



**MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE OF "SKY SQUARES / GÖKMEYDAN"  
AND "SPORTS LODGES" WHICH WERE THE SPORTS-MAKING  
AND WAR-PHYSICAL EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN  
THE SELJUK EMPIRE - AN INVESTIGATION OF THEIR  
EFFECTS ON THE SELJUK ECONOMY**

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**Abstract:**

The first information about the use of the squares was reached at the time of the Gokturks and continued with the Seljuk Empire. In the cosmology of the Seljuk Empire period, the sky squares / (Gokmeydan) provided the four basic elements which were; economy, military physical education, socialization, and sport. One of the most important elements to be considered about the sport was the establishment and operation of Sky square / (Gokmeydan) institutions while Seljuks were urbanizing. Even, it is known that Nizam al-Mulk, vizier of Sultan Malik-Shah I, was working on this issue intensively (İşcan, 1988). In this way, the sport was organized by the state to organize the sports, as well as sportsman training, protection, and nutrition. The sport was also influenced by the changing urbanization culture. In particular, it played an active role in ensuring security and urbanization in rural areas. The most striking example of this was the establishment of sports lodges for various branches in rural areas where urbanization was possible. As urbanization began, these sports lodges and buildings belonged to those lodges became a district of the city. To become the best fighting society, the Seljuk Empire reached its goal using its all facilities through Sky squares and Sports lodges. In addition to military physical education (both man and horse in terms of the period), Sky squares/ (Gokmeydan) and Sport lodges, which were opened to the people living in the city on certain days of the week, caused the public to operate in various sports branches as well as the establishment of enterprises that produce sports instruments of their interest and contribute to Seljuk economy.

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## 1. Introduction

In the study, a qualitative method called well descriptive field survey or documentary study was followed (Neuman, 2006; Creswell, 2012). In order to determine the educational and organizational structure of the sports institutions of the Seljuk Empire, the epics were analyzed by observations of the travelers of the period, the cosmology of the Seljuk community in the archaic period and the determinations of the philosopher in various fields working on that period. In the light of the data obtained, it was tried to determine the educational structure and organization of the Sky Squares / (Gokmeşdan) and Sports lodges, which were the social institutions of the Seljuk Empire and their contributions to the economy.

More generally, it can be said that the culture and civilization of the Seljuk culture organized in the Anatolian geography unites with the Iranian culture and the Central Asian Turkish traditions in the lifestyle dimension, and that it is fused with Christianity in the religious dimension and that it is based on the religion of Islam although it carries the traces of the old Shaman past (Özcan, 2006). The names of the settlements established in the newly established settlements or the names of the settlements where the Christian population is the dominant element under the Turkish folk etymology, and the traces of the Turkish place names in the Central Asian and Iranian Turkish geography, reveal that the nomadic and settled Turkish cultural heritage has been moved to Anatolia. It is known that the tradition of giving titles to some important and big Anatolian cities in the period of the Seljuk Empire is the legacy of Iran-Islamic urban culture and civilization and culture moved to Anatolia (Artuk and Artuk, 2003) As a result of these developments, it is seen as an inevitable result that Central Asian and Iran-Islamic cultures and civilizations have an effect on the spatial organizations which constitute the system of Anatolian Seljuk cities and their influence on topology (Science dealing with place name) origins (Ozcan, 2006).

The history of the social development of humanity has been well researched by historical materialism and its rules and laws have been determined. Social processes in the form of social and economic institutions are unique to the individual within the community. Human communities are ethnos (the science that examines the life of human communities). There is no one other than ethnos in the world. In order to determine the functional ties between physical geography and Paleontology studies on Central Asian History and the lower regions of Volga's archeology have reached three conclusions. First one; the historical fate of an ethnosis depends on the dynamic situation of the landscape and the geographical environment on which it focuses directly as a result of its economic activities. Second one; the archaeological culture of an ethno reflects the paleogeography of the environment of that era as a crystallized trace after the end of its historical fate. In this way, it is more convenient to determine

the history of events. The third one; the composition of historical and archeological information (materials) gives information about the characteristics of a certain geography environment at a certain age (Gumilev, 2001)

## **2. Sports Training Services and Management Structure of the Sky Squares / (Gokmeydan) Sports Lodges**

Throughout history, Sports has been a source of pleasure and entertainment for the people through competitions as well as providing health both physically and mentally. (Yıldız, 2009). In order to understand the sports culture in the Seljuks, it has been tried to be determined according to the resources we can reach. The mobility in the sports and entertainment life of the Seljuks draws attention. It can be said that the social life mobility in the Seljuks is reflected in the sports and entertainment culture in the light of some details between the sources reached until today and some details in the events. The sport, which is an important element of culture, is also a continuation of the previous Turkish states and it can be said that the Oghuz ceremony was transferred to Anatolia almost without decomposition. The sports are usually a training for the preparation of the war. However, these sports branches were adopted by the people in time and when there was no war, the rules were adopted or applied by changing the rules. The Seljuk sultans tried to improve themselves in the field of sports like every individual. The fact that the training materials of the Seljuk sultans reached so far explain this situation. Remarkable sport is such as wrestling, using arrow, ambling, equestrian, and hunting. In the related sporting activities, the struggle against nature and one-to-one struggle are observed without harming the other. As mentioned before, although sport was regarded as the nature of the war, it has affected every point of life. There are frequent sports competitions in wedding ceremonies, festivals and boarding ceremonies. Those who were successful in sports competitions would both rise to a reputable position and be rewarded. Colorfulness in sports life is also reflected in the entertainment life. In particular, it is often mentioned in entertainments and feasts in Ibn Bibi's work. These feasts are usually held in large spaces where public sultans can be intertwined. Also in women and feasts, they shared the same position with the men in the sporting events organized in the feasts.

The concept of Sky Square / (Gokmeydan) has found its place in the cosmology of the Seljuk Empire in the sense of the place where the expression of power, force and eternity in the sense of heaven in the sense of heaven belongs to the sky. On the other hand, the epistemological uniqueness of the concept of the square has expanded according to the cosmological development process of human beings. These changes and developments occurred as shown below. According to Akdoğan (1962); Square is expressed as open spaces where the public is gathered for social, religious and commercial purposes, and which are the scene of military and political demonstrations. According to another definition, the square is a wide open area that serves as a meeting place for urban people by initiating and directing urban circulation and these areas are

the focal points or focal points of all kinds of settlements (Küçükerbaş, Özkan, 1994). Another definition of the word square is that it is a limited space surrounded by a natural environment and/or built environment elements. The challenge also allows for individual activities depending on the individual activities, whether in the city or in the village. It is available for individual and collective events without any payment. Structures surrounding this public land occur in time during the historical development process (Suher, 1998). The squares can also be referred to as urban life with the name of a particular function, a special activity, a special structure or any object in it (Zucker, 1959). The squares that served an important purpose as a social and cultural meeting point were also found in the Central Asian Turkish cities, which constitute the historical basis of the Seljuk city culture.

There are various squares in Samarkand and Bukhara. The center of Khorezm in the Khorasan side was a square similar to Bukhara Square in Jurcanyyye, where sheep were sold. Tirmiz, the largest city on Ceyhun, had large squares (Şeşen, 2001). In relation to this information given about the historical continuity, it will be appropriate to contact the Seljuk cities in Iran geography. Before the Seljuks, it is known that there are squares in Iranian cities in the center of the city, where the important streets meet and the market is opened. In the center of the city, there were palaces, divans and a mosque. The city is the most beautiful example of this. When Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid came to Nisaphur, he lived in a mansion in Telâcird square. When the Seljuk Sultan Tughril ruled Nisaphur, he lived with the state head of the palace in the square, which was the administrative center of the Ghazni sultans, stated as Shadyah (Shazyah or Dârüazl-Emân) or as Shadyah Square (Metin, 2013). During the Seljuk period, archery, horse riding, javelin, and ambling were performed in the squares which became a part of civil and military life. At the time of the Great Seljuks, Horse was ridden slowly in a certain distance every day; the rider and horse were trained here with various methods of warfare. The word square was used as a scale in this period (Köymen, 1992). Chovgan was the most played game in squares. Malik-Shah I used to play chovgan, as well. The square, which is used as a training and exercise area during the Seljuk period, is depicted as a green and grassy field that covers a wide area outside the city walls. Because of this feature, squares in some places, is also called the sky square (Baykara, 1998). The area surrounded by a square should be almost the size of all people living in the city. Ibn Bibi stat that in the battle of Yassi Chemen, Seljuk and Harezm armies encountered in the order, the distance between the two is not as much as the two squares are described in the poem (Öztürk, 1996). The width and length of a normal square were calculated as 1000 cubit (Uğurlu, 1987). In this case, the square is around 4000 cubit, and the inner area is 1,000,000 cubit square (Köymen, 1992). The current value of this measure is 574.170 square meters. It is thought that the existing squares in the twenty-six Seljuk cities are about the same size. As it is understood, the square, which was also a common activity area, was extremely wide (Metin, 2013).

The cities, which were acquired in the time of the Seljuk Empire, were transformed within the framework of their cosmology. Army and economy, which are

two important elements in the continuity of the state, were reorganized together with urbanization. This arrangement has allowed institutionalization of the sky squares. Horse and horse breeding, which are the most important elements of the army and economy, have been developed in Sky Squares. Ergonomics have been tried to be achieved in horse breeding, which is the input of both the army and the national economy. The cavalry training that can utilize the war vehicles expertly on the horse was made in the squares established near the gates of the cities.

When we examine the primitive understanding of the elements affecting the body and sports perception of Seljuks, the cosmological heir of Gokturks. The individuals who make up the Gokturks have learned the active and passive membership roles of their countries through their political socialization, internalizing the system of ideology and values, and gaining social status in the Gokturks with the bravery institution, even if they do not come from the Asina lineage, they are placed within the social system (Kepoğlu, 2018). Under the influence of Islam in the Seljuk Empire, bravery institutions continued with some changes. Biopolitics is part of realizing the control and regulation of bodies on a population scale. In other words, Individuals brought together at certain time periods within the production site are also aimed to be separated from each other individually and distributed to the place. This is the framing method *of the discipline*. "Every individual has his own place, an individual everywhere." Avoiding distribution in groups, jointly settle settlements; to analyze complex, mass or elimination plurals. The disciplinary space is directed to allocate as many parcels as the body or element to be subjected to distribution tabi (Foucault, 2006). The Seljuk Empire was making the population productive by subjecting their bodies to formal education in madrasahs, and military training in Sky Square. On the other hand, it was controlling over the people through cultural activities, various sports activities, reward and punishments in this square, giving control over the bodies.

### **3. The Economic Conception of the Seljuk Empire and the Effects of Sky Squares / (Gokmeydan) and Sports Lodges Institutions on the Economy**

The economic approach of the Seljuk Empire had three objectives in accordance with the archaic period. The first is to plunder and take tribute by raiding towns and cities. The second is to seize new territories to provide food to the army. Both of these goals are economic. The Seljuk Empire must produce the economic surplus externally. This organization, which has exterminated externally, caused the formation of a second power competition organization based on physical force among Seljuks for the state, emirate, height or conquests (smaller nomadic settlements) which were located around it. The result of both organizations is to be the best fighting community (Divitcioğlu, 2015). The third one is the protection of the trade routes and ease of use for the beneficiaries. If this situation was successfully organized in Seljuk cities and settlements around the Seljuk fortresses, the state could ensure its continuity. For this reason, both horses and soldiers were subjected to combat physical education. For the state to be

successful, trained soldiers and horses were needed. For this reason, the findings of the researches about the field show the aim of using multidimensional use of the sky squares. Findings related to this subject are as follows. During the Seljuks, the squares had an important position as the places where the managers and the public were given the opportunity to live individual or social freedoms outside the daily life (Metin, 2013).

Horse and horse breeding have an important place in Turkish culture. The historians working on this subject agree on the fact that the horse was first domesticated and used in military, economic and living areas by the Turks. Under the light of this information, we can say that one of the reasons for the conceptualization of the squares by Turks is the horse breeding for economy and military. The reasons why we came to this conclusion can be listed as follows. Four-legged animals perform their movements with a combination of various leg movements. Ambling may be congenital in some horses, but can also be taught later. The racking technique is generally based on the method of moving forward and rear legs on any side of the horse at the same time and pressing the ground simultaneously. Ambling horse has a high efficiency. In other words, it can carry more load in less time, less distance to longer distance. The first written data about the concept of ambling (Yorga) is mentioned in the sentence of Uighur stele in 8th Century as "*I speared his army in yorga race.*" Here ambling is given as a stepping name. Another inscription, the Tonyukuk inscription, set in 725, states that one hundred thousand soldiers were gathered in the race plain and the plains mentioned took their names from the horse races held for various reasons. The name of the place in the inscription of Uighur stele in the sense of "ambling", it also depicts the existence of a sporting field designated for ambling horse at the beginning of the eighth century.

The Turkish horse and horseback was brought from Central Asia to the Middle and the Near East by the Seljuks and was further developed (Yildiran, 1999). The other reason is that the Turks have shown much better performance in their archery (Tirendaz), which is another kind of war games. There are two reasons for the archers' achievements in this sport. First, they are Turkish bowmen. A Turkish bow needs five to six years to produce. The second one should be sought in the deeply thought-out and systematic training of Turkish archers. This Turkish sport has every condition of a modern sport (Ritter, 2010). In order to be the best warrior society, the Seljuks, who have settled to life, have created and organized sky squares. As they reach these goals, many sports branches have been applied regularly through their contributions. The use way of Sky Square by Seljuk Empire's government is surprisingly similar to the principles of scientific management that Taylor proposed in 1905. That is, with the training of people and horses in the Sky Square, Taylor "*We are all looking for qualified personnel who are trained by others*". However, the only way to proceed with the steps towards national productivity is to realize the necessity of creating a systematic cooperation that will reveal and develop qualified people instead of hunting people who are trained by others. The first objective of any system should be to train people in

first class. The person who is capable of systematic management will reach the summit much faster and more precisely than the previous systems.

The Seljuk Empire government acted in accordance with Taylor's "*maximum prosperity, but with maximum efficiency*". This logic is in accordance with "*The most important feature of both the employees and the management is to be developed and educated so that people can reach a fast and the most productive level to the extent of their abilities.*" In the light of this logic, we learn from Ibn Bibi that the power of the Seljuk Empire was planned and organized for both war and economic purposes. Likewise, Taylor's labor productivity efficiency is a description of the rule that the limits of a person's capacity are limited to the types of work he has reached because of fatigue. This is the rule of a heavy work that resembles the work of a horse cart rather than a running horse. In practice, this kind of work requires the man to push and pull heavily with his arms; In other words, it is the power to do something by pushing and lifting something that they hold in their hands. In this case, the rule is that every time a push or pull is made for the arms of the worker, the worker may only be working in certain parts of the day. For example, in the transportation of pig iron, each of which weighs 92 pounds, while a first-class worker can only work in 43% of the day, he is supposed not to work in 57% of his time. Therefore, if a worker carries half a peak weighing 46 pounds, he will carry a load of 58% of the day and remain empty in 42% of the day. As the burden rises, the worker will spend more days working, and this will continue to the point where the worker can carry his load with his hands all day without getting tired (Taylor, 2016). The rules of the chovgan sport (now called polo), which was performed in sky square, were first created by the Turks (Güven, 1992). For the Seljuk Empire power, the importance of this sport is that it is a free time activity for military training and public.

From the relevant sources, we know that the Seljuk Empire established and operated the first formal education institutions within the understanding of decentralized management. There are two logic systems put forward by Robert Owen. First, "*The character of the person is not created by himself, but the environment.*" Second, "*By applying certain methods and tools, any character can be given to each community, increasingly to the world, from the worst to the best, from the most ignorant to the most intellectual. These methods and instruments are also largely under the control of the sovereigns of the nations*". Owen believed that the ideal society could only be established as a result of good education for children and young people. According to him, children should be educated starting from a young age (Aybay, 1970). This sport which was practiced and taught by the Turks in a very early period, especially as a military training in equestrianism, is a game not only for men but also for women and girls (Atabeyoğlu, 1984). The people were so impressed by this game that they were playing at night even by lighting. 10-foot-long candles were used for lighting. There was a great luxury at that time. The balls were being saved in gold boxes and decorated with red leather. The chovgans were made of coated wood and they were dressed up (Kinzler, 1947). For these reasons, sky square was also used in public education.

#### 4. Results

In the Seljuk Empire, the sky squares / (Gokmeydan) and sports madrasas stand out as a serious sports organization. The sky squares are the institutions that provide both military and socio-cultural services within the structure of the period. In the cities of the Seljuk Empire, the squares gave a regular service in the administration of the officer. In the settlements near the Seljuk fortresses, they also served under the control of the court of residence under the Castle Guard. The sports monopolies served in the administration of the lodge sheikh depending on the judge in the cities. In the Turkish tribes located outside the settlements, both military and socio-cultural activities continued in the open and closed spring and winter sports houses with a tradition coming from the Gokturks. Sports and physical activities have made important contributions to the dynamism of the general economy in every period (Yıldız, 2009; Yıldız, 2010). In addition, the government has reached its goal by means of the sky squares which use all facilities to become the best fighting society. In addition to military physical education (both man and horse during the period), Sky Square, / (Gokmeydan) which was opened to the public in certain days of the week, caused the public to operate in various sports branches as well as the establishment of the enterprises that produce the sports branches of the sports branch and their contribution to the Seljuk economy.

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