter, however, have broader implications. It mainly contributes to two lines of literature. Theoretically speaking, the question what has driven confiscation by the ruler is a question of public choice literature.<sup>50</sup> Although scholars adopting 'predatory state' view have generally abstracted predatory behaviour from its complexities, recent literature has broadened the concept of rationality by relaxing it from revenue-maximisation only approaches.<sup>51</sup> In examining the interaction between politics and economic growth in history, economic historians have concentrated rather on constitutional constraints and non-state formal organisations that tied the hands of rulers.<sup>52</sup> Motivated by these strands of literature, the chapter studies the motives and limits of confiscation by the Ottoman sultans who were not limited by any constitutional constraints.

The method adopted here divides the process of confiscation into two stages, namely pre- and post-inventory stage. As explained below, this division captures the degree of information available to the centre. Using a novel dataset and choice regression models, this chapter finds that fiscal distress and distance from Istanbul were main determinants of the first stage decision, while

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<sup>50</sup> Mancur Olson, "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development," *The American Political Science Review* 87, no. 3 (1993). Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue*.

<sup>51</sup> For a most detailed overview of confiscatory behaviour, see: Mehrdad Vahabi, "A Positive Theory of the Predatory State," *Public Choice* 168, no. 3-4 (2016).

<sup>52</sup> Cases of state confiscation of property studied by economic historians are actually different in type of abuse from debt repudiation to outright confiscation. Yet the overarching theme of this literature is confiscator behaviour of the state and the institutional constraints that deterred them from doing so. Douglass C. North and Barry Weingast, "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutional Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth Century England," *Journal of Economic History* 49, no. 4 (1989). Hilton L. Root, "The Fountain of Privilege: Political Foundations of Markets in Old Regime France and England," (Berkeley; Los Angeles; Oxford: University of California Press, 1994). Avner Greif, *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

bargaining position of the family and composition of wealth drive the second stage decision. These findings imply that the power to and motives of confiscation by pre-modern rulers can be more complicated than what has usually been simplified and sometimes caricaturised.

The rest of the chapter is organised as follows. In the light of the existing literature, section 3.1 presents a non-mathematical model. Section 3.2 focuses on empirical strategy employed in regression analyses. Section 3.3 presents and discusses regression estimates. Section 3.4 concludes.

## **2.1 Theoretical Background**

Drawing insights from institutional economics and public choice theory, this section offers a non-mathematical model detailing the incentive structure of the sultan. It should be stated at the outset that the model does not attribute full power or motivation to confiscate to him. He is a rational individual but in a constrained way. These constraints are either self-enforcing or humanly devised by the targets of confiscation through counterbalancing their power. It is indeed these constraints forming the backbone of the model.

It is first necessary to look at the sultan's monetary payoff from confiscation or the profitability of confiscation. Like every rational individual, he does not want to incur losses and thus tries to optimise his gains. To do so, he needs to calculate how profitable each case of confiscation is both in monetary and political terms. Monetary calculation was indeed done in many cases as included in confiscation inventories. But what is meant by calculation of political payoff is rather hypothetical. For simplicity, first consider that political payoff is zero, meaning that political costs and benefits are equal. If this was the case, the decision to confiscation would be governed entirely by monetary calculation. The monetary value of interest for the central government was what we can call the 'booty value.'<sup>53</sup> The booty value is the transferrable amount or net value of wealth, which equals to total value of wealth and receivables minus debts and direct costs of confiscation. Direct costs include the costs of transportation and agency. Agency costs are the commissions

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<sup>53</sup> Vahabi, "Predatory State," 154.

paid to confiscators and other agents involved in the process.<sup>54</sup> Even though these commissions were also governed by the duration of the process, which is a function of its complexity, costs of agency and transportation are generally determined by various aspects of asset confiscability.

Components of asset confiscability are largely associated with spatial constraints. This stems from the intuition that the capacity and motivation to confiscate of the state is unevenly distributed.<sup>55</sup> Here I consider three spatial constraints: (1) the proximity of physical location of wealth from the destination, which is Istanbul in the case of *müsadere* and (2) any other geographical conditions of the location, and (3) its administrative status. The proximity matters as it affected direct agency and transportation costs. There was a positive relationship between the distance and the commission paid to the confiscator. As for transportation costs, most assets were transported to the capital, whereas for others it was the cash acquired from auctions, which was sent. Geography regardless of distance should be considered too most notably because landlocked regions were historically less accessible, while maritime routes were safer, faster and cheaper than inland routes. It is crucial to note that spatial assets confiscability is also a function of organisational and administrative technology. This is rather negligible in our case since, to the best of my knowledge, there was no significant such technological progress in the Ottoman Empire during the period of concern. Non-spatial elements of asset confiscability are the concentration, specificity and measurability.

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<sup>54</sup> Avner Greif, "Commitment, Coercion and Markets: The Nature and Dynamics of Institutions Supporting Exchange," in *Handbook of New Institutional Economics*, ed. Claude Menard and Mary M. Shirley (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2005), 748.

<sup>55</sup> New Economic Geography suggests that economic activity is inherently unevenly distributed in terms of space. Danny Mackinnon and Andrew Cumbers, *Introduction to Economic Geography: Globalization, Uneven Development and Place* (Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2007), 27. The same logic can be applied to the spatial use of sovereign power. For this, see: John Allen, "Economies of Power and Space," in *Geographies of Economies*, ed. Roger Lee and Jane Willis (London: Arnold, 1997), 65-69.

Regional differentiation in type of administration is a striking feature of Ottoman political economy.<sup>56</sup> For example, the classical military-administrative system called *timar* was not applied in every region. They occasionally kept local institutions intact and sometimes preferred to give autonomy to a newly conquered region. This made the degree of state presence vary regionally regardless of distance from the centre. Despite having been located not too far from Istanbul, Wallachia was a tribute-paying vassal independent in domestic affairs. This implies that the capacity and motivation to conduct confiscations in there was arguably lower than, for example, that in the province of Damascus that was more distant to the centre yet was under direct rule of the central authority.

In case political payoff was zero, therefore, confiscation is expected to be implemented only if this monetary payoff was significantly positive. But political costs and benefits were hardly on balance. Before proceeding any further it is necessary to look at the nature of sultanic power. Although, in theory, they had an unquestionable authority, there existed the forces that balanced their power. The limits came from the increasing influence of the ulema and the Janissaries during the 17<sup>th</sup> century and provincial elites in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is true that these non-constitutional constraints, after all, proved insufficient to produce formal institutions that could effectively constrain their power.<sup>57</sup> However, they were at least hardly free from the risk of dethronement even if they were invariably replaced by other members of the dynasty. True for the period of concern too, several sultans were indeed dethroned by the Janissaries or by a provincial magnate in 1808.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, their capacity to confiscate was constrained by concerns of legitimacy.

Political costs are not only the potential retaliation by the targets of confiscation but also the opportunity cost of confiscation. The latter is related to the

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<sup>56</sup> Metin Coşgel, "The Fiscal Regime of an Expanding State: Political Economy of Ottoman Taxation," in *Fiscal Regimes and the Political Economy of Premodern States*, ed. A. Manson and W. Scheidel (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>57</sup> Şevket Pamuk, "Political Power and Institutional Change: Lessons from the Middle East," *Economic History of Developing Regions* 27, no. 1 (2012).

<sup>58</sup> Metin Coşgel, Rasha M. Ahmed, and Thomas J. Miceli, "Law, State Power and Taxation in Islamic History," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 71, no. 3 (2009).

fact that sultans have often seen their rule under threat by either external or domestic enemies which manifested in the form of war and rebellion respectively. These threats encourage rulers to confiscate by shortening their time horizon as he needs revenue to eliminate them.<sup>59</sup> The revenue crisis makes them seek additional sources so that they can protect their throne. As an extraordinary source, they turn to confiscation regardless of whether it pays off well monetarily. Of course, this is more so if they do not extract enough revenue from ordinary sources. Studies in Ottoman fiscal history show that fiscal capacity was persistently low and especially so during the period under question.<sup>60</sup>

However, they face a trade-off here on whose wealth to confiscate even under fiscal distress. Though they need revenue, they also consider bargaining position of potential victims. That is, targeting an individual or family with high bargaining power is costlier for three reasons. To explain these reasons, it is necessary to explain potential sources of bargaining power of the targets of confiscation. New institutional theory has often seen taxation as a source of credible retaliation, meaning that the ruler avoids confiscation if the potential target provides taxes higher than gains from one-time confiscation.<sup>61</sup> This fails to explain the case of the Ottoman Empire in which the targets of confiscation were office-holders and tax farmers, who were exempt from tax payment. Shirking in tax collection was not an issue either because taxes were collected mostly under tax farming system, requiring farmers to make a lump sum payment. Inability to retaliate with unpaying taxes, however, does not mean that they had no sources of retaliation. First, they had their own troops on which they invested for decades. They could and did use their military power against the central government. Surely, the centre's power was always superior to theirs. But the fact that they possessed armed troops made a deterrence effect especially when the opportunity cost of fighting a local trouble-maker was high. Second, many potential targets of confiscation

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<sup>59</sup> Olson, "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development."

<sup>60</sup> Eliana Balla and Noel D. Johnson, "Fiscal Crisis and Institutional Change in the Ottoman Empire and France," *The Journal of Economic History* 69, no. 3 (2009).

<sup>61</sup> Yoram Barzel, "Confiscation by the Ruler: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Lending in the Middle Ages," *Journal of Law and Economics* XXXV (1992).

provisioned the wars abroad by manning armies or sending food to zones of war.

Credibility of these threats depended also on the nature of fiscal markets in which they operated. As far as provincial elites are concerned, some enjoyed monopolies, while some had to compete with others. A family particularly successful in rent-seeking, that is, capturing rents of its area of influence, was likely to be replaced when its wealth and power was fully confiscated. By contrast, relative bargaining power of those families that operated in competitive fiscal markets was lower since they were less irreplaceable.<sup>62</sup> Take two families, i.e. the Karaosmanoğlus of Manisa in Western Anatolia and the Çapanoğlus of Yozgat in central Anatolia. These families were monopolies in their spheres of influence during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The more they monopolised, the more they became irreplaceable. Out of 21 (13 and 8 respectively) confiscation attempts initiated for these families, only 4 ended with confiscation. In 16 cases (11 and 5) they avoided full confiscation by paying an inheritance tax.

Confiscation could also take place simply because of the monarch's conflictual interests with that of a certain group of people. Although the ruler felt relatively secure in his throne and confiscation is monetarily not profitable to proceed, he could still find plausible if such a group existed. Collective confiscations of this kind were observed in world history often because of religious or ethnic animosity.<sup>63</sup> To some historians, these events were driven by certain economic motives such as homogenising his country to decrease costs of ruling. As the previous chapter has shown, the targets of confiscation were not religious or ethnic minorities but those who shared the ruler's revenue pie. Şevket Pamuk argued that one of the reasons of low fiscal capacity was that tax revenues were retained by intermediaries before reaching to the public treasury.<sup>64</sup> In the same vein, Mehmet Genç estimated the cen-

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<sup>62</sup> Douglass C. North, "The Paradox of the West," in *Economic History* (EconWPA, 1993).

<sup>63</sup> The most well-known examples of such expulsions and accompanying confiscations are that of the Jewish from England in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, from Spain in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, that of the Protestants from France and the Netherlands in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>64</sup> Şevket Pamuk, "Fiscal Centralisation and the Rise of the Modern State in the Ottoman Empire," *The Medieval History Journal* 17, no. 1 (2014): 11.

tral government's share from the tax revenue pie to be around only 24%.<sup>65</sup> In its path to modern state, the sultans' expectation from confiscation was to centralise the fiscal resources by keeping tax intermediaries under control.

To conclude, I hypothesise that the ruler's confiscation payoff was a function of its costs and benefits, be them monetary and political. Drawing insights from theoretical and historical literature, we can hypothesise that confiscations were not randomly exercised within the context of the chosen period. To clarify these hypotheses, I identify two stages of the process of confiscation. The first stage of the process refers to its pre-inventory period in which the sultan and his agents on his behalf decided to follow one of the strategies below:

→ Outcome 1

- Send confiscator
- No confiscation
- Inheritance tax

Confiscator was the main agent responsible for managing the process from the beginning together with locally based administrators. His main task was to prepare an inventory of assets left by the deceased. Importantly, this initial decision was made without full information on the attributes of wealth because there was no existing inventory yet. Thus, it can be said that external pressures were more determinative in the first stage.

The second stage is the stage after which the confiscation process ends. Its main difference from the first stage is that the sultan and his agents possess now full information on the wealth beyond speculations such as its net value and liquidity. It is assumed here that liquid assets are more confiscable. With this revealed information, if it is worth confiscating becomes clearer to the ruler. My hypothesis is that the second stage outcome was driven by the

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<sup>65</sup> Mehmet Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Devlet Ve Ekonomi*, 6 ed. (İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınevi, 2003).



newly revealed information, namely liquidity and precise bargaining power of the family. The process ends with one of the following outcomes:

→ Outcome 2

- Confiscation
- No confiscation
- Inheritance tax

A possible alternative outcome, partial confiscation, is merged with full confiscation under the name of confiscation after finding out that its determinants are not significantly distinct from those of full confiscation.

Taken together, this theoretical framework emphasised the selective nature of confiscations. Determinants and implications of this selectivity remain underexplored not only in the historiography of *müsadere* but in the broader economic history literature beyond theoretical approaches. To test the above hypotheses, this chapter brings about an econometric approach to the study of *müsadere* and generally speaking confiscation by the ruler. In this section I have provided potential forces of selectivity. The econometric analysis considers the role of fiscal capacity, time and geography-specific elements, identity and power of wealth-holders as well as composition of wealth. What follows is a discussion of variables and empirical methods pursued in the rest of this chapter.

## **2.2 Variables and Empirical Strategy**

The main dependent variable of the analysis presented here is the outcome of the confiscation process. This is a categorical variable taking two different forms in two multinomial logistic regressions. As noted above, the process of confiscation did not necessarily result in confiscation of all assets. Other possible outcomes were no confiscation and a special kind of inheritance tax paid by the family in exchange of full confiscation. It is difficult to predict to what extent the outcome was a choice or obligation. As far as confiscation records are concerned, however, it was not necessarily a choice. Therefore, I prefer to name the dependent variable 'outcome' rather than 'decision.' The catego-

ry of no confiscation refers to the outcome that resulted in waiving confiscation. Inheritance tax is an arbitrary kind of tax, requiring payment of a certain amount of money to the treasury by the family of the deceased, usually with a down payment followed by annual instalments. Inheritance tax as an outcome of the process generally occurred following a negotiation process between the government and family. Importantly, this amount was conjecturally determined rather than as a conventionally set proportion of inheritance. After all, inheritance tax was sometimes received before the preparation of confiscation inventory.

This categorical variable gives us a good sense about the driving forces and limits of the sultan's power to confiscate. One could ideally employ the exact share of confiscated wealth to total value of wealth, which would then be a limited continuous one that could be estimated using a Tobit regression. It is unfortunate that I was not able to identify this proportion for all cases though I was more successful in determining which of the above categories each confiscation fell into. The difficulty here stems primarily from the fact that the cases that the government ended with inheritance tax and no confiscation do not have an inventory as a confiscator was not sent to prepare one. The added value of this method, however, would be dubious as it would have created an additional problem of unrelated variables.

Therefore, the analysis adopted here employs multinomial logistic regression model (hereafter: MNLM) to estimate what determined the 'outcome' of the confiscation process. MNLM is a type of logistic model employed when the number of categories is greater than two and there is no natural order between them.<sup>66</sup> Ordered logistic regression, which is another multi-categorical

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<sup>66</sup> The use of multinomial regression is not so popular in economic history. For a few exceptions, see: Martin Dribe, Mats Olsson, and Patrick Svensson, "If the Landlord So Wanted... Family, Farm Production, and Land Transfers in the Manorial System," *Economic History Review* 65, no. 2 (2012). Javier Silvestre, Maria Isabel Ayuda, and Vicente Pinilla, "The Occupational Attainment of Migrants and Natives in Barcelona, 1930," *Economic History Review* 68, no. 3 (2015). Generally speaking, choice models are widely used in migration economics. There, various choices of migrants such whether to migrate, where to migrate, or which occupation to choose are estimated by choice models, either binary or nominal.

model, was not preferred either.<sup>67</sup> For the first stage, this is because the decision of sending a confiscator does not necessarily mean confiscation since the process could still end up with other outcomes than confiscation. Likewise, in the second stage the category of confiscation does not necessarily refer to a higher level of confiscation than inheritance tax because full confiscation was merged with partial confiscation to make up ‘confiscation’ category.

The formal models are presented in two-stage framework identified above.<sup>68</sup> Outcome 1 is the outcome of the first stage. The category of confiscation was not considered at this stage as it is an outcome that occurs only after an inventory was prepared. Fortunately, the sources allowed determining in which stage each confiscation outcome has happened. In the MNLM, the probability of alternative outcomes  $j = 1 \dots J$  to be realised can be formally expressed as follows:

$$Prob(Y = j) = \frac{\exp(\beta_j Z_i)}{\sum_j \exp(\beta_j Z_i)}$$

where  $i = 1 \dots, N$  indicates the wealth-holders whose wealth was considered for confiscation.  $Z$  denotes the vector of explanatory variables included in the MNL model. In simple terms, the model tested for the first stage takes the following form:

$$\begin{aligned} Outcome1 = & a_0 + a_1 war + a_2 distance + a_3 majorfamily (dummy) \\ & + a_4 title (dummy) + a_5 religion(dummy) + a_6 gender(dummy) \\ & + a_7 strong(dummy) + a_8 elapsed + a_9 nearestport + \varepsilon \end{aligned}$$

The first stage regression estimates the impact of fiscal distress and distance from Istanbul on the outcome of the first stage, namely send a confiscator, no confiscation and inheritance tax. The variable war is used to explain how wars impacted the decision to confiscate. Due to the absence of the data on

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<sup>67</sup> J. Scott Long and Jeremy Freese, *Regression Models for Categorical Dependent Variables Using Stata*, 3rd ed. (College Station, Texas: Stata Press, 2014), 385.

<sup>68</sup> Patrick Bajari, Han Hong, and Denis Nekipelov, "Game Theory and Econometrics: A Survey of Some Recent Research," in *Advances in Economics and Econometrics: Tenth World Congress*, ed. D. Acemoglu, M. Arellano, and E. Dekel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

state revenues, it also serves the function of proxying fiscal distress as most revenues were spent on wars during this period. I take its 3-year moving average for normalisation and with an assumption that fiscal effects of a war can be felt one year before and after the war. Another potential determinant of the decision at this stage is the distance from Istanbul, which proxies the expected direct costs of confiscation. These costs, i.e. agency and transportation costs, are also proxied by the distance from one of the major ports of the Ottoman Empire at the time.

One inevitable assumption of the model must be noticed at the outset. It assumes that there were no unobservable costs of enforcement. That is, agents involved in the process of confiscation did abide by laws by not receiving any bribes and confiscations were smooth, that is, with no resistance from families. Even though these were not necessarily true, it is impossible to include this information in the regression analysis because of its unobservable nature. I relax this shortcoming in the next chapter by analysing the impact of these costs with qualitative evidence.

Several variables are included in the first stage model to control for potential driving forces of confiscation. First, the variable family affiliation shows if wealth-holder was a member of a prominent family, controlling for bargaining position of the family. Admittedly, this variable has limits. The family's bargaining power vis-à-vis the ruler is indeed the matter of a complex long-term relationship, reflecting not only how much the sovereign values past conduct but also how he thinks his dependence on a family will change in future. It is not possible to know the entire history of these mutual interdependences between the centre and all 1017 individuals. While family affiliation is the best possible proxy to be used here, I relax this potential shortcoming with a micro-historical study in the fifth chapter.

Below is a full list of variables included in the first stage model with a short description:

- **War:** Number of wars fought abroad (in 3-year moving average)<sup>69</sup>
- **Distance Istanbul:** Bird's eye distance from Istanbul
- **Distance Nearest Port:** Distance from the nearest port.<sup>70</sup>
- **Religion:** Religion of the wealth-holder, Muslim or non-Muslim.
- **Gender:** Gender of the wealth-holder
- **Family:** 1 if the wealth-holder is a member of a prominent family 0 if not
- **Title:** 1 if the wealth-holder has a title, 0 if he does not.
- **Strong Sultan:** 1 if confiscation did not take place in the reign of one of two strong sultans Selim III and Mahmud II, 0 if not.
- **Elapsed:** The number of years elapsed after dethronement of the sultan.

Now I shall proceed to the second stage model. Outcome 2 is the dependent variable of this model. Those cases for which the game ended in the first stage with no confiscation or inheritance tax outcomes were excluded from the below model. The formal model of the second stage regression is as follows:

$$Outcome2 = a_0 + a_1 \log(netvalue) + a_2 liquidity + a_3 family(d) + a_4 strong(d) +$$

With new information revealed, following additional variables are considered in this model:

- **Net Value:** Net value of the wealth expressed (log transformed).
- **Liquidity:** Proportion of liquid assets such as jewellery, cash, slaves, watches to total assets.

The variable net value is used to measure if magnitude of wealth mattered. Liquidity was included in the model as it is a good indicator of whether the outcome was shaped by cost-benefit consideration. Family affiliation, how-

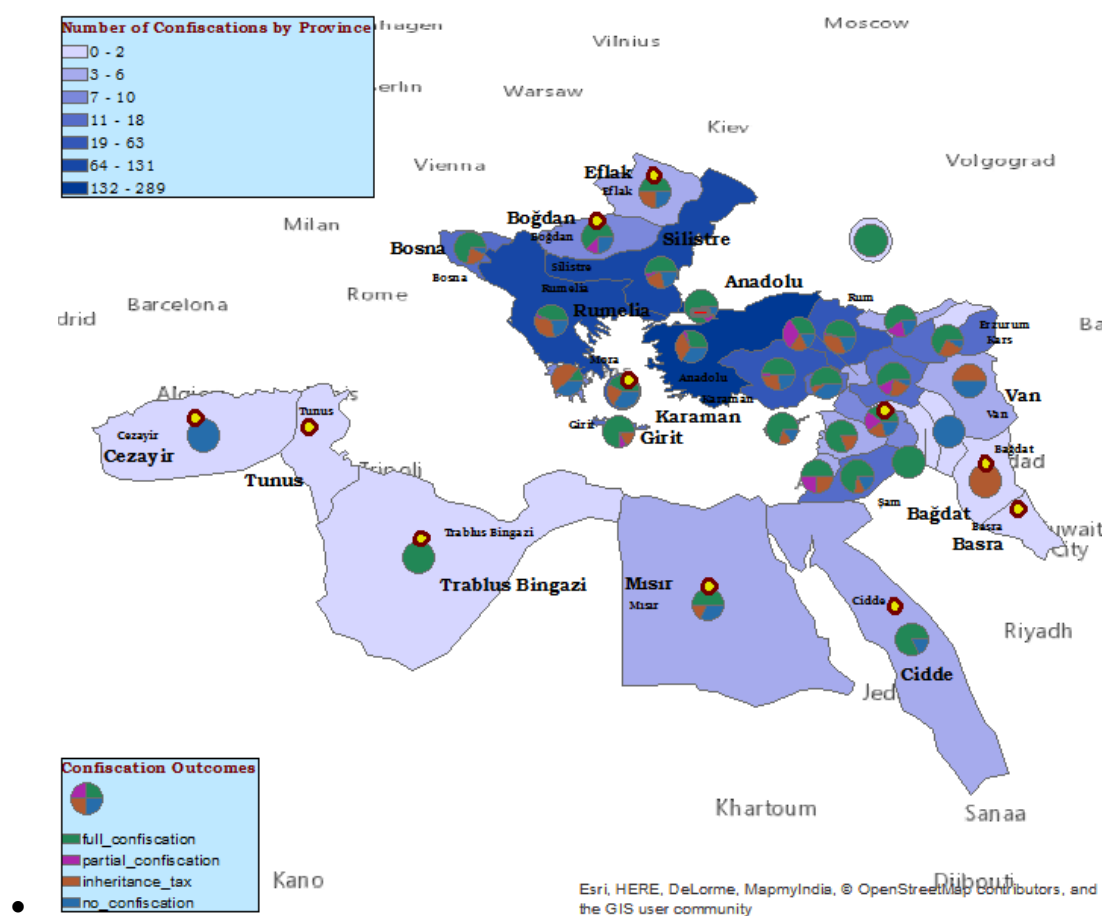
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<sup>69</sup> Data on the number of wars was obtained from the data used in a published article: Şevket Pamuk and K. Kıvanç Karaman, "Different Paths to the Modern State in Europe: The Interaction between Warfare, Economic Structure, and Political Regime," *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 3 (2013).

<sup>70</sup> These ports are Selanik (Thessaloniki), İzmir (Smyrna), Antalya, Mersin, Beirut (Beirut), Samsun and Trabzon ports.

ever, is used in the second stage model for a slightly different reason. The confiscator did not collect information not only on the qualities of wealth but on the power of the family, which could have been different from the initial information of the government. Thus, the variable family here measures previously unknown features of bargaining power, whereas it captures the impact of expected mutual interdependence in the first stage. Finally, the sultan's behaviour could still be effective in the outcome of the second stage.

**Map 3.1** Provincial distributions of dependent variable categories with frequency of confiscations



- **Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

Before proceeding to the results, tables 3.1 and 3.2 provide descriptive statistics of dependent and independent variables respectively. Table 3.1 lists all variables considered in models, continuous variables with summary statistics and categorical variables with their frequency. A necessary word of caution is that the variable liquidity could not be identified or calculated for

all cases. The number of cases including the variable liquidity is only 361. Thus, when liquidity is included in the model, it is estimated based on the cases for which liquidity data is available. Finally, map 3.1 displays the provincial-level distribution of dependent variable categories. The green colour represents the proportion of full confiscation relative to other three categories. Admittedly, pie charts shown in the map are more explanatory in provinces with significant number of confiscations coloured with darker tones of blue.

**Table 3.1** *Frequency table of the dependent variable, ‘outcome’*

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Relative frequency</b>
<b>All</b>		
Confiscation	601	59.10
No Confiscation	214	21.04
Inheritance Tax	202	19.86
Total	1017	100
<b>Stage 1</b>		
Send confiscator	832	81.81
No confiscation	110	10.82
Inheritance tax	75	7.37
Total	1017	100
<b>Stage 2</b>		
Confiscation	601	72.24
No confiscation	104	12.50
Inheritance tax	127	15.26
Total	832	100

**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

**Table 3.2** *Frequency table and descriptive statistics of explanatory variables*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Relative Observ.</b>
War	0	3.66	1.42	0.03		1017
Distance Ist.	1	2409.02	374.43	367.36		1017
Distance Port	1.64	1454.26	269.53	173.19		1017
Elapsed	0	31	10.16	6.82		1017
Net Value	-33.12	106.08	1.13	5.57		828
Liquidity	0	100	29.00	33.12		357

Gender								
Male					979	96.26	1017	
Female					38	3.74		
Religion								
Muslim					957	94.10	1017	
Christian					53	5.21		
						0.69		
Strong Sul- tan								
Yes					701	68.93	1017	
No					316	31.07		
Family								
Yes					135	86.73	1017	
No					882	13.27		
Title								
Yes					306		1017	
No					771			

**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

## 2.3 Results

The main results of MNL models are presented in tables 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6. Independence of irrelevant alternatives assumption inherent in the MNLM was tested with a Hausman-McFadden test.<sup>71</sup> Interpretation of coefficients in the MNLM is troublesome. Thus, the results are reported in relative risks. Interpreting relative risks is like that of the odds ratios in binary choice models. That is, relative risks reflect the change in a dependent variable category relative to a reference category for one unit change in independent variables. If relative risk is greater than, the odds of reference category is higher compared to the comparison category. If it is lower than 1, the likelihood of the outcome falling in the comparison group is higher. The main reference categories of the present analysis are chosen for the sake of simplicity of interpretation. They are, at the same time, categories with the greatest number of observations. The first stage regression uses ‘send confiscator’ category as its base category since the decision to send a confisca-

<sup>71</sup> Jerry Hausman and Daniel McFadden, "Specification Tests for the Multinomial Logit Model," *Econometrica* 52, no. 5 (1984).



tor means incurring at least the costs of agency if not others depending on the outcome of the second stage, while other plausible outcomes, namely no confiscation and inheritance tax, are much less costly. These variations in costs make it convenient to interpret the results compared to the category of send confiscator. The reference category for the second stage regression is 'confiscation' simply because the rest of the outcome are either lesser degree of confiscation (inheritance tax) or no confiscation at all, which similarly interpretation easier. Yet, where necessary, I also take another category as referent category just to see the interaction between other two outcomes, which is not shown by one single comparison.

Table 3.3 has three panels. The first panel shows the comparison of no confiscation and send confiscator (NC-SC), whereas the second and third panels other comparisons. A relative risk of 0.57 of war in panel 1 reveals that an increase in the number of wars fought abroad gives a rise to the likelihood of sending confiscator compared to no confiscation. This means that in years with lesser number of wars the ruler is more likely to decide not to continue the confiscation process. Among inheritance tax and no confiscation, he was more likely to make an offer to the family to pay an inheritance tax to waive confiscation than choosing no confiscation option. This is reasonable because inheritance tax can be regarded as the best alternative at times of war and fiscal distress. Inheritance tax was a quick and low-cost alternative to confiscation even though extracted revenue was lower. But, in general, send confiscator is still superior to inheritance tax, which means that when the sultan was under fiscal pressures of war, he tended to proceed and see how the rest of the process went.

The other significant result is the relative risk of the distance from Istanbul higher than 1, which means that in every 2 additional kilometres' distance makes no confiscation more likely by 1.002 relative to send confiscator. This is also the case with inheritance tax-send confiscator comparison. With distance, the sultan becomes more likely to decide not to proceed. Another important question is which of inheritance tax and no confiscation he tended to choose. The relative risk of 1.001 in the IT-NC comparison means that it

was inheritance tax. But, as indicated by the relative risk of 0.999, his decision could change if the location was near one of the main ports of the Ottoman Empire because of the low costs of transportation. To put it differently, his hesitance to conduct confiscations in remote areas and preference of negotiation with the family to make them pay inheritance tax could be balanced by the presence of ports. This is in line with transportation costs hypothesis.

**Table 3.3** Stage 1: *Relative Risks of No Confiscation (NC), Inheritance Tax (IT) and Confiscation (C), Dep. Var: Outcome of Confiscation Process*<sup>72</sup>

<b>DV categories</b>		<b>NC-SC</b>	<b>IT-SC</b>	<b>IT-NC</b>
<b>Warfare</b>	War	0.576***	1.172	2.034***
<b>Spatiality</b>	Distance Istanbul	1.002***	1.002***	1.001**
	Distance Near Port	0.999**	0.998***	0.999
<b>Identity</b>	Gender			
	Male	1	1	1
	Female	0.112**	0.357	3.182
	Religion			
	Muslim	1	1	1
	Non-Muslim	0.376*	0.767	2.038
<b>Bargaining Power</b>	Title			
	No	1	1	1
	Yes	0.320***	0.313***	0.979
<b>Sultan Behaviour</b>	Family Affiliation			
	No	1	1	1
<b>Sultan Behaviour</b>	Yes	3.27e-07	1.612	-
	Strong Sultan			
	No	1	1	1
	Yes	3.550***	1.151	0.325**
	Elapsed	1.050***	0.983	0.937***
	N	1017	1017	1017
	Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.13	0.13	0.13
	LR Chi <sup>2</sup>	152.78	152.78	152.78
	Prob Chi <sup>2</sup>	0.000	0.000	0.000

<sup>72</sup> The referent category is always the second one. In NC-SC, for example, it the SC that is kept constant.

**Source:** See bibliography for data sources

**Note:** \*\*\*, \*\*, and \* denote statistical significance at the 1, 5, and 10% levels.

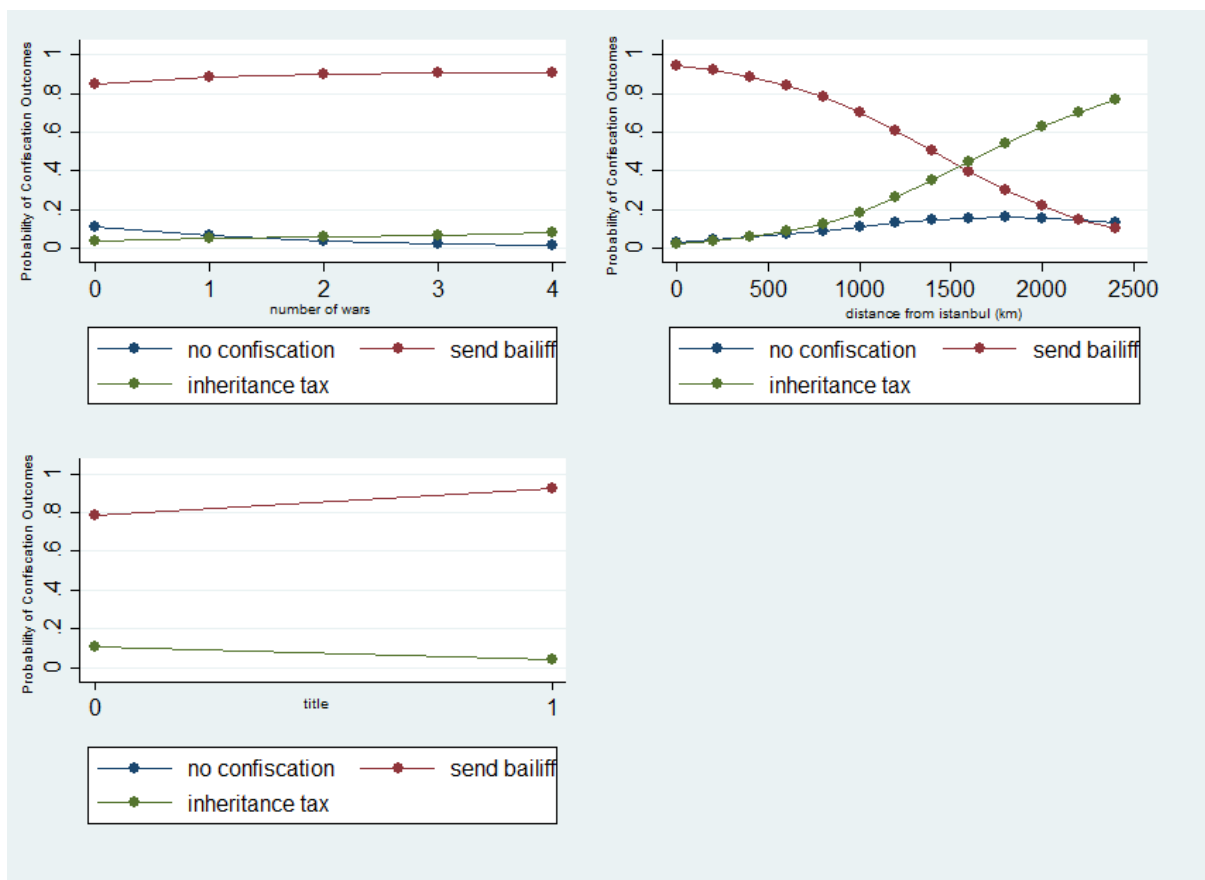
The surprising result of panel 1 is the relative risk of sultan. It suggests that under the rule of a strong sultan, no confiscation is 3.55 times more likely than sending a confiscator. It must be emphasised that the annual number of confiscations attempted by Selim III and Mahmud II are 14.30 as opposed to 7.70 attempted by other sultans, which shows that they did practice more confiscations. Yet, that their incentives to proceed the process was lower are worth explaining. Moreover, when considered in combination with relative risks of the variable 'elapsed' representing the number of years elapsed after dethronement of a sultan in rule. As elapsed goes up, no confiscation becomes more likely compared to send confiscator. In other words, the longer the sultan stays in power, the less likely he continues the process by sending a confiscator. If the theoretical literature is right in that there is positive association between the duration of rule and the sovereign power, both results curiously refer to a negative relationship between power and confiscation. A potential explanation for the first result is that a strong sultan might have collected more taxes than weaker sultans, hence did not depend as much on extraordinary source of revenue. For the second result, it might be that they were more interested in confiscation in early years of their rule due to the need for project finance. Or perhaps their power just deteriorated with time.

At first sight, the direction of the relative risk of the variable title is surprising. It suggests that holding a title increases the odds of the outcome to fall into the category of send confiscator compared to both comparison groups of inheritance tax and no confiscation. That is, the central government was more likely to continue the process if the wealth-holder had a title. This is not what theory would predict because title-holders tended to be more powerful and thus better bargaining position vis-à-vis the sultan. Yet we must consider two other forces here. First, title-holders were also the wealthier than those without a title. Second, when seen in the big picture, all who

benefited from the ruler's revenue pie were title-holders one way or another. What this implies is that a person with no title could be tolerated more than one with title.

It is also interesting to observe that two variables are found not significant. One of them is the main variable of bargaining power, family affiliation that proved insignificant in both comparisons shown panels 1 and 2. In the first stage, family affiliation did not matter perhaps because only when certain attributes of wealth were revealed they could do a healthier analysis of political costs and benefits of confiscation. Since no confiscation and inheritance tax were outcomes that could realise in the second stage too, pre-inventory stage was probably too early to decide without information on the value and other attributes of wealth.

**Figure 3.1** *Graphs of Relationships in the First Stage*



**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

Finally, although there are two significant results in terms of gender and religion, these are at the 10% level and do not lead confidently argue that there was a clear choice when it comes to these categories. Overall, the table shows that the first stage decision was driven by wars, spatial forces and the title showing one's status. Although the sultans tended to look more for confiscation opportunities at wartime, they did so if transportation costs were not too high. Figure 3.1 illustrates some significant relationships estimated by the first stage regression. One important note about these figures, one of which will appear later, is that they do not show results in relative terms. That, although changes might seem small in some cases, if we consider, say, that the likelihood of sending a confiscator was already much higher than those of other outcomes in the left-hand side of the graphs, they are not trivial.

The second stage estimates are shown in table 3.4. It reports the results with and without liquidity in panels 1 and 2 where the base category is confiscation (C). Then panel 3 takes no confiscation as the referent to show how IT-NC comparison is. In this table, the most striking result is always significant relative risks of log net value. Those in the first two panels show as the value of wealth increases, the sultans are more likely to confiscate relative to no confiscation. However, the same is not true with inheritance tax. It appears that the odds of inheritance were higher in high-value inheritances in comparison with confiscation. This finding should better be read in combination with the value of relative risks of the variable family affiliation, which shows the role of relative bargaining power. It is especially evident in confiscation-inheritance tax comparison. That is, being a member of a prominent family increases the probability of inheritance tax compared to confiscation by a factor 4.885 and 5.170 with or without liquidity respectively. This is closely associated with their power to bargain with the central government for primarily but not exclusively reasons mentioned above. Chapter 5 backs this phenomenon with qualitative evidence. It suffices here to say that prominent families used their military, economic and political sources of power to negotiate and even tried to reduce the amount of inheritance tax. So, the in-

terpretation of the variable family affiliation helps to explain why inheritance tax was more likely to occur with an increase in the amount of wealth. The reason why family affiliation is significant in the second stage and not in the first stage is the first stage outcome is more of a decision while this is rather an outcome. As an outcome, it reflects an end during which both parties do test their power.

**Table 3.4** Stage 2: *Relative Risks of No Confiscation (NC) and Inheritance Tax (IT) and Confiscation (C), Dep. Var.: Outcome of Confiscation Process*

DV categories		1 (W/O Liquidity)		2 (W Liquidity)		3 (Base:NC)
		NC/C	IT/C	NC/C	IT/C	IT/NC
<b>Wealth</b>	Log Net value	0.693***	1.342***	0.619***	1.337***	2.160***
	Liquidity			0.965***	0.953***	0.987
<b>Bargaining Power</b>	Family Affiliation					
	No	1	1	1	1	1
	Yes	1.670	5.170***	1.563	4.885***	3.124
<b>Sultan Behaviour</b>	Strong Sultan					
	No	1	1	1	1	1
	Yes	3.322***	1.976***	2.832*	1.238	0.437
	N	776	776	345	345	345
	Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.13	0.13	0.23	0.23	0.23
	LR Chi <sup>2</sup>	145.98	145.98	109.22	109.22	109.22
	Prob Chi <sup>2</sup>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

**Source:** See bibliography for data sources

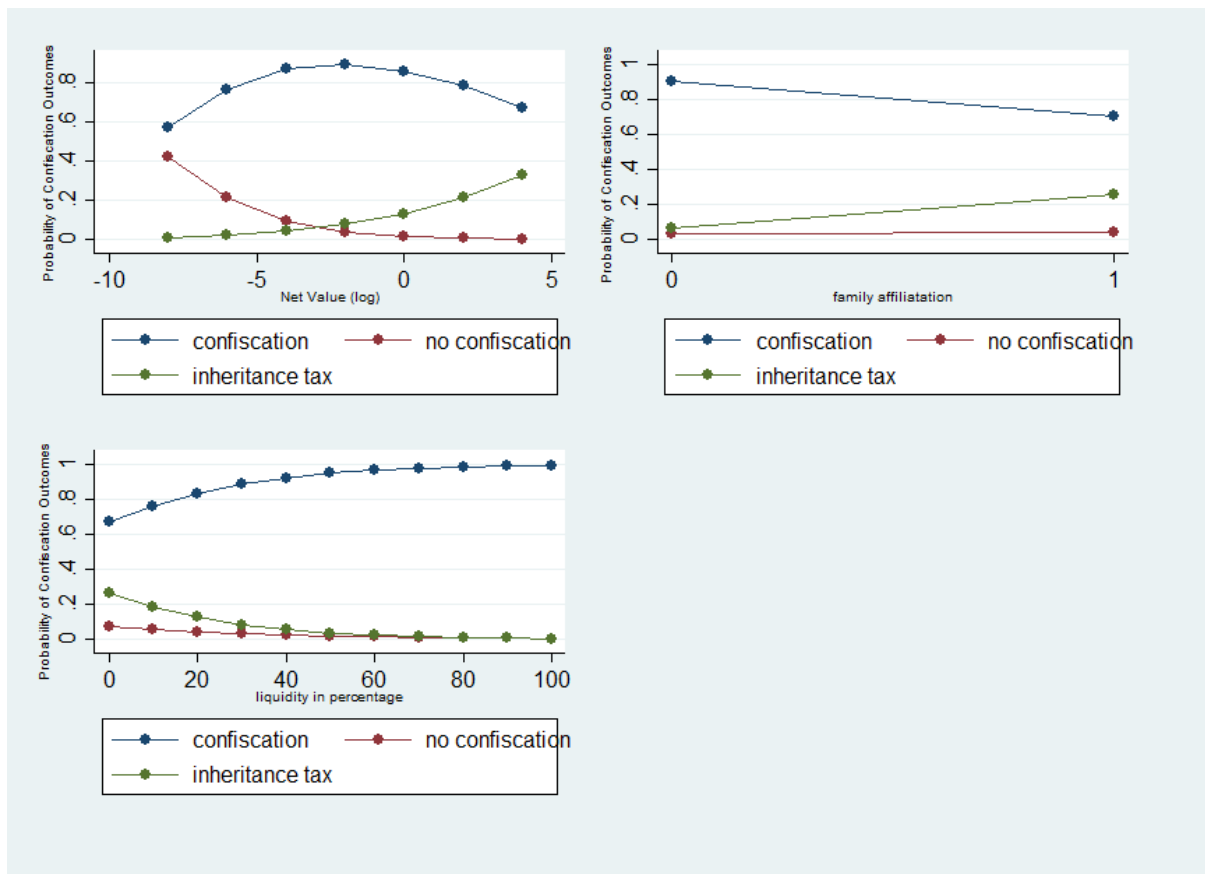
**Note:** \*\*\*, \*\*, and \* denote statistical significance at the 1, 5, and 10% levels.

One additional observation should also be highlighted here. There are 51 cases in the data in which net balance is negative, meaning that the value of assets is lower than one's debts. 35 of these resulted in no confiscation. This makes us argue that the outcome of no confiscation was governed by cost-benefit consideration at this stage. However, it is still unusual that 16 cases ended up with confiscation despite negative net balance. There could be two explanations for this. First, it could be simply miscalculation, which should

be considered given the complexity of cases. Second, using its power and despite the tradition to do so, the central government may not have cleared the debts of the person and thus actually made a profit differently from what we get from the sources.

Panel 2 of table 3.4 reports the results with liquidity as one of explanatory variables. The number of observations inevitably falls to 361 due to the lack of liquidity data for many cases. In panel 2, we see that the liquidity is highly correlated with the outcome of the second stage. More liquid assets were not only more easily convertible but also more easily transportable. As asset liquidity increases, confiscation becomes a more likely outcome compared to both comparison outcomes. An additional regression with no confiscation as the base category was also estimated and presented in panel 3. The insignificant relative risks of liquidity in IT-NC comparison indicates that the sultan was rather indifferent between these categories as liquidity level changes. As noted above, they differ in the amount of net wealth.

**Figure 3.2** *Graphs of Relationships in the Second Stage*



**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

The strong sultan variable is significantly correlated with the outcome of the second stage especially when the number of observations is higher, thus in panels 1 and 2. Their relative risks imply that strong sultans still prefer no confiscation in the second stage compared to comparison categories. Overall though many variables were not included in the second stage regression for the obvious reason that they had already been considered by the sultan and his agents, the value and liquidity of wealth as well as the bargaining power of the family estimates a good deal of the second stage outcome. When it is reached to this stage, the centre takes a final look at the confiscation inventory and the outcome is determined depending on which of the actions it will choose. Before proceeding any further, figure 3.2 visualises three significant results of the second stage regression.

Table 3.5 accounts for all factors without stages without liquidity, while table 3.6 does the same with liquidity. Most results are consistent with stage regressions. There are, however, two issues that to be addressed in this table. First, although an increase in the number of wars made no confiscation less likely relative to the base category of send confiscator in the first stage regression, overall it makes no confiscation more likely compared to confiscation. This leads to think about the opposite impact of wars on confiscations. That is, wartimes are generally not the best time for confiscation. With more information revealed both on wealth and the power of the family, the central government confiscates only if its monetary and politically payoff are considerably high. In addition to that, although a confiscator was sent, the symbiotic relationship between the centre and families particularly with coercive power was crystallised during wartimes in favour of the latter. That is, they provided other military and provisioning services which were more important one-time gains from confiscation. Second result of importance of the all sample regression is, in contrast to the first stage, distances both from Istanbul and the major ports become less significant though with same directions supporting transportation costs hypothesis. This does not change the fact that the first stage decision was governed partly by distances. To



emphasis these differences was indeed the main purpose of dividing regression analysis into stages.

**Table 3.5** All Sample: *Relative Risks of No Confiscation (NC), Inheritance Tax (IT) and Confiscation (C) without Liquidity, Dep. Var.: Outcome of Confiscation Process*

<b>DV categories</b>		<b>NC-C</b>	<b>IT-C</b>	<b>IT-NC</b>
<b>Wealth</b>	Log Net value	0.666***	1.365***	2.049***
<b>Warfare</b>	War	2.148***	0.991	0.461***
<b>Spatiality</b>	Distance Istanbul	0.999	1.000	1.000
	Distance Near Port	0.998	0.998**	0.999
<b>Identity</b>	Gender			
	Male	1	1	1
	Female	0.270*	0.116**	0.431
	Religion			
	Muslim	1	1	1
	Non-Muslim	0.670***	0.184***	2.644
	Title			
No	1	1	1	
Yes	0.281***	0.314***	1.115	
<b>Bargaining Power</b>	Family Affiliation			
	No	1	1	1
Yes	1.490	3.874***	2.601*	
<b>Sultan Behaviour</b>	Strong Sultan			
	No	1	1	1
	Yes	2.003*	1.947**	0.972
	Elapsed	0.963*	0.998	1.036
N	777	777	777	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.20	0.20	0.20	
LR Chi <sup>2</sup>	229.58	229.58	229.58	
Prob Chi <sup>2</sup>	0.000	0.000		

**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

**Note:** \*\*\*, \*\*, and \* denote statistical significance at the 1, 5, and 10% levels.

**Table 3.6** All Sample: *Relative Risks of No Confiscation (NC), Inheritance Tax (IT) and Confiscation (C) with Liquidity, Dep. Var.: Outcome of Confiscation Process*

<b>DV categories</b>		<b>NC-C</b>	<b>IT-C</b>	<b>IT-NC</b>
<b>Wealth</b>	Log Net value	0.536***	1.392***	2.597***
	Liquidity	0.964***	0.956***	0.991
<b>Warfare</b>	War	2.646***	0.942	0.356***
<b>Spatiality</b>	Distance Istanbul	0.999	0.999	0.999
	Distance Near Port	1.001	0.996**	0.995**
<b>Identity</b>	Gender			
	Male	1	1	1
	Female	5.36e-08	0.171	-
	Religion			
	Muslim	1	1	1
	Non-Muslim	6.85e-08	5.99e-08	0.874
	Title			
	No	1	1	1
	Yes	0.140***	0.219***	1.565
	<b>Bargaining Power</b>	Family Affiliation		
No		1	1	1
	Yes	1.086	3.520***	3.240
<b>Sultan Behaviour</b>	Strong Sultan			
	No	1	1	1
	Yes	0.795	1.260	1.584
	Elapsed	0.951	1.013	1.066
	N	345	345	345
	Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.33	0.33	0.33
	LR Chi <sup>2</sup>	157.38	157.38	157.38
	Prob Chi <sup>2</sup>	0.000	0.000	0.000

**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

**Note:** \*\*\*, \*\*, and \* denote statistical significance at the 1, 5, and 10% levels.

Before proceeding to a discussion of implications, I finally test the impact of cost-benefit consideration in an alternative analysis. This looks specifically at the role of transportation costs. If the outcome of the confiscation process was full or partial confiscation, the next decision that had to be made by the

government was how to transfer confiscation gains to the public treasury. It must be noted at the outset that the analysis excludes those gains that were occasionally being sent directly to warzones for military use. But there were generally three typical modes of transfer: (1) transportation of all assets to Istanbul in kind, (2) auctioning all assets on premise and transferring revenues in cash and (3) a mix of these modes. Independent variables included in the model are distance from Istanbul, distance from the nearest major port, the month of confiscation, net value of wealth and liquidity. Differently from previous regressions, the month of confiscation controls here the effect of seasonality. If the decision of transfer was governed by minimisation of transportation costs, then this test should provide further proof to the above argument that cost-benefit consideration played an important role even in this what we might be called the third stage of the process.

**Table 3.7** *Relative Risks of Sent in Kind (SK), Mixed (M) and Sent in Cash (SC), Dep. Var: Mode of Transfer*

<b>DV categories</b>		<b>1 (W/O Liquidity)</b>		<b>2 (W Liquidity)</b>	
		<b>SK-SC</b>	<b>M-SC</b>	<b>SK-SC</b>	<b>M-SC</b>
<b>Wealth</b>	Log Net value	0.905*	1.489***	0.901	1.410**
	Liquidity			1.026***	1.010
<b>Seasonality</b>	Month Included	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Spatiality</b>	Distance Istanbul	1.002***	1.002***	1.003***	1.003***
	Distance Nearest Port	0.999	1.001	0.999	1.000
	N	620	620	290	290
	Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.15	0.15	0.26	0.26
	LR Chi <sup>2</sup>	122.69	122.69	124.74	124.74
	Prob Chi <sup>2</sup>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

**Source:** See bibliography for data sources.

**Note:** \*\*\*, \*\*, and \* denote statistical significance at the 1, 5, and 10% levels.

As displayed in table 3.7, controlling for other variables, two of three variables of importance lend support to the cost-benefit argument. This includes the finding that as the size of inheritance get bigger, it gets more likely to be sent in cash. That is, an auction was held in more distant regions. There were presumably costs of auction but these costs can be negligibly included in the costs of agency that were already paid. As the liquidity increases, the assets are more likely to be sent in kind. This is because, in contrast to properties such as real estates, liquid assets were easily moveable. Majority of liquid assets in the dataset are jewellerys and cash. Yet the distance variables in the table do not support our hypothesis. The distance from Istanbul suggests that the more distant a location was, the more likely assets were to be sent in kind.

This section has shown the results of several regression tests analysing the driving forces of the practice of confiscation in the Ottoman Empire. It can be concluded by stating that the outcome of the process of confiscation was governed by a mixed bag of time-specific and spatial factors as well as cost-benefit consideration. An important question is how these results contribute specifically to our understanding of a seemingly ‘absolute’ monarch to confiscate. Let me answer question in the next section.

## **2.4 Conclusion and Broader Implications**

This chapter has explored the driving forces of Ottoman confiscations during the period 1750-1839, employing the toolkit of econometrics. These issues are new to the historiography of *müsadere* since they had never been framed this way. With the help of a novel dataset constructed out of confiscation inventories, part 1 of this study shed some light on the targeted population, functions, motives and limitations of the *müsadere* practice.

Based on the findings presented above, it is safe to argue that neither the decision nor the outcome of the sultan’s confiscation was governed by chance. Rather, it has been driven by several factors which cannot be explained solely by revenue-maximisation approach. The chapter has considered political, fiscal, spatial forces as well as attributes of wealth. It finds

that the profitability of confiscation, that is a function of costs and benefits shaped by spatial factors and certain qualities of wealth regarding its confiscability, determined the confiscation outcome in first and second stages of the process of confiscation. The role of wars and distance was more evident in the pre-inventory stage to send a confiscator while disappearing when all sample are considered. As the new information concerning the attributes of wealth and the power of the family was revealed by the confiscator, the second stage was governed rather by bargaining power of the family and wealth attributes. It was this relative power of some that made them turn an upcoming full confiscation into inheritance tax, which was a kind of partial confiscation. The cost-benefit argument was supported also by an additional test analysing how confiscation gains were transferred to the public treasury.

What are the implications of these findings for economic history? First, they lend support to argue that the Ottoman sultans, perhaps like their counterparts, were not truly absolute. They possessed power to confiscate, though at levels varying from sultan to sultan, and did so. But this power was by no means unconstrained. In contrast to well-known examples of representative political regimes such as England and the Netherlands, these constraints were not imposed by laws but by conjectures and bounds of rationality. Ottoman constitutional history began only in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and with an interruption of three decades after one year of parliament. However, even in the absence of constitutional constraints, a rational ruler would not confiscate with static power and motivation for every person and at any time or place.

Importantly, although fiscal motives may be crucial for understanding confiscations during certain times of revenue crisis, revenue-maximisation was not the only game in town. Cost-benefit consideration and politics were other important determinants of it. In this context, as fiscal distress increases, the sultan seems to choose no confiscation which is seemingly the least lucrative outcome. This is because (1) *müsadere* was too costly and lengthy, and (2) wars increased bargaining power of constituents relative to that of

the sultan. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to think debt retaliation which was the most well-known form of confiscation in Europe during early modern period. Failure to pay debts could damage credibility of a ruler but under fiscal distress he had no choice but repudiation. In the Ottoman context, however, confiscation was not the best option during wartime.

The present chapter has put forward what has driven thousands of confiscations practised by the sultans. It has focused on their preferences with little reference to limits of their power. In doing so, it had to exclude some crucial aspects of human agency primarily due to the lack of data on unobservable or dark sides of confiscation. However, these aspects should not be ignored for two reasons. First, after all, it was not the structures but human beings who made decisions and their behaviour was shaped by each other's behaviour. Second, it is necessary to make use of more actual examples to clarify some points raised in this chapter. Thus, part 2 of this work proceeds to an analysis of the actors of confiscation, their interactions and implications of these interactions.

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*Cevdet Adliye*

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63/3754, 93/5603, 93/5604, 95/5687, 703/28713

*Cevdet Askeriye*

1041/45716

*Cevdet Dahiliye*

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*Cevdet Maliye*

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*Darphane-i Amire*

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