

“assessment” of the land tenure systems as seen from the perspective of the peasant up to the middle of the nineteenth century. In spite of changes in regimes, regardless of where actual control of land rested, and regardless of the extent of surplus appropriation, peasant access to land (right of usufruct) was “guaranteed” and continuous throughout the *timar* and *iltizam* periods. This access to land provided a sense of stability and security for the peasant, notwithstanding natural disasters and increased exploitation as the power of the government’s local agents increased. One could further argue: How could it have been otherwise, since we are dealing with an agriculturally based economy? It is mainly through the surplus appropriation of agricultural production that the state reproduced itself. Thus, it was in the state’s vested interest not only to provide the peasant with access to land, but also to encourage the extension of the cultivated areas, for this obviously increased its revenues.

As part of the *tanzimat*, the Land Code of 1858 was an attempt to reassert the state’s control over *miri* land,¹⁷ a control that, as we have seen, had been receding the previous two centuries, resulting in the diminution of the state’s share of the agricultural surplus. This attempt was part of the fiscal reform policy predating the Land Code that aimed at encouraging agricultural production and promoting industrial development.¹⁸

¹⁷Kerpat, 86; Baer, 83.

¹⁸Kerpat, 86.