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NEW CUSTOM FOR THE OLD VILLAGE

INTERPRETING HISTORY THROUGH TURKISH VILLAGE WEB-SITES

by

MÜSEMMA SABANCIOĞLU

Under the Direction of Isa Blumi

ABSTRACT

It is estimated that there are 35.000 villages in Turkey, and a great number of them have their own unofficial web-sites created as a result of individual efforts. The individuals who prepare these web-sites try to connect with the world via the internet, and represent their past with limited information. Pages on these web-sites that are titled "our history" or "our short history" provide some unique historical, cultural, and anthropological information about the villager's life in rural area. This thesis examines amateur historians' methods of reinterpretation in the past, and as such explore Turkish local history from a new point of view.

INDEX WORDS: Turkey, Turkish Republic, Ottoman Empire, Rural life, Villages in Anatolia, Turkısh village, Internal migration, Circassians, Balkan immigrants

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by

MÜSEMMA SABANCIOĞLU

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2011

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2011

NEW CUSTOM FOR THE OLD VILLAGE

INTERPRETING HISTORY THROUGH TURKISH VILLAGE WEB-SITES

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May 2011

DEDICATION

To *fındık kız*

A great storyteller raised a daughter who pursues stories

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A couple of weeks ago, a friend of mine from Turkey asked me the subject of my thesis. When I explained her that I was working on the villages of Turkey, she said "Such a great topic! We almost forgot the villages. It is a very good time to remember them." Then, she added "the perception about the villages in the urban centers of Turkey is distorted, pejorative, and simply biased." I am very happy to find a chance to work on villages, and I will feel achieved if I get any attraction on behalf of this subject.

I am thankful to my academic advisor Isa Blumi, and my committee members Jared Poley and Joe Perry who have followed this project since its inception. They had to spent more time with me than usual. I thank to Isa Blumi, for encouraging me to keep going, even at times when I considered quitting. He reminded me where I come from, and he always supported me in his own idiosyncratic way. If I did not have Joe Perry, this research would lose much. I owe deep thanks to him for his support.

Conducting research on Turkey in the United States has its own challenges. Whenever I needed literature support, my friends, and colleagues in Turkey provided me what I needed. I especially thank to Gülsün Kaya, Damla Aydemir, and Istanbul University Press. I also would like to express my gratitude to Ebru Erdem Akçay and Sevgül Topkara Sarsu who read through my research. They shared their valuable insights with me. Jon Schmitt and Michelle Lacoss also helped me a lot during a very critical stage of the project, and I will never forget their support. My family, from Istanbul, reminded me that I was not alone and morally stood right behind me, like they always do. Sedat Şenoğlu supported me all the way from Stockholm. I am privileged to have a friend who keeps encouraging me even from such a distance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis attempts to address a largely ignored undercurrent of change in the Republic of Turkey over the past thirty years. It centers on the village, long neglected in national political and historical analysis, as a dynamic force in larger Turkish society. Using various media as sources, it argues that while there runs a deep cultural gap between the urban and rural populations of Turkey, the way these divisions are reproduced in urban stereotypes fails to actually capture the dynamic social life in Turkey's rural communities. As demonstrated by this project's detailed analysis of various forms of social media produced by villagers themselves, especially through the internet in the form of village web-sites, I will shed light on a new interactive medium by which the village becomes a more direct agent in not only shaping the country's past, but in writing it as well. This thesis, in other words, sheds light on the emergence of village web-sites in Turkey, by investigating and analyzing their attempts at adding their own narratives to the dominant histories that have systematically reduced villages in Turkey to a subordinate, peripheral role.

Revealing that traditional representations of rural life in Turkey are more the product of certain preconceived notions and prejudices directed at villagers, an analysis of content on the Internet, highlights that villagers' telling of their own history, a first in the Turkish Republic, not only constitutes to reinterpreting the country's past, but becomes the subject of an entirely new kind of history through narrating their own history which is a novelty in Turkey. The value of this thesis may ultimately be gauged by the fact that it illuminates for the first time the growth of village web-sites that specifically attempt to reinsert the village into the larger Turkish historical narrative. These sites, usually presented under the title "the history of our village" (*köyümüzün*

tarihi), or "our short history" (*tarihçemiz*) have in fact been rewriting how the country's twentieth century history can be remembered.

Turkey is a country where political, religious and ethnic tensions coexist. Even ordinary individuals without strong political leanings often find themselves having to take sides in the contentious political environment. Any study on the history of the Turkish Republic since the post World War II has to deal with the three central cleavages as they continue to plague society as a whole. During the 1970s, the polarization existed between leftists and the entrenched rightist sector of the society. The polarization between Kurds and Turks that emerged in the 1970s and took a violent turn in the 1980s became another sociopolitical cleavage in Turkey, and it remains as one of the most crucial problems of the country. A more recent tension, which marked the first decade of the new century, exist between the secular and the anti-secular currents of the society.

In this thesis my main aim is to point out, by using a new kind of source, the village web-sites, that another form of disunity in Turkish society, namely, the cultural gap between the village and urban centers. Although such a gap can certainly be traced back to the Ottoman Empire, I would like to restrict my discussion to the Republican period from 1923 to 1950, since, as I will argue below, contemporary villagers' motivations behind preparing internet web-sites can be associated with the consequences of the specific politics of the Republican period.

I argue that the urban/rural divide is far deeper than it is usually thought to be, and deserves special attention because of the extensive scope of its effects on modern Turkish history. My aim is not to shed new light on the main sociopolitical dynamics in the country through a discussion of the urban-village disparity. Instead, I focus on how rural Turkish societies interact with the outside world through their web-sites. This focus reveals novel insights as well as giving voice to the villagers who have been the most ignored members of the Republic since the

foundational years. Through their web-sites, Turkey's villagers attempt to share their own interpretations and thoughts for the first time in a medium other than oral transmission, thus gaining a potentially larger audience and, I argue, greater direct influence over how history will be told in Turkey in the future.

17,5 million people live in the villages of Turkey today. As such, it is probably not an exaggeration to say that village web-sites provide a voice to millions of villagers. In this regard, my aim is to point out the necessity of hearing these long-ignored voices. I consider the emergence of these web-sites as specific responses to the state as it has actively sought to the shape the life in rural Turkey with a large scale disregard for any contributions from the villagers themselves. At a basic level, these web-sites are responses to a long-established state policy of changing of the names of villages; to the Turkification efforts that one can observe throughout the Republican history; and to the continued attempts by the ruling elites to exploit villagers in Turkey. In short, I will investigate and display the phenomenon of village web-sites as an invaluable lens through which we can critically analyze the relationships of the villagers with the state, urban elites, and ruling classes without the distortion of long-held state-centric and class-based prejudices.

The village web-sites are a little known phenomenon in the literature on Turkey.[1] Even this fact demonstrates the gap that I wish to highlight throughout this thesis. While a generalization, it is safe to say that city dwellers do not expect to see web-sites that present the village life from the middle of Anatolia or the Eastern part of the country. I have to admit that in the beginning of this project, I too, considered "villages" and "the Internet" as two unrelated,

---

[1] I have found only two studies so far on the village web-sites: Mete Yıldız and Zuhal Güler Parlak. *İnternet'te Köylerimiz Hazırlayanlar Kullananlar ve İşlevlerinin Analizi* (Our Village on the Internet Preparers Users and Analysis of Their Functions", Ankara: Turhan Yayınevi, 2008. Nebi Özdemir, "Sanal Dünyanın Köy Monografileri" (The Virtual Monographies of the Villages), *Milli Folklor,* Yıl 18, Sayı 72. accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.millifolklor.com/tr/sayfalar/72/06.pdf

even mutually exclusive universes. My view of the situation in rural Turkey clearly reflected an urban bias based on a lingering ideological construct developed since the early stages of the Republic's construction in the 1930s. Under the Atatürk regime, a harsh policy of "modernization" entailed severe treatment towards what were deemed "backward" and "traditional" areas of "reactionary" social forces. This applied both to religious and rural social and cultural contexts.

It is often assumed by urban dwellers that villagers are still lagging "behind" in urban social practices, including articulating for themselves a place in Turkey's narrative. It was therefore rather unexpected to discover villagers that were sufficiently informed about the internet to create web-sites for themselves. I was not alone in having this viewpoint; during this research most individuals from Turkey with whom I spoke about the project could not hide their bewilderment. One of them said "such a crazy world, even villages have web-sites!" Over the course of my research, I came to realize that our reactions showed not only our ignorance regarding rural life in our country but also a severe and unwarranted prejudice. This hints at the previously noted, deeply rooted rupture and dichotomy between Turkey's urban and rural areas. In time, by investigating how rural Turkey is actively rewriting its place into Turkey's history, it became clear that the internet had minimized the perceived information-technology gap between the urban and rural areas.

Image 1. The home page of Rize, Merkez, Yeniselimiye village web-site.

When one notices these web-sites, the first question that comes to mind is: Why do the villagers set up these web-sites? To some extent, the answer is simple: because internal migration and emigration reshaped the whole society in Turkey since the 1960s, and the Internet has been connecting these relocated people since the beginning of the 1990s. However, this simple answer requires an analysis at multiple levels; the contents of these web-sites indicate that internal migration is not the only explanation for the emergence of these web-sites, although it is the one that appears most often on the surface.

Following the Introduction, this thesis begins with a presentation of a public discussion about the villagers' relationship with the modernization project of the Turkish Republic. This discussion, which took place in 1950, and involved politicians, Turkish and non-Turkish

intellectuals, scholars, and "a villager" named Mahmut Makal, made the gap between urban dwellers and villagers visible to urban elites, and undeniable for the politicians. Makal and his famous book *Bizim Köy* (Our Village) strikingly shows that the tension between the two sides was deeply rooted.[2] In fact, I would like to use Mahmut Makal as a guidepost throughout my text, since Makal and his books provide clues to the main dynamics behind this tension.

This thesis is divided into four main chapters, titled "A Short Story of a Book and Its Author," "Literature on Villages," "Turkish Villages and Village Web-Sites," and "Villager's Responses to the State and the Urban Dwellers."After the presentation of the story of Mahmut Makal, I will provide some remarkable research by Turkish and non-Turkish scholars on village life during the second half of the twentieth century that sets the stage for my claims about how we should interpret the village web-sites in the larger context of Modern Turkish history.

In the "Turkish Villages and Village Web-Sites," chapter, I will focus on the current situation in the villages of Turkey: populations, geographical distributions, the main elements of the village life, and most importantly for this thesis, local governments and the villagers' relationship with the Internet. The main aim of this chapter, however, is to provide an insight for readers who do not have any idea about what a village web-site looks like. A brief analysis regarding the historical sources that were used by the villagers will be provided. I will then briefly present the main motivations behind the preparation of village web-sites.

In the chapter titled "Responses to the State and Urban Dwellers," I will examine the relationship between villagers and state authorities from a historical perspective. I will break down the presentation to specific aspects of this relationship, and discuss them under the titles: "Language Differences Between Rural and Urban Dwellers," "Lists of Firsts, and Contacts with the State," "Changing Names," and finally "Foundation of the Village, or Problem of Identity."

[2] Mahmut Makal. *Bizim Köy*, (İstanbul:Varlık Yayınları, 1950).

In the “Language Differences Between Rural and Urban Dwellers” section, I will examine the languages used by villagers. All the narratives that I use in this thesis are written in Turkish; however, the villagers' dialect varies from region to region. I will focus on the local glossaries provided by the villagers, thus this section will allow me to highlight the linguistic aspect of the dichotomy between rural and urban dwellers, and to show how people may not understand each other even though they speak the same language. In the “Lists of Firsts and Contact with the State” section, I will describe a unique way in which the villagers present their stories/histories. I will suggest that these lists, which describe events that the villagers deem “important firsts”, such as the first paved road constructed in the village, actually provide important clues regarding the problematic relationship between the state and the villagers.

The “Changing Names” section will focus on one of the most problematic practices of the state, and will show how the villagers responded. It is estimated that during the history of the Republic, one third of the villages' names were changed, in manners consistent with various aims of the state.

Almost every village web-site pays special attention to the village’s historic foundation. Telling the foundational story seems to be much more important than anything else presented in these narratives. In the “Foundation of the Village or Problem of Identity” section, I will try to shed light on why this issue is so important to those who create and maintain the web-sites. This section also covers a brief discussion about the official historical discourse of the country.

The title of this thesis, “New custom for the old village” (*eski köye yeni âdet*) is an idiomatic expression in the Turkish language, and it has a pejorative meaning which indicates the perceived needlessness of doing something new, and disturbing the *status quo.* The Turkish Institute of Language, a state establishment which was founded in 1932, gives the following

explanation for this idiom: to attempt an uncommon novelty/innovation which could be found strange.[3] The expression, of course, does not refer to a specific "old village", and the use of the word "village" is not a coincidence; the majority of the country lived in the villages of the rural regions until the 1950s. It shows a striking feature of the Turkish society which has existed since the beginning of the foundational years: being stuck between the old and new. Villages have been the places where one can see the strong ties to old traditions. For the founders of the Turkish Republic, modernization of the villages became one of the most challenging issues, and it is hard to say that they succeeded in this task properly. Mahmut Makal's book *Bizim Köy* told this tension through the eyes of a villager. However, after he became an educated person, Makal himself was stuck between the old and deeply rooted traditional life of an Ottoman village, and the new mentality toward the modern way of life that was brought by elites of the new Republic. Consequently, he brought new customs to an old village, and he wrote his books in order to be read by urban dwellers, and he did this successfully. In the enchanting story of a teenage school teacher, we will see how the tension between the old and the new became visible in a striking way.

1.1. *Method*

I had to make many challenging decisions while trying to shape this project. Every potential perspective that I considered yielded different and intriguing results; the abundance of web-sites and their vivid contents made it hard to focus on a particular aspect of the material. I came to the decision that focusing on the gap between urban and rural dwellers would allow me to narrow the number of web-sites to be analyzed, construct a coherent framework, and avoid the possibility of writing a chaotic or unwieldy text, while still yielding intriguing results.

---

[3] The explanation in Turkish is "Alışılmamış yadırganan bir yeniliği yapmaya çalışmak"

Before going any further, it would be useful to consider the relationship between historians and the Internet. Can this be a productive relationship? My answer will be yes, and I believe it can be much more productive than it currently is. People who use the Internet leave their marks in different ways, and the collection and study of these marks seems to be a promising avenue of research for not only history, but many other social sciences, as well.

Until today, the main use of the Internet for historians stemmed from the unique opportunity it provided them to access databases and archives with large volumes of historical documents. These documents, contrary to what is commonly assumed, were published not by historians themselves, but by research institutes or libraries. On-line archives, databases, and various historical documents became accessible to anyone with an Internet connection. Another common use of the Internet among historians has been to share their knowledge and experiences via discussion groups, allowing them to become more productive, and have new opportunities for collaborations and inter-disciplinary work.

In this project, I utilize the internet in a novel way, analyzing a new sort of material, different from the digital archives and databases commonly used by historians. In order to use this material, however, I had to incorporate a certain amount of anthropological slant in my approach.

The rapprochement of history with anthropology is not a new phenomenon. It first occurred in the 1970s, when it was a new approach to understanding the past. Historians and anthropologists had many things to learn from each others' fields, and the scholars in both disciplines started focusing on this possible collaboration. Davis suggested "…that there were four specific features of anthropological work from which historians could learn: 'close observation of living processes of social interaction, interesting ways of interpreting symbolic

behaviors, suggestions about how the parts of a social system fit together, and material from cultures very different from those which historians are used to studying."[4]

Clifford Geertz's work titled *The Interpretations of Cultures* also reflects this methodological turn. Geertz persuasively stressed the importance of symbolic meanings in cultural contexts by using a metaphor due to Gilbert Ryle, namely, the difference between a twitch and a wink. He argues that, in the cultural context, a twitch and a wink may have different meanings. He says that by looking at the eye movements of two boys, "one could not tell which was twitch and which was wink, or indeed whether both or either was twitch or wink."[5] Geertz's argument helped construct a new point of view for anthropologists. He encouraged them to see the possible meanings behind a specific situation, in analogy with seeing the possible cultural meanings behind a twitch and a wink. He also underlines the necessity of considering the "practitioners" as the primary subjects of study. He states that "if you want to understand what a science is, you should look in the first instance not at its theories or its findings, and certainly not at what its apologists say about it; you should look at what practitioners of it do."[6]

Geertz's approach opens up a new window for social scientists -including historians-, and when considering the use and importance of symbols in the cultural context in which people act, historians are heavily influenced by his "thick description" method. A remarkable example, Robert Darnton's book titled *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*, starts with these sentences: "This book investigates ways of thinking in eighteenth century France. In attempts to show not merely what people thought but how they thought—how they construed the world, invested it with meaning, and infused it with emotion"[7] Darnton's book

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4 Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *Houses of History*, (New York University Press, 1999), 177.
5 Cliffiord Geertz. *The Interpretations of Cultures*. (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 6.
6 Geertz. *The Interpretations of Cultures*, 5.
7 Robert Darnton, *Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 3.

was an example that demonstrated the intriguing results one could obtain when the method of thick description is applied to history. By using fairy tales, police reports, private correspondences, and archival documents, Darnton tried to illuminate the history of the mentality of a specific era and culture. Influenced by Geertz, Darnton constructed a framework based on "working back and forth between text and context"[8]

Returning to the context of Turkish village webs-sites, my whole project is based on the so-called natives' or practitioners' perspective. I would like to present my interpretations of the narratives in village web-sites through the lens of the thick description, but before I focus on this somewhat peculiar relationship, in order to provide more insight for the reader, I would like to present some particular features of the village web-sites, and some important points that I had considered in choosing the narratives.

On my database, there are more than a thousand narratives that could be analyzed. Some of them include only several sentences regarding the village history, and some of them cover the results of comprehensive research with sources and footnotes, which may take tens of pages. Presenting narratives under the title of "the history of our village" is not the only way the villagers tell their history. As it can be seen in the following chapters, the villagers, for instance, prepare certain "lists of firsts", in order to offer a meaningful historical presentation. Some web-sites cover a great number of old photos, and villagers' comments under these photos yield substantial amount of information on the history of village, in a rather untidy way. Others share historic ephemeral documents that were somehow kept by someone until today. Considering the narratives that I use in this thesis, one cay say that the presenting of village histories is, most of the time, a communal effort for villagers. Yet, we have to clarify one specific point that will be helpful to see the villagers' narratives from the point of view of the thick description method.

[8] Darnton, *Great Cat Massacre*, 262.

Who are the people who write these narratives, beyond being the preparers of web-sites? Most of the narratives do not present any specific author names, however, they must be written by someone. Perhaps they are eager volunteers, an individual, retired history teachers, or self-educated, amateur local historians. To use in this thesis, I chose to use narratives that were presented with an "anonymous tone", i.e., those that do not present the name of the author, and do not describe the events or interpretations through the first person. By focusing on narratives that hid the author's personality, I aimed to restrict my attention to presentations that aimed to give impersonal accounts, with an air of objectivity. Such accounts in general include certain basic components such as interviews with village elders or other examples of oral history, such as local legends and folk tales. Some web-sites use excerpts from books, written by local, amateur historians, to tell their story. I rarely used the web-sites that resort to books.

I am not an anthropologist conducting a field study. Participant observation, or formal and informal interviews will not be utilized in this project. On the contrary, I chose not to communicate with the administrators of these web-sites because such communications would change the nature of this project. I aim to consider these narratives as prepared data that can be used independently. In this sense, my approach towards thick description will be somehow restricted. Geertz argues that "ethnography is thick description", because the ethnographer by "interviewing informants, observing rituals, eliciting kin terms, tracing property lines, censusing households, and writing his journals" tries to read the culture as a manuscript.[9]

While I do not directly perform an ethnographic study by interacting with informants, my choice to rely on the villagers' narratives, which utilize the products of what may perhaps be considered ethnographic research, results in a peculiar relationship with the thick description. I report on a kind of field study performed by the villagers themselves, which focuses on the

[9] Geertz, *The Interpretations of Cultures*, 10.

practitioners of their specific culture. In other words, I argue that villagers offer a vivid picture of their own field study. They use informants, oral history methods, legends, folktales, and for some cases, they literally census households, observe rituals, and ultimately write their own journal on the village web-site.

In order to demonstrate this peculiar relationship with the thick description, let me give a specific example from the foundation stories of the villages. A common example of these stories is that of the "founding brothers." According to this narrative, a certain number of brothers go to a location, and each one of them founds a different village in the area, or sometimes, in locations far away. For instance, the web-site of the village Erenli offers this story:"There is no information about the history of Erenli village before the foundation of the Republic, however, elders of the village tell us that in the old times two brothers came to the village in order to grass down of their animals. One of the brothers immigrated to somewhere else, the other settled down in Erenli. It is believed that the name of the brother who stayed in the village was Mahmut Eren. The widely known old name of the Erenli village was Mahmuteren, which was based on the brother who stayed here. Then, the name of village was change to Erenli [with Eren].[10]"

In the Geertzian sense, the story of the brothers presents many questions that help seek various levels of meanings in the cultural context. Why did the brothers not stay at the same village, but dispersed to different places? How can we read these stories in terms of the traditional kinship structure in Turkey? Why cannot one see any stories of sisters among the villagers' narratives? It is evident that these questions may lead a researcher to see a culture from

[10] "Erenli köyünün Cumhuriyet öncesi tarihi hakkında bilgi veren kaynak yoktur. Ancak köyün yaşlı insanları, eskilerden köye hayvanlarını otlatmak için, iki kardeşin gelip yerleştiğini ve uzun süre burada kaldıktan sonra, kardeşlerden birinin başka bir yere göç ettiğini bir tanesinin burada kaldığını söylemektedirler. Burada kalan kardeşin isminin Mahmut Eren olduğu söylenmektedir. Erenli köyünün, halk arasında daha çok bilinen, eski ismi olan Mahmuteren ismini burada kalan kardeşin adından almış olduğu söylenmektedir. Daha sonra köyün ismi değiştirilerek, Erenli ismini almıştır." Ordu, Merkez, Erenli village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011 http://www.erenli.net/

different perspectives, and to interact with the "practitioners" of the culture that produced these stories, in order to obtain a better understanding of that culture. Somehow, what I try to do in this thesis not going to be at this level. While I do ask similar questions at times, and analyze the narratives such as "lists of firsts" from such a viewpoint, my primary aim is to use the common tendencies, patterns, and similarities among the village web-sites in order to set up a coherent framework that sheds light on the relationship between the villagers and the state policies. I apply the thick description method as a historian, and compare the narratives to the actual/real historical realities of the county.

One last issue I would like to clarify regards the languages used in the web-sites. Most web-sites are in Turkish, and I was not able to use the web-sites that are in other languages, such as Circassian, or Bulgarian. There are also some bilingual web-sites that use Kurdish and Turkish simultaneously.

Turkish language used in the narratives seems quite similar to the language used in the Turkish mass media; however, the authors of the narratives occasionally have difficulty finding the proper expression, thus the narratives seem repetitive, confusing and unclear, at times. In translating the narratives, I chose not to correct or simplify the sentences. I tried to be faithful to the original narratives, and I had to give up using some narratives when I realized that it was almost impossible to translate them into English. The reader who is able to read Turkish will easily see these unclear expressions, and observe some logical errors, or blurred meanings in the narratives; these reflect what I have encountered in the original web-sites. I did not change any of them, however, I changed their capitalization because when they want to emphasize a word, or expression, they usually use capital letters.

2. A SHORT STORY of A BOOK and ITS AUTHOR

In this chapter, I focus on a specific book published in 1950, and its effects on the public and politic life in Turkey. My intention is to show how the tension between the politicians, urban dwellers and the rural part of country became visible at that time. This tension needs to be viewed in the light of the modernization process in Turkey. In 1950, a short book strikingly revealed that, one of the most aggressive modernization projects of the twentieth century, the modernization project of the Turkish Republic, had failed at the rural level, and how the authorities attempted to hide this failure.

In 1947, Mahmut Makal was just seventeen years old when he started to teach in a small village named Nurgüz, located in the middle of Anatolia. He was born in another small village, Demirci, which is not too far from the village where he started his career. He was trained as an elementary school teacher at the İvriz Village Institute between 1943-1947. Village Institutes can be considered as one of the significant, and also the more controversial projects of the Turkish modernization process. Between 1937 and the mid-1940s, the government tried to transform the countryside by training the villagers' children to be schoolteachers. Mahmut Makal was one of those children. His non-fictional account *Bizim Köy* (Our Village) was published in 1950 by a prominent publishing house in Istanbul.

Bizim Köy portrayed the daily life in Nurgüz, with bitter comments from the author. The villagers are portrayed as ignorant, rude, and they seem extremely reluctant towards the modern way of life. Makal wrote his first book in the end of the 1940s, and in those times, the villagers had nothing in their life but what their fate offered in their isolated lives. They were totally neglected by the Ottoman authorities throughout the centuries. The Ottoman State only knocked their door when new soldiers were needed, and for collecting taxes. By the 1940s, very little had

changed in their life after the foundation of the Republic. Limited transportation still kept them isolated from the rest of the country, and the people of Nurgüz had no frequent contact with the life outside.

Some of the people who had the chance to read Makal's book right after it was published in 1950 argue that the book was an atomic bomb which exploded right in the middle of the political arena. Some argue that the book caused a big mental earthquake in the big cities. Makal's comments on village life, in fact, were more than bitter. What he told, in detail, was not easy to imagine for the people who lives in the big cities. Some of them were just unacceptable.

The villagers were living at the same place with their animals, lice were normal part of daily life, they barely knew how to clean themselves, smoking habits started by the age of seven, and overall the villager's ties to the old traditions seemed unbreakable. The villagers were guided by *hoja*s and all kinds of superstitions. As Makal describes his students, the portrait became more hurtful: "If you look at the children's eyes, there is no life in them; if you look at their faces, there is no colour in them; their noses are running, their heads aren't held up. And children ought to be plump."[1]

Moreover, the presence of a schoolteacher in the village did not make the people of Nurgüz happy. They simply refused to be modern, and they did not seem interested in the modern way of life. In the very beginning of his book, Makal mentions some serious problems that he encountered:

> The next problem was to persuade the children's fathers to send them to school. If they were not agreeable, Law 4274 (on compulsory school attendance) did not impress them at all. 'You are a villager too, Efendi. You are one of us. I am only saying this because you have made a good impression. But what's the the point in putting the child to school? God does not allow a mouth that he's made to starve! He'll manage the same as his father did.

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[1] Mahmut Makal, *A Village in Anatolia,* Translated by Sir Wyndham Deeds, Ed:Paul Stirling (London:Valentine Mitchell&Co:1954), 108.

> Let him learn to follow a yoke of oxen and mind his own business. As long as he knows enough to look after himself while he's on military service, and to write a letter -that's all he needs. More than this is a sin.'

Makal wishes, in the continuing paragraph, as follows: "I am convinced that one day the villagers themselves will find the cure for their ignorance and illiteracy."[2]

Turkish Republic was founded in 1923. There is a certain agreement among the scholars who study this period: the founders were urban elites, the foundation of the new country was based on urban and western values, and the new ruling elites had a hard time reaching the villages, physically and mentally. Throughout the 1930s and the 1940s, almost every politician who attempted to develop policies in favor of the villages and the villagers was an urbanite, or had predominantly urban values. The discourse, common through the 1930s, that the villagers are the "masters of the country" did not change the life of the villagers. Moreover, the idea of training the villagers in the village created a controversial project named Village Institutes in the end of the 1930s. By the end of the first three decades of the Republic, the politicians came to realize that there was something wrong regarding the modernization of the rural areas. Behind this realization there was Mahmut Makal, and his book *Bizim Köy* and his other following books.

The year *Bizim Köy* was published, 1950, was a turning point for Turkish democracy. Democratic Party (DP) won the election that year, and the 27 years of single party rule of the Republican People's Party (RPP) came to an end. During the campaign, DP used Mahmut Makal's book as an effective campaign document against the RPP. According to DP, Makal's book was showing the "real" situation in the rural areas. The new president of the country, Celal Bayar, wanted to talk with Makal face to face. What he said to him was, if he faced any further

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[2] Makal, *A Village in Anatolia,* 3-4.

difficulties in the village, he could talk with the president personally. The message was clear, Makal was not supposed to write another book.

Makal's book *Bizim Köy* first appeared in English as part of *A Village In Anatolia*, which is an annotated translation of Makal's two books, *Bizim Köy* and *Köyümden* (From My Village) published in 1952. *A Village in Anatolia* was published in English in 1954, and was reviewed by European and American scholars. The translation was made by Sir Wyndham Deedes, who started his army career in the Ottoman Empire in the end of nineteenth century.

One of the first reviews of the book was by C.G. Simpson, published in the *Royal Institute of International Affairs* in July 1954. Simpson's short review emphasizes that "for the first time an intelligent and acute observer had got inside the peasant's skin: for the first time the peasant had lifted his voice." The review ends with a suggestion: "This is a book to be read by all who are interested in Turkey."[3] Yet such a suggestion was one of the last things the Turkish authorities wanted. According to the latter, the book was not a nice presentation of the country, and the official response was swift. Makal was arrested on charges of subversion soon after the publication of his first book.

Also in July 1954, another review was published by W.C. Brice in *Man* which was published by Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. The author did not seem surprised by the conditions in Nurgüz.

> The villages in Anatolia differ greatly from district to district, and the conditions described by Makal are typical only of the poor semi-nomadic communities of the central plateau, in a season of exceptional famine. Even so, the kinds of hardship he reveals include nothing new to anyone familiar with rural Turkey. What is surprising is that this account should have caused such a sensation in the capital. It would seem that the gulf between town and countryside in Anatolia is as wide now as it was in the time of St. Paul.[4]

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[3] C. G. Simpson, "A Village in Anatolia" *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs*), Vol. 30, No. 3 (Jul., 1954), 383.

[4] W.C. Brice, "A Village in Anatolia," *Man*, Vol. 54 (Jul., 1954), 115-116.

In the summer 1954, a review by Richard D. Robinson was published in the *Middle East Journal*. Robinson basically focuses on the translation and editorial problems of the book. He does not seem to agree with the observations of the Paul Stirling, the editor of the book. Stirling had conducted an ethnography in an Anatolian village between 1947-1951 and added a considerable number of footnotes to Makal's book while attaching an "Introduction" chapter for the English edition. Stirling mentioned the possibility that Makal's observations were overly harsh, and questioned whether his narratives were accurate. Yet, according to Robinson:

> Some of the remarks about Makal's shortcomings as an observer are peculiarly unfortunate and largely unwarranted. There is no basis for criticizing the author for interpreting and reacting to village life as he sees and feels it. Makal makes no pretense of writing as an ordinary villager. He is obviously a very unordinary villager, and he, better than anyone else, realizes it. In fact, the editors seem to miss entirely the most significant feature of the book, which is, simply, that given a few years of modern education an Anatolian village boy has emerged as a full-blown citizen of twentieth-century Western civilization, capable of reacting to his own village environment in much the same manner as would you or I.[5]

The last review I would like to present here is the one written by Robert Devereux in 1957, titled "Anatolian Trilogy." Devereux's review seems much more comprehensive than others. He first portrays the Turkish modernization project after the foundation of the Republic, and then provides detailed information regarding Mahmut Makal's personal life, including the environment where he was raised. This review is not only of *Bizim Köy* and *Köyümden,* but it also regards his later book, *Memleketin Sahipleri* (Masters of the Country) published in 1954. Devereux also, as in Brice and Robinson's reviews, mentions the poor quality of the English translation, and the official response of Turkish authorities:

> Since the book presents only the worst aspects of Turkish life, and then not always with complete accuracy, Turkish officials have done their best to discourage its translation and publication outside Turkey. Though leaders of the DP regime may have honored Makal and appreciated the help which his book gave the party in the 1950 election, they have also realized the unfavorable impression which the book would create abroad. The

[5] Richard D. Robinson, "A Village in Anatolia," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 8, No.3 (Summer, 1954), 350-351.

> possibilities of its use for adverse propaganda by unfriendly nations are obvious. A Russian translation has, in fact, been published in which the Turkish subtitle "Notes of a Village Teacher" was changed to "Notes of a Turkish Teacher," so as to imply that Makal speaks for all of Turkey.[6]

As Devereux hints, DP first used the book as a campaign document in the 1950 election, then, in 1954, tried to suppress it, considering its potential for adverse propaganda against the country.

The four reviews that I presented here can be considered as the first responses of the Anglophone world to Makal's controversial books. All four emphasize the political stir which was created by the books in the beginning of the 1950s. Robinson and Brice, in their reviews, gave a substantial place to editorial and translation problems of the book. Robinson also provides a very intriguing detail regarding the translation. He says "In fact, an excellent translation of Makal's first book, *Our Village*, made last year by a Turk, was never submitted for publication because of informal governmental pressure brought to bear on the translator."[7] Unfortunately, he does not give detailed information about this translation or the translator.

One of Robinson's interesting evaluations regards the book's editor, Paul Stirling. Robinson says that "Perhaps Dr. Stirling's undue conscientiousness in his editorial duties may be explained by the desire of all those concerned with the publication of this book to please the Turkish Government."[8]

Paul Stirling was a British social anthropologist at the London School of Economics. In 1949, he conducted an ethnography in a village, Sakaltutan in Kayseri, which is not far from the village Makal was born and raised, and the villages he portrayed in his books. Stirling portrays Makal as "the first genuine villager, from the inarticulate millions of peasants all over the world,

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6 Robert Devereux, “Anatolian Trilogy,” *Books Abroad*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Spring, 1957), 126-130.
7 Robinson, “A Village in Anatolia,” 351.
8 Robinson, “A Village in Anatolia,” 351.

to describe the village from within."[9] In his "Introduction," he indicates several times that no one can assume that Makal's village descriptions were accurate. He strikingly emphasizes that "by selection of the grimmest parts of village life, by the omission of alleviating circumstances, by imprecision and exaggeration, Makal paints his subject even blacker than it really is."[10] Stirling also points out that Nurgüz was not the only village (or location) in the world which lives in these conditions. Despite what he sees as Makal's shortcomings, Stirling finds him utterly sincere. "The misleading character of parts of his account is due rather to excess of virtue than of vice. He is a man of great compassion for the sufferings of his people, with a burning sense that these sufferings must be made known. Injustice, corruption, lethargy, and indifference rouse his anger, and he does not fear to say so. At the same time, he is determined to share the hardships of village life. He has refused opportunities to take more comfortable jobs, and has dedicated himself to the service of his villagers."[11]

In the end of his "Introduction," Stirling praises Makal: "Unfortunately, the strikingly staccato and picturesque language of the village does not survive translation. But his breadth of knowledge, his eye for situations, his flashes of mature insight, which are, if anything, even more astonishing, are plain enough in this version. We can readily forgive shortcomings of objectivity in a work which is at the same time a unique document of great interest and importance, and also a vivid, amusing, and heartrending account of the village people of Central Turkey."[12]

Even if some of Paul Stirling's criticisms about Mahmut Makal's narratives are valid, Makal's books showed a striking reality in Turkey. He portrays backwardness, ignorance, and illiteracy in rural parts of the country, which was ignored and neglected by the government.

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[9] Paul Stirling "Introduction" to *A Village in Anatolia,* xiii.
[10] Stirling, Introduction, xiv.
[11] Stirling, Introduction, xvi.
[12] Stirling, Introduction, xvi.

Obviously the Turkish modernization project was not able to reach to Nurgüz and the villages around it. However, according to the official discourse, rural areas had been one of the most important targets of the Turkish modernization project since the foundation of the Republic. In the 1950's, people probably still remembered the words of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic, on rural areas. In 1922, before the proclamation of the Republic, Atatürk said that the villagers were the "masters of the country" in a speech he gave in the newly founded parliament. Atatürk said that the villagers were sent to the different parts of the world, their blood was shed, and their bones left behind, by "us". The fruits of the villagers' labor were taken from their hands, and wasted. Moreover, in the face of their sacrifices, the villagers were treated rudely and were seen as servants. Then he continues his speech with the importance of the farmers for the rural economy.[13] It is evident that after a very long time under the domination of foreign capital and the half-colonial situation of the country, Atatürk trusted that the villagers would play an important role in the rising of the new Republic, and he acclaimed the villagers as the masters. However, three decades after this speech, Makal portrayed a very different kind of profile for these "master"s, which could not be easily accepted by the authorities.

How did people in Turkey respond to the book?[14] Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, a prominent novelist and poet, argued that *Bizim Köy* was just the first of a series of books which would surely appear soon. He says: "We have villages as much as stars in the sky.[15] Makal is making the job easier for others who are familiar with villages, and are capable of writing about them, because he is going in one of those villages in a courageous way. Very few books were able to

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[13] Nimet Arsan, (comp.). *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri I* (Atatürk's Speeches and Statements), (Ankara:Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Yayınları I, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Second Edition, 1961), 225.

[14] The quotations from Turkish intellectuals were taken from a newspaper article titled "O Köy Bizim Köyümüzdü" (That village was Our Village) *Radikal*, April 4, 2008. Accessed April 7, 2011. www.radikal.com.tr/ek_haber.php?ek=ktp&haberno=7529

[15] His words in Turkish: "Gökte yıldız, bizde köy".

take such a shortcut. How did he do this? Neither magic, nor miracle. What he is doing is telling the truth in a simple way."[16]

Peyami Safa, a right wing novelist, called the book a "brochure," and he argued that the issue of villages is bigger than this. According to him, Makal's voice is small, messy and shady.[17]

Another prominent literary critic, Nurullah Ataç, on *Bizim Köy* appeared to speak for all Turkish intellectuals of the time:

> I believe that in our world of literature, there will be a new era which belongs to Mahmut Makal, and others like him. I am very happy to say this. We, our generation, spoke of our love of our country, and the beauty of our country. We said that we have to see and learn more about our country. But we could not be an example for the next generations. All did was speak. We also loved our country, but in an unrealistic way, without seeing the reality. We dreamed about it. At best, we saw just a couple of cities. We could not enter its villages, we were afraid of it. Today's generation is now doing what we could not. If they are angry with us, they are probably right about it. We have to understand the smallness of our visions compared to theirs. We thought about the country in our rooms, while smoking. We saw villages that never existed, a country that never existed. This young generation around Mahmut Makal will save our country, and our literature. They bring the truth and the reality to our literature. And the following generations will think on what they produced, and they will try to improve these realities.[18]

It did not happen in the way Nurullah Ataç wished. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s and the following decades, the influence of the media, technological resources, and the development of the infrastructure changed the daily life in rural Turkey, to a certain degree. The only thing that strikingly changed was the overall picture of village populations. Today, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute, only 24 percent of the Turkish population lives in rural areas. Current population of the country as of today is 73 million, and more than 17,5 million people live in the rural part of the country.[19] Yet, according to demographic data, 80 percent of the Turkish population lived in rural areas in the 1950s. Since the 1950s, in particular during the 1960s, and

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[16] *Kitaplar*, May 1950.
[17] *Ulus*, April 12, 1950
[18] *Ulus*, December 15, 1951.
[19] *News Bulletin of Turkish Statistical Institute*, January 28,\ 2011. Results of Census Based on Addresses, 2010, accessed April 7, 2011, www.tuik,gov.tr

after the September 12, 1980 coup, people flowed to the urban centers. However, the gap between the urban and village life remains.

With hindsight, we can say that Makal's observations in 1950 showed some striking characteristics of rural life that persisted through the ninety years since the foundation of the Republic. The villages in Turkey are still perceived by the urban elite as not sufficiently modern, as backward, and even as illiterate regions of the country

3. LITERATURES ON VILLAGES

The Republican elites, until they lost the governance in 1950, tried to create a picture of a prosperous, happy, and modernized rural life. Mahmut Makal, with his book, showed that this picture was far from persuasive. My main aim here is to show how the villagers, until the 1950s, were seen by most Turkish scholars as passive agents in the modernization project of the country. By using accounts of non-Turkish scholars, I try to provide different academic perspectives under which the villagers were studied.

During the 1960s, Turkish villages were the focus of some anthropological research, mostly conducted by non-Turkish scholars. American scholars' interests towards Turkish villages yielded plenty of folkloric, ethnographic, and anthropological studies, corresponding to the country's entrenched place in American geo-strategic interests. *A Bibliography of American Scholarship on Turkish Folklore and Ethnography,* published in 1982, covers 465 titles, most of which contain research conducted in the villages in different parts of the country.[1] The oldest entry in the bibliography is dated from 1850, but overall, these works are concentrated in the 1960s, and 1970s, when the United States and Turkey were close allies.

During the 1960s, some significant anthropological research was conducted by the non-Turkish scholars in Anatolia. The scholars who chose to pursue their academic interests in a small village in Turkey, preferred villages close to Ankara, the capital. For instance, Paul Stirling, a British scholar, arrived in his field in November 1949, and he admits that his choice of a village was made in an unscientific way:

> It was not possible to choose a 'typical village' because no such things exists, it was at least possible to avoid choosing villages with obvious peculiarities. I set out to find an orthodox Muslim, Turkish-speaking village of modest size, fairly away from the

[1] Warren S. Walker. *A Bibliography of American Scholarship on Turkish Folklore and Ethnography. Türk Folklorü ve Etnografyası Üzerine Amerika'da Yayınlanmış Araştırmalar Bibliyografyası*. (Ankara:Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Milli Folklor Araştırma Dairesi Yayınları 36, 1982).

> direct influence of the cities, on the plateau which forms the largest part of Anatolia. My final choice was unscientific. When the staff of an American school and clinic situated in the right kind of area, near Kayseri, generously offered to provide a base, and to help with some acute practical problems, my wife and I accepted with gratitude and enthusiasm.[2]

Stirling's research focused on the daily life of a village named Sakaltutan in Kayseri. His main concern was to present an overall picture of the life in a Turkish village. In order to do this, he focused on households, economy, family structure, kinship, marriage, rank, groups, feuds, and power. The final chapter of his book was related to the "villagers' contact with the life outside". He was investigating the discrepancy between the urban and the rural, the government services in the village, urban and rural social rank, and villagers and townsmen.[3]

Stirling's readers can access very detailed portrayals of the village life. The book is full of explanation, description, and analysis. However, the villagers, as persons, do not appear in his book. The reader cannot get the feeling that Stirling, as a person, was living there. Throughout the book, one does not see any records of his communications with the villagers, even for anthropological purposes. Stirling had done his field work, and wrote a very detailed book on the villagers, but there were, in a sense, no villagers in the book. Of course no one would expect to see the daily life conversations between the author and the villagers in a book reporting on an anthropological field study, however, overall, one can easily start to think that Stirling, in fact, was an invisible man during his field study. He just observed, and left.

Another anthropological research was conducted by Joe E. Pierce, a scholar from Portland State College at the time. The village that Pierce chose for conducting his research was

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[2] Paul Stirling, *Turkish Village*, (New York:Science Editions, 1964), 3.

[3] The reader may remember from the previous chapter that Sakaltutan village, where Paul Stirling conducted his research, and Nurgüz village, where Mahmut Makal started his teaching career, are close to each other. They are located in the middle of Anatolia, and the distance between the two villages is 120 miles. Two men, at the same time, were taking notes in these two villages. Stirling was conducting his anthropological research, Makal was writing the first sketches of his book. I personally believe that a comparison between the two books, one written from the perspective of an insider and the other from that of an outsider, could yield some important results. Such a comparison has not yet been made.

Demirciler, located 65 miles southeast of Ankara. His book, published in 1964, also focuses on the daily life of the village, including descriptions of digging a well, the preparation of foods, leaving for the military service superstitions, and folkloric material. Pierce's interaction with Demirciler lasted for six and a half years. In his Preface, he says that in order to communicate better with the reader, the book would be narrated by a small village boy named Mahmud. "As Mahmud learns about his culture so can the reader."[4]

Pierce's book was part of a series titled "Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology," published by Stanford University. The editors of the series say in their Foreword, "these case studies in cultural anthropology are designed to bring to students, in beginning and intermediate courses in the social sciences, insights into the richness and complexity of human life as it is lived in different ways and in different places." The life in Demirciler village was portrayed in a detailed way in the book, and most likely, the people of the village never learned that the "richness" and the "complexity" of their life was to be taught in American universities. After six and a half years of field study, there was only one villager in Pierce's book: an imaginary one: the little boy, Mahmud.

Another anthropological research that I would like to present here belongs to another American scholar, who was doing his Ph.D. at the time in the University of Chicago. Michael E. Meeker visited Turkey for the first time in August, 1965. One of his main goals was to understand "how local tradition had played a role in shaping the course of economic and political modernization" in Turkey. In order to conduct his research, he preferred a district center instead of a village, because he wanted to investigate the relationship between the state and the local

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[4] Joe E. Pierce, *Life in a Turkish Village*, (United States:Holt, Rinehart, and Winston,1965), "Preface".

elites. He also knew that townsmen and villagers had different responses to the nationalistic project of state modernization.[6]

Michael E. Meeker's research in Trabzon led him to extensive research, not only in anthropology, but also in history. As his archival and historical research deepened, the conclusions of his research became more sophisticated. In 2002, University of California Press published his research, which covers a broad perspective on the history of Turkey: *A Nation of Empire, The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity.*

Throughout the book, using different sources, anthropological observations, and archival documents, Meeker strongly points to the continuity between the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkish Republic. He basically argues that "the nationalists who founded the Turkish Republic enjoyed an important resource for an otherwise daunting project. As they set about to create a new population of Turks for the country that would be called Turkey, they were able to rely on an already existing state society that could be moved from Empire to Republic."[7] In this sense, the book presents an interesting picture on the so-called broken ties between the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. The distinguishing feature of Meeker's research was that it investigated the relationship between the local elites and the state. He did so by actively observing a small town center, instead of recording his observations from the sidelines.

In 1980, another anthropological research was performed by an American female scholar. Carol Delaney, as Michael Meeker, was working on her Ph.D. at the University of Chicago. Her research seems to go beyond portraying the village life in an anthropological way through passive observation. She focuses on gender and cosmology in Turkish village society. Delaney first visited the base location of her field study, Gökler village, in the winter of 1980, and she

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[6] Michael E. Meeker, *A Nation of Empire, The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity.* (Berkeley:University of California Press, 2002), 5.

[7] Meeker, "Preface" xii.

spent two years there. Gökler is a village relatively bigger than its neighbors, and it is also close to Ankara. Delaney's anthropological research was published in 1991, under the title *The Seed and the Soil, Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society*.[9]

One of the striking features of Delaney's book is that she spent more time with women than men; thus the reader presumably can see the women's world, which is not easily accessible to male scholars, Turkish, or non-Turkish. Delaney's educational background was in philosophy, religion and psychology, and theology, and her multifaceted assessments, and comparative approach are visible throughout the book.

But what about people from Turkey; what did they write about the villages during the history of Republic? Needless to say, that there is a large amount of research which directly discusses the villages and village life from different perspectives. Villages were analyzed from economic, sociological and historical perspectives. The villagers themselves did not seem to attract much research when they lived in their villages, however, when they started to migrate to the urban centers, we see the rising numbers of research papers devoted to them. From the beginning of the 1990s, under the title of "internal migration", or "problems of integration" we see the villagers as a popular research topic in the urban centers.

The most popular topic of research on the villages in Turkey seems to be the Village Institutes. I attempted to get an estimate of the number of works on Village Institutes, however, after seeing the great number of research studies, novels, memoirs, articles, and photo albums, I had to give up. Why did the village Institutes attract this much attention? Because the Village Institute project is one of the most controversial projects in the history of Turkey. The fact that

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[9] Carol Delaney, *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

the Village Institutes were viewed as communist institutions by some right wing thinkers and as fascist by some left wing intellectuals suggests the amount of controversy surrounding them.

One of the main aims of Village Institutes was modernization and transformation of the rural part of the country. The main idea behind the project, was to keep the villagers in their villages. More than 20,000 students were educated in the Village Institutes, and according to Fay Kirby Berkes, who conducted an extensive research on the Institutes in 1960, “more than 11,000 of Turkey's some 35,000 villages had become involved in the experiment within the decade.”[10]

The project was conducted during the single party era in Turkey under the rule of İsmet İnönü, who was elected as the second president of the country after the death of Atatürk. Beyond all controversy, it has been argued that the project "was an attempt to restore and consolidate the direct power of the state."[11] However, there were some unexpected consequences, namely,

> The education in the Village Institutes began to create a type of student who happened to be too disobedient and self-confident despite the mainstream norms of the single-party regime. This was probably because the students were given more initiative compared to their counterparts in mainstream schools, since they were “learning by doing” which required initiative. The literature concerning the Village Institute is full of stories in which students, when they left the schools on vacation or for some other purpose, caused problems with the authorities because they were too eager to object to any kind of injustice.[12]

For instance, Mahmut Makal was one of those students, and he wanted to be heard by the urban dwellers.

I argue that despite all these works on the villages in Turkey, the voices of the villagers themselves are missing in the literature. Where can we hear their voices? They can be heard through the novels that were written by the people who grew up in the rural part of the country.

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[10] Fay Kirby Berkes, “The Village Institute Movement of Turkey: An Educational Mobilization for Social Change” (Doctorate of Education Thesis at Columbia University, 1960), 2.

[11] M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, “The Village Institute Experience in Turkey”, J*ournal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol 25, No.1 (May 1998), 72.

[12] Karaömerlioğlu, “The Village Institute”, 70.

There are numerous novels which focus on village life, and some prominent names who seem eager to fictionalize their lives in the rural part of the country. The authors Kemal Tahir, Orhan Kemal and Yaşar Kemal, and also Fakir Baykurt and Talip Apaydın are representatives of a peculiar genre in Turkish literature called *peasant novels*, which, in fact, emerged after the publishing of Mahmut Makal's *Bizim Köy.*

What about the real voices of the villagers? I am arguing that there is only one kind of academic source where we are able to hear these voices. Primarily, the research conducted by Pertev Naili Boratav and İlhan Başgöz, and other folkloric research. Pertev Naili Boratav was a founder of folklore research in Turkey during the 1940s in University of Ankara. İlhan Başgöz was one of Boratav's students, and together, they compiled a great number of folkloric materials from the villages of Turkey, especially from the northeastern part. Through folkloric poems, tales, riddles, fables, and songs, one can hear all kinds of villagers' voices in their articles.

Anatolia was the home to many ancient civilizations through the history of humanity. After the long history of Byzantine Empire, and the six-century lifespan of the Ottoman Empire, Anatolian culture reflects an astounding accumulation. The folkloric materials presented by Boratav and Başgöz reflect this accumulation in their enchanting diversity. However, if one attempts to understand the villagers by using this material, a pitfall emerges, namely, the mystification of the villagers. One starts to think of the villagers in those beautiful songs, magnificent stories, and legends, and other impressive folkloric material. However, one has to understand that the villagers are the people who live with those materials, not live in them.

Recently, in 2006, a book was published in Turkey by a prominent publishing house: *Orada Bir Köy Var Uzakta, Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Köycü Söylem* (There is a Village Far Away Peasantry Discourse During the Early Republican Period).[13] The book, written by Asım M.

[13] M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, *Orada Bir Köy Var Uzakta, Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Köycü Söylem* (There is a

Karaömerlioğlu, relied on the author's Ph.D. thesis, which was completed in 1998 in Ohio State University. The title of the book comes from a popular song from the single party period, whose lyrics were written as a poem by a well-known poet, Ahmet Kutsi Tecer. The poem reflects the entire ideology of the single party period towards the villages:

> There is a village far away,
> even though we do not go to there and see it,
> that village is our village.

The single party period portrayed the villages as places where people were happy, healthy, and prosperous, and even though the urban elites did not go to the villages, they saw them as a part of the modernization project.

In his book, Karaömerlioğlu investigates the political discourses regarding populism and peasantry that flourished during the single party period. By using Eric Hobsbawm's words who said that "Turkey is the castle of peasantry in Europe and Middle East," the author also emphasizes that until the middle of the 1980s, Turkey's population was dominated by the peasants. He argues that Kemalist brand of populism, and peasantry deserve more attention, and have to be understood better in order to shed light on the current dynamics of the country. He sees a connection between the peasant mentality, which can be seen throughout the country, and an often failed understanding of democracy.[14] Karaömerlioğlu's book appears to be the most comprehensive research that illuminates the mentality at the state level towards the villages. It covers the main political discussions regarding villages and peasantry, and also gives place to the intellectuals' approach regarding the village life.

One way or another, the villagers that appear in the research discussed above were just objects viewed from different perspectives. They were investigated by non-Turkish scholars to

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Village Far Away Peasantry Discourse During the Early Republican Period), (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006).

[14] Karaömerlioğlu, *Orada Bir Köy Var Uzakta*, 17.

see how they lived their daily life, how they ate, slept, prayed. They were examined in a substantial number of case studies conducted by Turkish scholars, anthropologically, linguistically, sociologically, etc. I do not intent to underestimate all of these studies at all. My whole point is that, something was missing in the literature. What did the villagers think in fact about those studies? How would they express themselves if they were given a chance? What did they actually say when *kaymakam* (district governor) visited their village?

Including the Village Institutes, many attempts related to villages emerged throughout the Republic history. These projects tried to make villages more modernized, more educated, more civilized, but few things changed beyond the introduction of electricity, communication, tractors and paved roads.

The last policy which can had catastrophic outcomes and kept the political agenda and public opinion busy for a short time, was the evacuation of the Kurdish villages in the Eastern part of the country. Forced evacuation started at the end of the eighties, continued into the nineties and reached its peak in the mid-nineties. In the course of conflict between PKK (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*, Kurdistan Workers' Party), and Turkish military, 1779 villages and hamlets and 6,153 settlements were evacuated or destroyed by the Turkish security forces. It is estimated that 4 million people were forced to migrate from their villages.[15] Those villages are ruins today. I am not able to present these people's voices in this study, because Kurdish villages, or rather, the villages that identify themselves on the Internet as Kurdish, represent the smallest number of web-sites on my database.

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[15] Joost Jongerden "Resettlement and Reconstruction of Identity: The Case of the Kurds in Turkey" *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics,* Vol. 1, No. 1, (September 2001), 80.

4. TURKISH VILLAGES and VILLAGE WEB-SITES

> The uniqueness of each village is felt as soon as one enters--an elusive quality that invades one's senses and colors one's perceptions. It is carried by sounds of dogs or machinery, the scent of an *iğde* (oleaster) tree or a stand of graceful kavak (poplar), airy home to hundreds of twittering sparrows. It is evident in the structure and upkeep of the houses, in the posture of the people and the faces they turn toward you. It is all of these and more. It is nothing tangible, nothing that one can name or point to, but a sense of place that seeps through the senses and makes itself felt.[1]

In this chapter, I will introduce the common patterns and similarities among the village web-sites, but before going any further, I would like to present a broader picture of the villages in Turkey, which will be helpful in situating a useful framework. What I mean by presenting a broader picture is to provide more information on the physical features of a village, the regional differences in Turkey, local governments' representation on the Internet, and finally, the main components of a village web-site. After I present this information, I would like to focus on the content of the web-sites. I will exhibit the main sources used by the villagers, common patterns that were followed in narrating their history and the main motivations behind preparing a web-site for a village.

4.1. *A Village in Turkey*

According to "the Village Law" published in 1924, a village is a place with under two thousand inhabitants.[2] It is estimated that there are thirty five thousand villages in Turkey. The Statistical Institute of Turkey, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and other state establishments give different numbers depending on whether various alternative administrative divisions of the country are included separately.[3] One way or another, the number changes between thirty four

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1 Delaney, *The Seed and the Soil*, 201

2 Law number 442, Article 1st, accepted by the Parliament on March 18th, 1924, published in *Official Gazette* (*Düstur*) on July 4th, 1924.

3 These divisions were called as *mecra, mezra, mahalle* and *nahiye.*

thousand and thirty six thousand. According to the second article of the "Village Law", the mosque, the school, meadows, and forests form the commons for the villagers.

The village is ruled by the headman of the village (*köy muhtarı*), who is considered as the representative of the state, and is elected by the villagers every five years. The headman is typically from the village, and he does not represent any political party. Other key figures in the villages, who can be considered representatives of the state, are the teacher(s) of the school and the imam, who are appointed by the state. The state representative directly responsible for the administration of local villages is the district governor (*kaymakam*), who lives in the town center. One of the responsibilities of the district governors is to meet with the villagers on occasion, in order to be informed about their possible needs.

A village in Turkey can be located very close to a town center, or hundreds of miles away from it. The distance to the town center certainly shapes the daily life in the villages. Other factors that affect daily life in a village include geo-economical activities, ethnic and sectarian backgrounds. I will be focusing on all of these issues briefly in the following sections in the context of the village web-sites, however, I would like to mention one more factor: geographical features, and their deep differences over different parts of the country.

Turkey can be roughly divided into seven regions: Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean, Black Sea, Eastern, Southeastern and Central Anatolian. Each part of the country has its own distinctive geographical characteristics. Turkey, especially its East, has many mountains, which make it impossible to reach some villages during the winter time even in the present day. The geological obstacles are also significant causes for the presence of villages without electricity, with limited access to clean water, or paved roads. As it will be shown in the following chapters, having a paved road is considered significant enough to note on village web-sites.

4.2. *Local Governments and Villages on the Internet*

81 provincial governorships and 923 district governorships began to set up web-sites for themselves in 2000. Initially, the state only provided domain name (*gov.tr*) service. However, in 2007, a homogenous web design was provided for all provinces.[4] Governorships throughout the country make themselves present on the Internet by using similar approaches. For example, each provides basic information for potential visitors such as historic sites, tourist destinations, demographic information, data concerning current economic conditions, and attempts to facilitate relationships between official authorities and current citizens.

Strikingly, these web-sites also provide individual city histories from an "official" perspective, reflecting the dominant nationalist and political standpoint. They provide narratives that emphasized the importance of being Turkish, the unfortunate fate of the Ottoman Empire, or the viciousness of the rest of the world who has been desperately planning to erase the Turks from the world stage. In addition to the 81 provinces that provided their own historical narratives, 923 town centers also had similar chronological accounts. It is not clear who prepares these narratives for the governorships---none of them had citations, references, or the names of the author(s), at least during my research. They do not provide detailed information about the history of the region, they briefly touch upon the typical components of the official historical flow of prehistoric Anatolia, Ottoman Empire, Turkey, and rarely mention the Byzantine Empire. Without exception, each governorship presents their own history.

And the villages. As the smallest administrative units in the country, villages, had their own web-sites as well. However, unlike the sites of the governorships, they were not state-

[4] Letter/response to Müsemma Sabancıoğlu by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, September 23, 2010. In response to my inquiry, the Ministry stated that, until 2007, the governorships used their own designs, and they were technically supported by private enterprises. In 2007, the Ministry of Internal Affairs began a project called ISAY aiming the standardization of the governorships' web designs. They noted that currently 41 governorships and 417 town district governorships use the ISAY project design.

sponsored in any sense; they were prepared by the villagers who live in the village or immigrant villagers who live in urban centers. The approaches they used to establish their presence on the internet were very different from the ones used by the governorships. They used different designs, different content, and, most importantly for this thesis, different points of view regarding history.

Village web-sites are not the only place on the Internet that one can access information about villages. The State Planning Organization (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*) is currently conducting a project called YEREP, (*Yerel Yönetimler İçin Eğitim Malzemesi Geliştirme*, Development for Education Material for the Local Governments). The project's web-site *yerel.net* is a portal that provides basic information about villages and other local governments such as the name of the headmen of the village, information on infrastructure, geographical location, distance from the closest town center, population, recent developments in the village, and, occasionally, photographs. The project also provides a very useful resource: the list of all villages in Turkey, which is not otherwise easily found on the internet. The list also allows one to see a list of the villages that share the same name, and their locations.[5]

Online social networking site facebook.com is used quite intensively by the villagers, almost all discussions being shaped around uploaded photographs. It is hard to say how many villages are being represented on Facebook, but many of the villages with web-sites represent themselves on Facebook, as well.

Another resource on the Internet worth mentioning is the web-sites of the village schools. In addition to information about the schools themselves, these web-sites also share some basic information on the village history and life. They are supported by the National Education

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[5] YEREP, (*Yerel Yönetimler İçin Eğitim Malzemesi Geliştirme*) web-site, accessed on April 7, 2011, http://www.yerelnet.org.tr/koyler/

Ministry, and their domain names end with the official suffix *k12.gov.tr*. Most likely, they are being prepared by the teacher(s).

4.3. *A Village Web-Site*

What does a village web-site look like? The sites are generally simply designed. They represent individual villages with unique photographs or videos of the community. Because of this, site content varies from village to village. However, there are reoccurring themes that are present on most sites, such as, geographical description, calendar of important local events, a collection of local vocabulary, community invitations for upcoming weddings, virtual cemeteries and obituaries. Some web-sites have a virtual cemetery which allows the visitors to send/hear a prayer on-line by clicking a button. The prayers are in Arabic and they are read aloud by the village's Imam, the religious leader. Video recordings are extensively used by villagers, and by means of these recording one can watch a variety of appearances of village life. Recordings from weddings and local festivals are widely used. Villagers also seem eager to share their own personal lives. Short displays from the coffee houses, village squares, interiors of houses, short conversations can be given as examples. Sometimes shepherds record themselves while they are in the meadows or mountains with their animals. Compared to the cold appearances of the state sponsored web-sites, the vivid and boundless freedom of expression among the villagers is rather striking.

4.4. *Sources for Making History*

Before focusing on these issues utilizing the examples from the web-sites, I would like to provide two examples regarding the villagers' aim in creating a historical narrative. These two narratives underline the importance of having a written history, and invite the villagers to share information, which they believe will allow them to reach an accurate history, and leave written

sources rather than rumors and legends for the future generations. The first example will be from an an Alevi village called Kavak, close to the city of Sivas.

> It is known that we do not have a written history on the time since Pir Sultan Abdal. Due to this, we thought of conducting a research in order to have a written history. Since we do not have a written history, we are aiming to reach all known facts by compiling the all information that have been whispered from ear to ear. It is very important for creating an accurate written history to add your information, or information you heard from your elders, and to correcting the all mistaken, inadequate, or non objective information. Please share your ideas and your information, even a small one, with us. The short information below, compiled by us, is presented as an example: The details in our archive, and your information you may send are open to discussions. Centuries ago, our ancestor who were known to have lived in Banaz had to immigrate as a result of the political oppressions at that time (additional information will be given). Sample information:The first immigrants Ağa Çelebi, Mehmet Çelebi and Cümük Çelebi settled down in the area that is known Bozkurt today. After couple of years in Bozkurt, they moved to Balahasan region, and the re settled in the region Kavaklı Dere (the name of the village is coming from there).[6]

The second example from a small Kurdish Alevi village called Hüyücek in Kahramanmaraş, Hüyücek, and the domain name of the web-site is registered for the old name of the village: Marikon.

> We tried to be loyal to the narratives and objective in writing the history of Hüyücek village and its ancestry. Interviews were conducted with many people from Hüyücek. Questions were asked, and conversations were made. We needed to publish the common summary of this research, which is the result of the written interviews with Yusuf Aydın and Bektaş Bakır and the hand written notes left by Ali Gümüş, in order to remember and recall our past. We do not make history, because there is no certain history, however it is possible to reach more information with the help of a comprehensive oral history study. In this sense, our study is just a beginning. This text can expand with the criticisms and

[6] "Pir Sultan Abdal'dan bu yana, yazılı bir tarihimizin olmadığı bilinmektedir. Biz de bundan yola çıkarak, en azından bundan sonra yazılı bir tarihimizin olması için, bir çalışma yapmayı düşündük. Yazılı bir tarihimiz olmadığından dolayı, kulaktan kulağa aktarılan bilgileri derleyerek tüm bilinenlere ulaşmayı amaçlıyoruz. Sizlerin de bildiğiniz, büyüklerinizden duyduğunuz bilgileri tarih arşivimize katmanız, başka bilgi gönderenlerde gördüğünüz eksik, taraflı, hatalı verileri tarih arşivimize iletmeniz, doğru bir yazılı tarih oluşması için çok önemlidir. Bu derlemenin amacına ulaşması için önerilerinizi ve tarihimizle ilgili bildiklerinizi (kısacık bir bilgi dahi olabilir) bizimle paylaşınız. Aşağıda derlediğimiz kısa bilgi, örnek olarak sunulmuştur. Arşivimizdeki ayrıntılar, sizin göndereceğiniz bilgiler tartışmaya açıktır. Örnek Bilgi; "Yüzyıllar önce Banaz'da yaşadığı bilinen atalarımız, dönemin siyasi baskısı (ayrıntılı bilgi eklenecektir) sonucu göç etmek zorunda kalmışlardır. İlk göç edenler Ağa Çelebi, Mehmet Çelebi ve Cümük Çelebi bugün ki Bozkurt adıyla bilinen bölgeye yerleşmişler. Bozkurt'ta birkaç sene kaldıktan sonra, Balahasan bölgesine geçip, oradan da Kavaklı Dere denilen bölgeye (köyümüzün adı buradan gelmektedir) yerleşmişler." Sivas, Şarkışla, Kavak village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011 http://www.emlekkavak.org/tarihimiz.asp

> opinions that may come from you. Our goal is to allow every Hüyücek resident to find their history, and to read the cultural sources that they have feed on more accurately. No doubt that there are a lot of inadequacies and shortcomings, but we tried to do our best.[7]

Such requests for more accurate and comprehensive historical information are very common. Almost all web-sites invite the villagers to contribute to these narratives. Due to the interactive nature of the preparation of these pages, the contents of these narratives are far from static. Every piece of information that can be obtained from the village elders, books, newspapers, and other sources are continuously being added to the narratives. In the two similar narratives presented above, we see that the villagers are having a hard time creating a proper historical narrative. The only sources they were able to reach seem to be oral narratives from hearsay and rumors. This is a rather common situation.

In preparing a history narrative, villagers utilize city annuals (*salname*) and reports published by the state, census records, local archives (if they exist), and the official Ottoman and Republican Archives. The books of local historians, well known travelers' accounts, and some famous novels are also utilized. These are the main conventional sources used by the preparers of the web-sites. However, I believe it is worth clarifying the relationship between the villagers and historical documents such as those from the Ottoman Archives.

Villagers who prepare the historical narratives are self-educated people who obviously have a special interest in history, and they seem eager to find documents regarding their village

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[7] "Hüyücek Köyü'nün tarihini ve soy tarihçesini yazarken, tamamen tarafsız ve anlatılanlara sadık kalınmaya çalışıldı. İlgili birçok Hüyücekliyle röportaj yapıldı. Sorular soruldu, sohbetler yapıldı. Yusuf Aydın ve Bektas Bakır ile yapılan yazili röportaj sonuçları ve Ali Gümüş'ün kendi el yazısıyla bıraktığı notlardan yola çıkarak bu araştırmanın ortak özetini biz Hüyüceklilere, geçmişimizi anma ve hatırlama maksadıyla yayınlama gereği duyduk. Tarih yazmıyoruz çünkü kesin tarih yok. Ancak geniş kapsamlı bir sözlü tarih çalışmasıyla çok daha sağlıklı bilgilere ulaşmak mümkün. Bu anlamda çalışmamız bir başlangıç oluşturuyor. Sizlerden gelecek eleştiri ve fikirlerinizle, yazı daha da zenginleşecektir. Amacımız her Hüyüceklinin bu yazılanlarda geçmişini bulabilmesi ve beslendiği kültürel kaynakları doğru okuyabilmesidir. Kuşkusuz bir çok eksik ve yetersizlik var ama biz elimizden geleni yapmaya çalıştık," Kahramamaraş, Elbistan, Hüyücek village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.marikon.net/

in the Ottoman Archives. The Official Ottoman Archives, located in Istanbul, provide a vast number of documents for researchers. Some of the villages use official documents from the archives, but in general, presenting just one document seems enough for them. The villagers' aim in presenting their history is not to provide a comprehensive research, and even a single document from the archive can make their research seem “professional” and convincing enough for them. Villagers, in general, look for and find documents that mention the name of their village.

I would like to stress the difficulties one encounters while attempting to read documents from the Ottoman Archives. This will also be helpful for understanding a considerable barrier between ordinary individuals with an interest in the history of the country and conventional historical sources. On the first day of 1929, Turkey officially started to use the Latin alphabet exclusively. This reform was one of the parts of whole modernization project which was actualized by the founders of the country. The reform affected the whole society, and the people educated in the new script were unable to read materials written before 1928. In the context of village web-sites, it is hard to say how the villagers read the documents in Arabic script. Most likely, there are still some people in the villages who are around ninety years old, and are able to read Ottoman Turkish; however, the language used in official documents varies considerably from century to century. For some centuries, the language of the State was highly sophisticated, and it is very hard to interpret for ordinary people. This is not just a matter of reading the documents, it is also a matter of interpretation, which requires substantial amount of historical information related to the issues at hand. None of the village web-sites shed light on how the documents used were found in the Ottoman Archives, and by whom, but the documents are widely being used by the villagers.

Another important question regards the kinds of documents being used by the villagers. *Tahrir* records, (Ottoman tax registers), census, complaints documents, and lastly, imperial orders seem popular among the villagers. Some villages prefer to exhibit the documents themselves as visuals.[9]

If there is no information about the history of the village as in case of two examples that I introduced above, how could it be possible to create a history narrative? Here I would like to explain the main approaches used by the villagers to extract sources of information that lead them to their own past. I believe that, to some degree, they are the only authorities who are able to see their own reality.

One of the leading approaches among the village web-sites is using the main physical components of the villages to tell the history of the village. For instance, some villages associate the history of the mosque with the history of the village. For villagers, the mosque, the school, the mill, fountains, remains of a castle, an antique warehouse, an old bridge, and any other sort of physical structure can be used in order to create a reasonable narrative. One of the proper examples for this kind of narrative can be given from a village located in Mersin, on the coast of Mediterranean Sea:

> At the entrance of the village, there is a huge bridge that was made of stones in 1940. Furthermore, there is also a historical fountain in the village square, and a 400 years old plane tree near the fountain. There are also historical remains of a laundry in the village. It is known that the fountain was made at the end of the 1800s, and it is still used by the villagers. Near the beginning of the water pipeline and the fountain, there is an Arabic scripture that says that the fountain was made in 1290 in the Hijri calendar. In short, we can say that the fountain was made in 1874 according to the Gregorian calendar. Moreover, there is a pipeline between the fountain and the laundry. On the other hand, the laundry has not been in use since the central water system was built in the village. It is abandoned, no one cleaned and repaired it. It is estimated that the "Foreign Haji" mansion was built in the 1880s. It consists of six big rooms, and two of them are still in use, the other is abandoned. Basement of the mansion was designated for the animals to be used

[9] An example can be seen in the web-site of Handırı village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.handiri.com/

> as barn and hay barn. This part is partially being used by the villagers. The foundation of the village by Turks was 440 years ago. There are some remnants showing that other people used to live in the village before the Turks. In the Donkey Creek Canyon, there are ruins of an old church. Moreover, there is a location called Church.[10]

Another example can be given from Artvin, the border city neighboring Georgia: the villagers from Kayadibi use some buildings to tell their own history:

> Even though it is not possible to see the facts with the help of archeological excavations, it is possible to measure the deepness of the past by using various data. For instance, in order to search for the history of Kayadibi village, it is enough to determine the old houses of our village and their ages. How old do you think are those houses, which are in general made of pine trees? The answer, without exaggeration, will be over five hundred years. The old houses were covered by resin, which made them waterproof, and they can stand for not only decades, but for centuries. […] Recently, a book was published on Georgian history. It is indicated there that Georgians gave importance to their fruit trees. All old trees of our village were planted by the Georgians.[11]

These narratives indicate that if there are no documents, books, or archival resources, the villagers have bridges, mills, houses, and most intriguingly, trees. For me, one of the most interesting parts of this project was to see the close relationship between the villagers and the trees. The trees can mostly be seen in the foundational stories of the villages, and there are many

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[10] "köyün girişinde […] 1940 yılında yapılmış büyük bir köprü vardır. ayrıca köy merkezinde tarihi bir çeşme ve önünde yaklaşık 400 yıllık bir çınar ağacı, birde tarihi çamaşırhanesi (yunaklık) var. köyün yıllardır içme suyu ve kullanma suyu ihtiyacını karşılayan çeşmenin 1800'lü yılların sonuna doğru yapıldığı söylenmektedir. tamamı […] taştan yapılan çeşmenin su oluğunun hemen üst kısmında bulunan taş kabartma ve arapça yazılan orjinal kitabesinde; yapılış tarihi 1290 olarak belirtilmiştir. Kısacası miladi takvime göre 1874 yılında yapılmış olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Ayrıca çeşmenin teknesinin sol alt köşesinden başlayıp çamaşırhanenin (yunaklık) içine kadar yer altından, altlı-üstlü yerleştirilen kesme taş boru ile çamaşırhanenin de su ihtiyacı karşılanmaktadır. ancak merkezi şebeke suyunun gelmesi ile çamaşırhane kullanılmaz olmuştur. Gerekli temizlik ve tadilatlar yapılmayınca da atıl vaziyette kalmıştır. Gavur Hacı Konağı: 1880'lerde yapıldığı sanılan binada; 6 büyük oda mevcut olup, 2 odası halen kullanılmakla beraber diğer odalar uzun zamandır kullanılmamaktadır. Zemindeki bölümler ise büyükbaş hayvanlar için ahır ve samanlık olarak düzenlenmiş ve bir kısmı halen kullanılmaktadır. Türkler tarafından köyün kuruluşu, yaklaşık olarak 440 yıl öncesine dayanıyor. Türklerden önceki yıllarda uzun süre başka kavimlerin yaşadığına dair kalıntılar var. Eşşek deresi kanyonunda bir kilise harabesi halen mevcuttur. Ayrıca köyün girişinde hala kilse (kilise) denen bir mevkii vardir." Mersin, Erdemli, Doğusandal village web-site, accessed April 5, 2011, http://www.dogusandal.com

[11] "Arkeolojik kazıların girmediği yerlerde de, geçmişin derinliğini ölçme çeşitli veriler sonucu mümkündür. Örneğin Kayadibi Köyü.nün geçmişine ilişkin araştırma için köyümüzün eski evlerini ve yaşlarını belirleme yeterlidir. Genelde: Çam ağaçlarından yapılmış evlerin ömrü kaç yıldır dersiniz ? Cevap: Mübalağasız 500 yılın üzerindedir, [evler] reçine ile kaplıdır. Su geçirmezler […]. Bu yapıdaki ağaçların zamana dayanma gücü yıllar değil, yüzyıllardır. […] Son yıllarda Gürcistan Tarihi denen bir kitapçık yayınlandı. Orada Gürcilerin meyve ağaçlarına çok önem verdikleri yazılıydı. Köyümüzün bütün eski ağaçlarını Gürcüler dikmişlerdir."Artvin, Şavşat, Kayadibi village web-site, accessed on April 5, 2011, http://www.kayadibisavsat.com/

villages which carry names stemming from different kinds of trees.[12] In the narratives, trees connect and separate villages, trees are sacred, blessed, and are respectable components of the village life. Boratav argues that trees are one of the most important parts of Turkish mythology, and the village web-sites show that they are also used as sources in writing about the history of the village.[13]

My last example regarding the sources used by the villagers, is from the web-site of a small village in Malatya: the villagers of Kuyudere emphasize the Armenian heritage of the village; apparently they utilized some documents from the Ottoman archives in creating their narrative. This narrative covers local legends, hearsay, the opinion of elders, and archival documents. In this sense, this one seems like a very good example for a multifaceted narrative.

> We do not have much information about the history of the village. However, according to the elders, the first people who came to the village settled down to a region in the west of the village, called Billi. According to hearsay there was a busy caravan route through Billi, and the traders used this road to bring material from Iran and Horasan. Time to time, the villagers were attacked by the leaders of the caravans. The whole village consisted of just five houses, and in order to protect themselves from the attacks, they came to a safer area, which is the current location of the village. It is not clear when this immigration happened. According to another hearsay, the people of the village, who consisted of just five houses, used to live in the southern part of the village called Avaren. The above mentioned attacks led them to find another location, and three of them immigrated to Karahöyük, two of them came to the current location of the village. It is believed that the first person who came to the village was an Armenian named Memik. Another rumor says that the first settling was in the area of Dereyatağı in Billi, and Memik was also the first person who settled down in the village. The current region of the village was known as Armenian lands. All rumors indicate that the first people who came to the village were Armenians. This is supported by the fact that the name of the village is of Armenian origin. Minayik means small or isolated village in the Armenian language. Furthermore, the word Minayik can also be thought to mean 'small village remains' in Turkish. Even though there is no excavation in the region, during the unofficial excavation some antique findings from Urartu civilization were found. It is

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[12] An example can be seen at the web-site of Söğütini village located in Kürtün, Gümüşhane. Accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.sogutelikoyu.com/soguteli-koyu-tarihcesi The name of the village can be translated into English as hole (or cave) of a willow tree. The villagers believe that an unknown man, the founder of the village, came to the area at an unknown date. With his animals, he found shelter in a hole/or a cave in a willow tree.

[13] Pertev Naili Boratav, *100 Soruda Türk Folkloru* (Turkish Folklore in 100 questions), (İstanbul: K Kitaplığı, 1999), 74-77.

> estimated that the village was founded some time in the 12th or the 13th century. In the tahrir records during the Kanuni [Süleyman I] in 1560, the village was known by the name Menayik. The discovery of the village by Turks was around the 1570s. Some historical remains, water pipes, coins, and the remains of old houses are proof that there was another settlement here. In 1560, besides the women and the children, there were 29 men in the village, and 19 of them were married. In this period, one fifth of the annual income was 34.770 akce, and a half of this was allocated for the head of the court, and the other half was allocated for the Malatya *mirliva*.[14]

While some villages utilize the conventional historical sources I mentioned above, web-sites of certain villages start their historical narratives by stating that "there is no information about the past of the village." If there is no information, how can they create a history narrative? As Maza argues that "Innovative methodologies often appear in fields where conventional sources are unavailable. Historians of illiterate communities [...] tend to go in search of peasants' and other workers' mental universes in the stories they told and listened to."[15] The abundance of the unconventional sources used by the villagers shows that the villagers can be creative like Maza's educated historians working in a lack of conventional sources. It is interesting to note that here, the villagers become their own subjects in their own stories. As opposed professional

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[14] "Köyün tarihine ilişkin fazla bir bilgiye sahip değiliz. Ancak yaşlılardan edinilen bilgiye göre köyün kurulmasında rol oynayan ve buraya ilk gelenler şimdi köyün batısında ve arazi olarak kullanılan Billi mevkiine yerleşmişlerdir. Söylentiye göre, o zamanlar Billi mevkiinden işlek bir kervan yolu geçmekteymiş. Kervancıların İran ve Horasandan mal getirip götürdükleri söylenmektedir. Köylüler zaman zaman kervancıların baskınlarına maruz kalmışlar. Zaten beş ev oldukları söylenen köylüler tekrarlanan bu baskınlara dayanamayarak kendilerini korumak için daha emin buldukları köyün şimdiki yerine gelip yerleşmişlerdir. Bu göç hadisesinin ne zaman olduğu tam olarak bilinmemektedir. [...] Köye ilk gelenin Memik isminde bir Ermeni olduğu söylenmektedir. Diğer bir bilgiye göre ise; Billi de Deveyatağı denen mevkide ilk yerleşme olmuş. Buraya ilk yerleşen yine Memik isminde birisi olarak geçmektedir. Şimdiki köy yeri ve ören yeri eski Ermeni toprakları olarak geçmektedir.Bütün söylentilere göre köye ilk gelenler Ermenilerdir. Köyün isminin Ermeni adına dayandırılması bunu doğrulamaktadır. Minayik, Ermenice de küçük köy, yalnız köy anlamına gelmektedir. Ayrıca Mineyik ismi Türkçe'de de mini-höyük (küçük, köy kalıntısı) olarak açıklanabilir. [...] Herhangi bir kazı çalışması yapılmamış olup, yörede yapılan bazı illegal kazılar sonucunda bulunan antik eserlerden dolayı, höyük içerisinde bir Urartu hükümdarının yattığı ve ona ait değerli eşyaların bulunduğu rivayet edilir. Köyün 12 ve 13 yy kurulduğu sanılmaktadır. 1560 tarihli Kanuni devri Malatya tahrir defterinde köyün adı Menayik olarak geçmektedir. Köyün Türkler tarafından keşfedilişi 1570'li yıllara dayanır. Köyde ve arazilerde bulunan bazı tarihi kalıntılar, su boruları, madeni paralar ve evlerin yıkıntıları bu bölgede önceleri bir şehir (yerleşme) olduğunu göstermektedir. 1560 tarihinde çocuk ve kadın nüfusu hariç 19'u evli olmak üzere köyde 29 erkek nüfusu bulunmaktadır. Bu tarihte yıllık gelirinin 1/5'nin 34 770 akçe olduğu bunun yarısı Kadı dilenciye, yarısıda Malatya mirvilasına tahsis edilmiştir. Zaten Mineyik köyü Eski Ören toprakları üzerindedir..." Malatya, Arguvan, Kuyudere village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.arguvankuyudereliler.org.tr/

[15] Sarah Maza, "Stories in History, Cultural Narratives in Recent Works in European History" *American Historical Review* 5 (December, 1996), 1496.

historians, however, accuracy is not in general the primary goal of the villagers; they collect whatever sources they can find to construct a reasonable narrative of history.

4.5. *The Ways of Presenting Village History*

In this section, I would like to show some of the common ways of presentation used by the villagers. There are a great number of villages that focus on the history of the region instead of the village itself. It seems to me that this is preferred by the villagers who want to present something about the history, but cannot reach proper historical sources that they can use. The web-site of Çamalan, a village in Ankara, gives the following narrative:

> The region where our village is located hosted Hittites, who were Turks in the pre-Islam era. Then the region was occupied by the Phrygians, Bithinians, Persians, Romans and Byzantines respectively. During the Arab military expedition to conquer Istanbul, the region was occupied by the Arabs twice. After the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, the region was taken by Anatolian Seljuks, then, during the Forth Crusade, the Byzantine Empire took back the region, however, the region was dominated by the Anatolian Seljukis until their ruin in 1308. After this date, the region joined the Candaroglu, then, during the reign of Orhan Bey the region joined the borders of Ottomans. Since that time, the regions have been ruled by the Turks. During the Candaroglu ı era, the region consisted seven different nomad groups. Ottomans united them, so the village was formed.[16]

Another example can be given from the web-site of Üçbaş village in Ankara:

> The region began to Ottomanize in the reign of Süleyman Paşa who was the son of Orhan Ghazi. After the cleansing of the region from the Roums, the sons and nephews of Beyazit I started to live in the region. One of the tribes that started to live in the region was the sons of the Üçbaş' which come from the Kayı tribe. It is believed that Üçbaş's settled down in the region between 1390 and 1400.[17]

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[16] "Köyümüzün bulunduğu bölge çağlar boyunca islam öncesi Türkler olan Hititlere ev sahipliği yapmış daha sonra sırası ile Firiğler, Bittinya Krallığı, Pers, Roma ve Bizans hakimiyetine girmiş, Arapların İstanbul'u fethi için düzenledikleri seferler sırasında iki kez Arap istilasına maruz kalmış, 1071 Malazgirt zaferinden sonra Danışmentliler, daha sonra Anadolu Selçuklu devletinin hakimiyetine girmiş, bir dönem de Haçlı seferleri sonucu Bizans İmparatorluğu hakimiyetine girmiş sonrasında yeniden Anadolu Selçuklu devleti hakimiyetine girmiştir. 1308 yılında Anadolu Selçuklu devletinin parçalanması sonucu kurulan Candaroğlu beyliği topraklarına katılmıştır. Orhan bey döneminde Osmanlığı beyliği sınırlarına katılmış ve bu tarihten sonra Türklerin hakimiyetinden çıkmamıştır. Candaroğlu beyliğine bağlı iken şu anki köyün kurulu olduğu alanın etrafında 7 oba olarak konuşlanmış iken, Osmanlı beyliği zamanında bu 7 oba birleştirilerek şimdiki köyümüz oluşturulmuştur."Ankara, Nallıhan, Çamalan village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.camalan.com/

[17] "1354 yılında bölgenin Orhan Gazi'nin oğlu Süleyman Paşa tarafından fethi ile bölge Osmanlılaştırılmaya başlamıştır. Zaman içinde bölgenin Rumlardan temizlenmesi ile birlikte 1390-1400 yılları arasında öncelikli olarak Sultan Yıldırım Beyazıt Han'ın kuzenleri ve yeğenleri bölgeye yerleştirilmiştir. Kayı boyundan olan Üçbaş oğulları da bu obalardan birisidir. 1390-1400 yılları arasında Üçbaş ogullarının buraya yerleştikleri […]

As it can be seen, the villagers, in fact, do not provide any detail about the village. They briefly touch upon the main contours of the history of the region, and one way or another they find something to exhibit under the title of "the history of our village".

Another common way of presenting history is to use chronological information in order to show the position of the village in the flow of history. Such chronologies, in general, start with a famous success, a battle won or new lands conquered by an Ottoman Sultan. For instance, Şadıllı, a village on the coast of Aegean Sea, gives chronological information regarding the region and the village. The chronology starts with the death of a prominent person in 1600.

> A major earthquake in Marmara caused 136 ships to sink in April 5th of 1646, and after the earthquake, almost all inhabitants of the Cevizli village died due to an epidemic. In 1656, Mehmet Efendi from the Görice village had the architect Mustafa Aga make a house for Mevlevi dervishes. In 1720 Cezayirli Hasan Paşa was born in Gelibolu. In 1734, a prominent religious leader, Zeynel Arab, passed away. In 1750, Şadıllı village was founded. In 1776, another major earthquake ruined the Dardanelles Strait by a tsunami. In 1790 Cezayirli Hasan Paşa passed away. […] The first day December in 1912, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk went to Gelibolu. On the 21st of July in 1913 Mustafa Kemal took back the city of Edirne which was lost during the Balkan Wars. August 20th in 1920, Gelibolu was occupied by the Greek troops. […] 1922 Fındıklı village was founded. On 26th November of 1922, Gelibolu was totally liberated.[18]

Another popular way of presenting history is telling the local legends, mostly the legends regarding the foundation of the village. For instance, Alvar village in Malatya present themselves as follows:

> The history of the village Alvar goes back to the period of Sultan Selim the First in the sixteenth century. Melek Khatun and Hüseyin, who had the surname Mecit, settled down in the village. When they noticed the beauty of the village, Kılıç, Dinç and Büyük

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anlaşılmaktadır." Ankara, Kızılcahamam, Üçbaş village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, www.ucbaskoyu.com

[18] "05 Nisan 1646 Marmara'da meydana gelen deprem 136 geminin batmasına yol açtı. Bu deprem onrasında baş gösteren bulaşıcı hastalık salgını Cevizli köyü halkının neredeyse tamamının ölümüne yol açtı. 1656 Görice köyünden Mehmet Efendi mimar Mustafa Ağa'ya Mevlevihane'yi yaptırdı 1720 Cezayirli Hasan Paşa Gelibolu'da doğdu 1734 Din adamı Zeynel Arab öldü.1750 köyü kuruldu 22 Mayıs 1776 İstanbul Adalar merkez üslü depremde oluşan Tsunami Çanakkale Boğazı'nda da büyük hasara yol açtı 1790 Cezayirli Hasan Paşa öldü 01 Aralık 1912 Mustafa Kemal Atatürk Gelibolu'ya gitti 21 Temmuz 1913 Mustafa Kemal, Kolordu Kurmay Başkanı olduğu Bolayır Kolordusu ile, I. Balkan Savaşlarında kaybedilen Edirne'yi geri aldı 20 Ağustos 1920 Gelibolu Yunan güçleri tarafından işgal edildi 1922 Fındıklı köyü kuruldu 26 Kasım 1922 Gelibolu işgalden tamamen kurtuldu." Çanakkale, Gelibolu, Şadıllı village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.sadillikoyu.org/Tarihi.htm

> families also settled down here. They named the village the "New Land." In the course of time, the village became bigger, and consisted of fifteen houses. Then, a person named Kabahabdal came to the village. Since he was a friendly person, he gained everyone's sympathy. However, there were some people who did not like him, and they informed the Sultan, and claimed that he wanted to become the Sultan. When the Sultan heard about him, he summoned Kabahabdal to the palace, and he tested him. Since Kabahabdal did not fail the test, the Sultan was convinced that people had lied about him, and he wanted to reward Kabahabdal. He said "you may wish for anything you want from me, it could be money, or gold." Kabahabdal wished to take two marble stones in the palace, and then he said "I wish to go back to my village." He threw the marble stones towards the village and he said "go and get those stones, my villagers." This is the origin of the name of the village Alvar. [...] The Sultan also gave him a wide land in the village as a gift. When Kabahabdal died, people built a shrine for him, and that shrine was found by birds scratching the surface. There is also a bathhouse which is believed to heal arthritis. There is also a half burned, half green oak that Kabahabdal planted. Every year, in the last week of June, people commemorate Kabahabdal and sacrifice animals for him. In 1970, the state has decided to change the name of the village to Yünlüce, however, inhabitants of the village believed that the name Alvar was a gift from a dervish, and after a petition campaign the village took back the original name Alvar.[19]

The examples that I presented here demonstrate the common patterns I observed in my research.[20] The manner of presentation chosen by the villagers is likely based on the kind of sources available for constructing a historical narrative. Why do the villagers insist on providing a history even when they have difficulty finding sources they can use in constructing a narrative?

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[19] "Alvar köyünün tarihçesi 16. yy (1517 yılları) 1. Selim'e (Yavuz döneminde) dayanır. melek hatun ve oğlu hüseyin (mecit soyadlı) buraya yerleşir. Köyün güzelliğini gören 'kılıç, dinç ve büyük' soyadlı aileler'de buraya yerleşirler. Köyün adını ise 'navruzeli' (yeniyurt) koyarlar. Aradan geçen zamanla 15 haneli bir köy oluşur. Köye 'kabahabdal' isimli bir şahıs gelir. Çok çabuk çevre edindiğinden köy halkı arasında sevilen birisi olur. Fakat sevmeyenlerde olduğundan padişah'a haber gönderip 'sizin yerinizde gözü olan biri var!' denir. Bunu duyan padişah kabahabdal'ı huzuruna cağırır ve bir sınava tabi tutar. Kabahabdal bu sınavdan başarı ile çıkar. Böylece padişah anlatılanların yalan olduğunu tesbit eder ve onu mükafatlandırmak ister. Kabahabdal'a 'ne dilersen dile, dileğin yerine getirilecektir!' der. Padişah altın, akçe ne istersin der. Kabahabdal orada bulunan iki adet mermertaşını ister ve 'sadece köyüme dönmek isterim!' der. Padişah'ın verdiği mermertaşlarını var gücüyle İstanbul'dan atar ve 'al varsın köyümüzün adı alvar kalsın' der. Günümüzde o taşlar dilektaşı olarak bilinir. Padişah tekke deresine kadar olan araziyi kabahabdala vakıf arazisi olarak verir. Kabahabdal öldüğünde bu arazi üzerine bir türbe inşaa edilir. Günümüzde hala var olan bu türbe köy halkı tarafından 'tekke türbesi' olarak bilinir. Türbeye yakın bir yerde, kuşların eşeleyerek cıkardığı 'balım pınarı' isminde, yaz ve kış sürekli aynı ısıda olan bir su kaynağı bulunmaktadır. Köyümüzün yakınında tüm romatizma hastalıklarına karşı şifa verdiği inanılan bir hamam da vardır. Kabahabdal'ın diktiği, yarısı yeşil ve diğer yarısı yanmış olan bir meşe ağacı bulunmaktadır. Her yıl Haziran ayının son haftasında burada Kabahabdal'ı anma töreni düzenlenip kurbanlar kesilir. 1970 yılında köyümüzün adı devlet tarafından 'Yünlüce Köyü' olarak adlandırılmıştır. Ancak köy halkının yoğun isteği üzerine, 'Alvar' ismi bize evliyanin bir armağanıdır düsüncesiyle, 1990 yılında başlatılan bir imza kampanyası sayesinde tekrar 'Alvar Köyü' ismini almıştır." Malatya, Kuluncak, Alvar village web-site accessed April 7, 2011, www.alvarkoyu.com

[20] Another popular way, namely, a "list of firsts," will be discussed in the following chapter.

Even more generally, why do the villagers construct these web-sites in the first place?

One common factor is internal migration. Nostalgic feelings about the homeland and problems with integration to the urban way of life leads the villagers to turn towards their old way of life. They do not want to lose their ties to those back home, and vice versa. Village web-sites help the separated villagers to keep in touch with each other. Internal migration affects not only the daily life in urban areas, but it also shapes the rural life. One way or another, scholars in Turkey who study internal migration tend to neglect the other side of the coin, and they mostly focus on the impacts of internal migration on urban centers. There are also examples where the village is almost deserted, and the immigrants create web-sites in order to keep their village from being forgotten.

Another common motivation in preparing web-sites may be called "to show the virtues of the village." There are three villages claiming to be the first village in Turkey with a web-site: Sivrialan village in Sivas province, Kıyısın village in Çankırı province, and Keçili village in Isparta province.[11] It is not clear when the Kıyısın web-site was first created, but the web-sites for Sivrialan and Keçili claim that they were created in 1994 and 2000, respectively. There are also many village web-sites claiming to be the biggest one, the most comprehensive one, and the best one. These ambiguous claims reflect a tendency that one observes on many village web-sites: to show how their village is different from the others on the Internet.

[11] Sivas, Şarkışla, Sivrialan village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.sivrialan.org/. Çankırı, Ilgaz, Kıyısın village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.kiyisin.com/. Isparta, Gelendost, Keçili village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.kecili.gen.tr/

Image 2. The home page of Çankırı, Ilgaz, Kıyısın village web-site

As a third motivation, I would like to offer certain problems with the sense of belonging among the villages with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Due to the imperial heritage and a history of mass movements, more than thirty different ethnic groups live in the Turkish Republic. In my preliminary study, I found that besides the villages that emphasize their cultural and historical Turkic roots, most web-sites were created by immigrants who came to Turkey from the Caucasus, or the Balkans. These people reminisce about their long-lost homelands, and express their longing to a past that cannot be recreated. We can safely assume that these latter groups of people miss their homeland, and they try to express their sense of belonging through their web-sites. There are also many web-sites for Alevi (an Islamic sect) villages, and it seems

that these web-sites will give invaluable insights into the way these people view their past and the difficulties they face due to their minority status.

For the purposes of this thesis, the most significant motivation behind the creation of web-sites is problems with the sense of belonging. This will discussed further, with the help of examples, in the following chapter under the title "Responses to State Policies and Urban Dwellers".

Finally, I would like to present another type of migration that has a wide impact of the emergence of the web-sites. The so called guest workers in Germany also prepare their own village web-sites, and I suspect that the creation of village web-sites may have, in fact, originated in Germany. It is hard to say much on the issue of when the first village web-sites were created, and by whom. It could be the immigrants in Germany, who have had issues with integration to the German society. My suspicion is based on a comprehensive research, conducted in the Turkish language media in Berlin. In her book *Migrant Media, Turkish Broadcasting and Multicultural Politics in Berlin* Kira Kosnick focuses on Turkish-Germans, who are widely considered to be the culturally most 'alien' group of immigrants, and the German multicultural politics toward the immigrants.[22] Kosnick clarifies that Kurds, Alevis and Islamist groups are able to produce programs that would be banned in Turkey. The book also discusses how media is being actively used by the Turkish speaking groups in Germany, and most importantly, how the they use the media in order to keep their connections with Turkey. Could this environment and technological savvy have resulted in the earliest village web-sites? Further research would be needed to settle this question.

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[22] Kira Kosnick, *Migrant Media Turkish Broadcasting and Multicultural Politics in Berlin, (*Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2007), 11.

In fact, Germany is not the only place in Europe where Turkish citizens live and work in large numbers. For instance, on the web-site of Ördekli village located in Kayseri, it is stated that the members of the village and their descendents now live in Australia, Austria, Britain, Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, and France. A table titled "people who live far away" provides the names of the villagers who now live abroad, which is a quite common practice in the web-sites of villages with many immigrants abroad.[23]

One can find a great number of narratives on the village web-sites regarding the people who went to Germany during the 1960s. While the people who live in Germany have attracted a lot of attention from scholars, village web-sites help us see the other side of the coin, namely, the perspective of the people who were left behind.

While many villages tell how the migration started, some tell how it did not start:

> During the old times our village was the most prosperous village among the ones around. The people of other villages came to our village as servants, and they earned their living this way. During the times of shortage, people from other villages came to our village to obtain wheat and foods. Then, the *nimet* requires thankfulness, and when thankfulness for the *nimet,* disappeared, a lot of water passed under the bridge, and the other villages adapted to a new era, and they developed their villages. However, out elders and fathers refused to go to Germany when workers were needed there. "*Aman ha*, they will take your seed, then they will raise enemies against Turks," they said. Everything is for a reason, every "going up" has a "coming back down.[24]

This narrative carries a certain reproach towards the decision of elders, and the villagers see a connection between the impoverished state of village and the decision of not going to

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[23] Kayseri, Sarız, Ördekli village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://ordeklikoyu.org/uzak_olanlar.asp

[24] "Banaz Köyümüz eski zamanlarda çevre köylerin en zengini ve en verimli köylerinden biriymiş, çevre köylerden bir çok insan köyümüze hizmetkar olarak çalışmaya gelir ve geçimini bu yolla kazanırmış. Kıtlık ve yoksulluk zamanlarında çevre köylerden gelen insanlar köyümüzden buğday ve yiyeceklerini temin ederlermiş. Gün olmuş Nimet şükür ister nimete şükür olmayınca köprünün altından çok sular akmış çevre köyler çağa ayak uydurarak köylerini geliştirmişler fakat bizim büyüklerimiz ve atalarımız Almanya'ya işci alınacağı zaman karşı çıkmışlar aman haaa sakın Almanya'ya gitmeyin sizin tohumunuzu alacaklar ve Türklere düşman yetiştirecekler diye Almanya'ya gitmek isteyenlere engel olmuşlar. Her şeyde bir hayır vardır her inişin bir çıkışı her çıkışın bir inişi vardır." Uşak, Banaz, Yazıtepe village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.yazitepe.com/

Germany when the opportunity was there. On the other hand, the history of Sivrialan village shows that the inhabitants of the village have always been in a close relationship with migration:

> The people of Sivrialan village had always lived in a closed environment, and then people started to migrate during the 1960s. As seasonal workers they started to work in Adana and Mersin. Most of the time they were keepers or gardeners of the citrus fields. During the spring time they would come back to the village, and they would go back to their working areas by train or on foot. It takes one or two weeks to arrive Mersin on foot. In the 1960s, the migration wave to Germany started, and it continued until the 1980s. During the 1980s, due to economic problems and lack of schools, migration took another direction, again towards Adana and Mersin. Nevertheless, during the 2000s, the migrations calmed down, however, at least one family emigrated every two or three years. According to the 1995 census, the population of Sivrialan is 180, however, it is estimated that more than 2000 people who have records in the state registry live in Ankara, Mersin, Germany and other European countries. The third generation of Sivrialan people in Germany live in Köln. Most of them were naturalized there.[25]

What is obvious is that the villages that have a population in Germany keep in contact with their people in Germany. The name of the villagers who first migrated to Germany forms one of the main components of the lists of "firsts" on these web-sites.

Similarly, German-Turkish population with a village background did not break their ties with their villages. Tokca village from Çivril, Denizli, represents one of the most comprehensive village web-sites prepared in Germany.[26] The site does not cover a history narrative for the village, however, it was obviously designed for the basic needs for the villagers. The web-site is divided into seven sections, titled "the village of Tokca," "fun," "necessary," "religion," "MsN

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[25] "Tamamen kapalı bir çevre içerisinde yaşayan Sivrialan halkı özellikle 1960'lı yıllarda çeşitli sebeplerle göç vermiştir. Mevsimsel işçi olarak Adana'da ve Mersin'de çalışmaya başlamışlardır ki genel olarak turunçgiller(portakal, limon, vb.) bahçelerinde bekçi veya bahçıvan olarak çalışmışlardır. Bahar aylarında Sivrialan'a dönen erkek nüfus genellikle yazlık işlerini hallettikten sonra tekrar çalıştıkları yerlere yaya olarak veya trenle dönüyorlardı. Yaya olarak Mersine gidiş yaklaşık bir-iki hafta arası sürüyordu. 1960'lı yıllarda Sivrialan Almanya'ya ilk göçünü vermiş ve bu göç 1980'li yıllara dek yoğun bir şekilde sürmüştür. 1980'li yıllarda tekrar ekonomik nedenlerden ve köyde okulun olmaması sebebiyle göç Ankara ve Mersin'e yoğun olarak yön değiştirmiştir. Ancak 2000'li yıllarda sakinleşen bu göç hareketliliği yinede iki-üç yılda bir ailenin Ankara'ya göç etmesi sebebiyle varlığını sürdürmüştür. 1995 yılı nüfus sayımlarında Sivrialan'da 180 kişi yaşamaktadır. Ancak Ankara, Mersin ve Almanya ve de diğer bazı Avrupa ülkelerindeki Sivrialan kökenli nüfusa baktığımızda yaklaşık olarak 2000'i geçkin bir nüfus olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Üçüncü Türk kuşağını barındıran Almanya'daki Sivrialan halkı yoğun olarak Köln Gummersbach'da toplanmıştır. Çoğu halk burada Alman vatandaşı haline gelmiştir" Sivrialan village web-site accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.sivrialan.org/

[26] Denizli, Çivril, Tokca village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, www.tokca.de

spezial," "online games," and "friends web-sites." The contents under the title of "friend web-sites," are directly related to the Turkey, not Germany; links are given to the villagers' personal web-sites, the web-sites of Denizli State Hospital, the history of Denizli, e-consulate, and to the web-site of Çivril town center. Under the title of "necessary," they present links to Frekanz Turksat (where people can reach Turkish television channels broadcasts), the National Lottery of Turkey, e-state of Turkey, maps of Turkish cities, a road map for Germany, postal codes for Turkey, free telephone, newspapers, and cheap plane tickets.

As it can be seen, the web-sites are heavily designed for keeping in contact with Turkey. In the very beginning of this chapter, I mentioned that "a village in Turkey can be located very close to a town center, or hundreds of miles away from it." These web-sites which are prepared and hosted in Germany show that a village can be located 2000 km far from Turkey.

In this chapter, I was able to exhibit only a small number of narratives from the village web-sites. However, the narratives that I used were chosen because of the power of their presentations. One can develop many different perspectives on the web-sites, and as I have emphasized earlier, every perspective can yield different, intriguing results. The reader who encounters these narratives for the first time can see the striking ways the villagers interpret and reconstruct their own past. Closer inspection provides some aspects that are not easy to see immediately. The common patterns observed, or the different ways the same events are interpreted in different villages, and the insider perspective of the villagers constitute a new kind of source for the social scientist.

The relatively permanent contents of the web-sites also provide a chance to compare them. As it can bee seen in the narratives presented in this chapter, historical accuracy or a scientific approach do nor matter much for the villagers. The stories, legends, oral history

products, and overall beliefs regarding what happened in the past can be considered as parts of a communal memory of a specific community, and all this can be used in history studies.

5. VILLAGERS' RESPONSES to the STATE and URBAN DWELLERS

Here, I would like to focus on the discourses and features of the village web-sites commonly encountered, and examine them in terms of the relationship between the villagers and state policies. First I will show how Turkish-speaking urban dwellers and villagers, in fact, use different languages, and I will discuss where the difference comes from. Then, I will focus on a unique way of presentation used by the villagers, namely, a "list of firsts." These lists will provide evidence suggesting that the establishments of the state barely existed in the rural part of the country until the 1950s. The next section discusses the state practice of renaming villages that affected more than ten thousand villages since the beginning of the Republic. I will show how villages that were officially renamed do not use their new names, and how some of them are seeking justice against this policy.

Almost all narratives to be told by the villagers pay special attention to the "foundation of the village." In the next section, I will provide an answer to the following question: why is telling the foundation stories so important for the villagers? My discussion will be based on identity problems, and to a certain degree, the Turkification efforts of the state.

The narratives used in this chapter have can be analyzed from the viewpoint of Geertz's thick description method. The symbolic meanings behind some of the narratives can be investigated in the relevant cultural context. Some of them have more obvious meanings that do not require much symbolic interpretation. For instance, the "Changing Names" section covers one of the most problematic policies of the Turkish Republic, and the villagers' responses seem clearly against it. They simply refuse to use the new, official names, and on the web-sites they indicate their own reasons for this. On the other hand, as I will show in the section titled "Lists of Firsts," by using a peculiar way of presenting the history of their village, villagers offer

narratives that are quite open to interpretation. The reader will find below some examples of narratives that can be analyzed in terms of underlying symbolic meanings.

5.1. *Language Difference Between Rural and Urban Dwellers*

The Turkish that is used by the villagers in the web-sites is similar to the language used in nation-wide broadcasts. I do not think that speakers of the Turkish language would have a hard time understanding the narratives. Despite many sentence fragments, unclear meanings, spelling mistakes, and punctuation errors, it all can be comprehended fairly easily. However, one of the main components of the web-sites, namely, a glossary, covers a wide range of local words that are not used, or even known by the urban dwellers. It is important to note that these glossaries do not only cover things like the names of the tools used in daily village life, etc.; they provide much more than that. They cover nouns, verbs, expressions, idioms. They also occasionally cover words or expressions one can identify as stemming from other languages, such as, Greek, Georgian, Armenian, Arabic, Circassian and other languages that were spoken in Anatolia for centuries. However, it requires an etymological investigation to reliably identify which word comes from which language; the melting pot that is Anatolia has mixed up not only people, but also languages.

In the chapter titled “A Short Story of a Book and its Author,” I mentioned that Mahmut Makal's book *Bizim Köy* was translated into English in 1954, and presented some reviewers' thoughts about the poor quality of the translation. I strongly agree with the assessment by the reviewers. If I read Makal's book in English first, I would not be able to get any sense of the characteristics of the language used by Makal. Makal would not be much different, in my opinion, from a person who was raised in Istanbul.

The picturesque feature of the book is completely missing in the English translation. Makal uses many words, expressions and folkloric language components from daily life in Nurgüz. While most Turkish speakers can follow the general flow of the book easily, people from urban centers would have to use a dictionary in order to understand the book in close detail. A dictionary from Turkish to Turkish.[1]

In order to put this discussion in perspective, it is worth introducing some aspects of the language used by the urban dwellers. Like rural Anatolia, the urban centers were also melting pots, and the Turkish spoken there has many loan words from languages such as Arabic, Persian, French and English. Most of these foreign words, when integrated into Turkish, were slightly deformed. In addition, certain types of phrases (*terkip*) were imported from Arabic and Persian; however, because they were imported as they were used in the Turkish language, they would be unintelligible to Arabs and Persians. The sophisticated Turkish used by the urban elites was not easily understood by the rural population of the country before the 1950s. Some words came from western languages as representatives of the modernization, and it would not be fair to expect these words to be known or understood by the villagers. Turkish equivalents of the words bath, automobile, chauffeur, apartment, coat, hotel, and even comma, are such examples, all coming from French.

Fay Kirby Berkes, in her PhD thesis, gives one striking fact about Makal's language:

> As the pre-election sparring among the educationists and politicians rose towards a climax, a bomb burst in the face of the literate public. This was the appearance in early 1950 of 'Bizim Köy', the first full length prose work by a village institute graduated Mahmut Makal [...] Linguistically, it was incomparably more genuine than the writing of realist writers of the past. While the realist writers had sought to capture the language of the people as 'non-people' or intellectuals, Makal wrote effortlessly as the people spoke. No one could deny that he knew the vocabulary and grammar of the educated population.

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[1] For the reader who knows Turkish, I would like to give some example from Makal's book: *kulağasma, gömgök gövermek, kayırlık, korcalak, şalak, ısnayın günü, şinik, tefek, öteygün, sormuk, çikil, ocak olmak, kımçıtmak, haylamak, ehnezik, yancak, kön, cülük, gıvalak, üşüngünnük, hamaylı, çımkırtmak…*

> On the other hand, he used constructions that no one else had dared to use although they were part of common speech and he used a colloquial vocabulary that was unquestionably Turkish and yet"'Greek" to the urban dweller. From a linguistic point alone, Makal had opened a new era in which the literate peasant would have an advantage of understanding over the intellectuals.[2]

Kirby's last sentence deserves special attention in the context of this thesis. The modernization project of Turkey was based on Western values, and the whole country faced challenges related to the reforms carried out/introduced by the founder of the Republic. The alphabet was changed from Arabic to Latin, people started to dress in a western way, the legal system, units of measurement, daily life, all changed during the 1920s. Since the *Tanzimat* period, French was a *lingua franca* in the Ottoman Empire. Students were sent to France in order to learn the western way of life. Translations from the European languages had been done throughout the nineteenth century, but the newly founded Republic's elites considerably increased the number of translations. The Translation Bureau was established in 1939, and with a belief that the western civilization was based on sources in Ancient Greek and Latin, a great number books in these languages were translated into Turkish.[3] Throughout the 1930s, a variety of western classics were staged in the theaters, operas, concert halls in the capital. Ankara had opened its doors to the western civilizations, and all that came from Europe was welcomed.

While the founders of the Republic were creating a new nation which relied on western values, they also tried to make a new language for the new nation. The first step was to change the script. Then, the founders focused on the issue of eliminating foreign words from Turkish. After the 1930s, the question of language took another direction. They started to pursue the "real" Turkish words stemming from the heritage of Central Asia. *Öztürkçe* (pure Turkish) became an ultimate destination for intellectuals. In fact, Ataturk himself was personally paying

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[2] Kirby Berkes, "The Village Institute Movement of Turkey", 826-827.

[3] Özlem Berk, "Batılılaşma ve Çeviri" (Westernization and Translation), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Modernleşme ve Batıcılık,* Vol. 3, (İstanbul:İletişim Yayınları, 2002), 516.

attention to the language issue, and in 1932, *söz derleme seferberliği* (the word-collection mobilization) began. As Lewis argues that the word "Mobilization was not an empty metaphor." Civil servants, who had a certain amount of contact with the people in rural and urban populations directly contributed to the mobilization. According to Lewis' research, "within a year, a total of 125,988 slips had been returned, from which, after checking and the elimination of repetitions, 35,357 words were left."[4] These were the potential new words for a new nation, and they were published under the title of *Tarama Sözlüğü* throughout the 1940s and the 1960s.

The creation of *Öztürkçe,* after a certain point, became a craziness. Some intellectuals tried to prove that all human languages derived from Turkish. Sun Language Theory (*Güneş Dil Teorisi*) was described as a theory not only of linguistic matters, but also a theory that could help solve "the most common and difficult problems of anthropology, archeology, history, prehistory, and bio-psychology."[5]

The word-collection mobilization, collections of words from the ancient Turkic texts, and concoctions ultimately caused great confusion. In practice, the efforts did not pay off well. Although modern Turkish still carries some words that come from this period, there are still a great number of Persian and Arabic words in the language. The efforts towards eliminating the Arabic and Persian did not succeed. Overall, as Lewis argues, "The language spoken today by the agricultural laborer, the shopkeeper, and the small craftsman is not markedly different from that spoken by their grandparents. These people keep much of the old language alive."[6]

In the village web-sites, villagers present their own local words and phrases in their glossary sections, but they do not use these words on the main web-site, neither for their

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4 Geoffrey Lewis. *The Turkish Language Reform A Catastrophic Success,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 49.

5 Original Commision Report for Sun Language Theory at The Turkish Institute of Language web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://tdkkitaplik.org.tr/gdtr/gdtraporu.pdf

6 Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform*, 140.

historical narratives, nor in the other sections. The audience of these web-sites consists primarily of the villagers who live outside the village, but on the other hand, the villagers have concerns about being understood by others. These web-sites are also used for promoting the village, and perhaps for this reason, they choose to use an urban Turkish. Beside the glossaries, they also provide examples that show the local accent in comparison to the urban Istanbulite accents. Here is an example from the web-site of Kocayokuş village located in Gümüşhane:[7]

English	**Urban Turkish**	**Kocayokuş Accent**
Lawyer	Avukat	Abukat
Wheat	Buğday	Boğda
Chick	Civciv	Cücük
Coffee	Kahve	Gayfe

Table 1. The example demonstrating the villagers' accent from Kocayokuş Village Web-Site

Examples like this show how the local pronunciation of the words differ from the urban pronunciations. The glossaries, on the other hand, give many completely different and unique lists of words. In the table below, I provide examples from three villages. I keep the vilagers' original definitions for the local words.

English	**Villager's explanation**	**Harmancık Village Glossary**[8]
A kind of	Bir türlü	Bitevir
Potatoes	Patates	Gartuf/Kartol
Unowned	Sahipsiz	Ander
To sharpen	Bilemek	Ğılevlenmek
Careless	İhmalkâr	Peytanbal
Did you see that?	Gördün mü ya?	Yank
		Durakköy Village Glossary[9]
To insist (strongly)	Çok ısrar etme, isteginde dayatma vazgeçmeme	Çalyapış

[7] Gümüşhane, Merkez, Kocayokuş village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.kocayokus.com/hasan-tasdelen

[8] Gümüşhane, Merkez Harmancık village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.harmancik.net/

[9] Konya, Derebucak, Durak village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.durakkoyu42.com/

mattress	Sağlam, dayanıklı, kalınca Döşek	Döynel
To eat snacks for spending time	Vakit geçirmek için çeşitli yiyeceklerden azar azar yemek	Evtünmek
Illness	Hastalık	Sökel
Souvenir/Memoir	Hatıra	Teberik
		Dindebol Village Glosarry[10]
Blurred	Flu; Net değil, berrak değil, bulanık	Pusarık
Suddenly	Bir anda olan	Cavada
To get freeze	Soğuktan elleri ayakları donmak	Çelermek
To take a nap	Uyumak, kestirmek	Mürtlemek

Table 2. Comparative Examples from the Glossaries in Village Web-Sites

Turkish Language Association web-site has a page for the *Tarama Sözlüğü*, which is based on the word collection mobilization I mentioned above.[11] Only 8 out of the 15 words presented above have entries in the *Tarama Sözlüğü*, and two of these entries give meanings different from the ones used by the villagers.

As it can be seen, the words provided on the village glossaries are quite different from the ones being used in the urban centers. It is evident that the words used by the villagers were kept in a relatively isolated environment, and the rarity of the contact with the urban dwellers and the villagers caused a certain gap between the languages that are used. In the year 1950, when Makal's book was published, the urban elites were learning the western languages in their quest of modernization, but they were not familiar with colloquial the language/vocabulary that was spoken in the middle of the country.

It is hard to say how often these words are being used by the villagers in their daily life; this kind of information is not provided by the village web-sites. It is evident that the words were viewed as a part of their culture, and as worth sharing on the web-sites.

[10] Karaman, Ermenek, Dindebol village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.dindebol.com/
[11] Database for *Tarama Sözlüğü* , accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.tdkterim.gov.tr/tarama/

In 2006, a prominent publishing house published a dictionary titled *Yaşar Kemal Sözlüğü* (A dictionary for Yaşar Kemal).[12] Yaşar Kemal is an internationally famous, prominent novelist from the city of Adana, which is located at the foot of the Taurus Mountains in southern Turkey. Most of his novels represent the rural life of the Taurus mountain range, and he uses Anatolian folkloric material quite extensively. "The Yaşar Kemal Dictionary" was prepared by Ali Püsküllüoğlu, who grew up in the same region as Yaşar Kemal, and is also a prominent writer, poet and etymologist. The mere existence of this dictionary, I believe, demonstrates a lot regarding the dichotomy between the urban and rural lives in Turkey. As I indicated earlier in the chapter titled "Literature on Villages," after Mahmut Makal, a peculiar genre called *peasant novel* emerged in the Turkish literature world. In 1986, an article titled "Turkish Peasant Novel, and Anatolian Theme," the authors Dino and Grimbert argue that this peculiar genre did not only contribute to the Turkish language, but also contributed to the democratization of Turkish literature. The authors argue that "...the extraordinarily rich vocabulary, the expressive verbal structure, the vivid and evocative language, and the lively dialogues made a major contribution to the development of Turkish literature, guiding or supporting attempts to purify and transform the language of contemporary Turkey, which was undergoing a process of great change."[12]

Mahmut Makal's book was the first example to see the difference between the languages that were spoken in the rural and urban areas, The languages were simply different, and the speakers of one could not understand the speakers of the other. The publishing of "The Yaşar Kemal Dictionary," I believe, shows that these two dialects did not get close to each other since the 1950s. While English translations of Makal's books were considered poor by some, Kemal's books are generally thought to be translated competently. The English-speaking readers of Yaşar

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[12] Ali Püsküllüoğlu, *Yaşar Kemal Sözlüğü, (*İstanbul:Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006).

[12] Guzine Dino and Joan Grimbert. "The Turkish Peasant Novel, or the Anatolian Theme," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 60, No. 2, (Spring, 1986), 267.

Kemal are perhaps unaware that his Turkish-speaking readers need a dictionary to follow his novels closely.

5.2. *Lists of Firsts and Contact with the State*

I would next like to present a very unique narrative tool used quite commonly in the village web-sites , namely, a list of firsts. These lists cover the important events from the past of the village, and they provide an opportunity to analyze the villagers' point of view. Quoting from the web-site of a village in southern Turkey,

> The first school was opened in our village in 1955. The first mosque was built in 1939. Our first teacher was Necati Çetinkaya, the deceased. The first person in our village to be educated in middle school was Mevlit Bolat, and he was also the first person to become a teacher. The first woman who was educated in middle school was Aynur Bolat. The first headmen of the village is Mahmut Hoca (Mahmut Özyürek). The first imam assigned to the village with a permanent position is Ördekçili Ramazan Hançer. The first person who bought a horse carriage was Mehmet Yıldırım (Sütçü). The first person who bought a tractor was Kemal Öztürk, he had bought a Massey Ferguson tractor to the village. The first person who owned a car was Hasan Karadağ, he had brought a Ford mini bus from Germany in 1975. The first modern road was built in 1968 by the headman Mustan Aydogmuş, and our first paved road was made in 2000 by his son headman Ramazan Aydogmuş. […] We started to use electricity in 1975. The first television in the village was bought by Hasan Karadağ in 1975. […] The first migrants from the village were Mehmet Ali Çelik and Mustafa Çetinkaya. They migrated to the town center Isparta in 1963.[13]

This list is from the web-site of Keçili, a village in Isparta, with a population between 1500-2000. Lists of firsts are very common on village web-sites. The power of these narratives stems from the implied previous absence of what they needed, or what they found important in

[13] "Köyümüze ilk okul 1955 yılında açılmıştır. Köyümüzde ilk cami 1939 yılında yapılmıştır. İlk öğretmen rahmetli Necati Çetinkaya'dır. Köyümüzden ilk defa orta okula okumaya giden kişi Mevlit Bolat'tır. Yine ilk öğretmen Mevlüt Bolat'tır. İlk defa orta okula giden hanım: Aynur Bolat'tır. Köyün ilk muhtarı Mahmut Hoca, 0Mahmut Özyürek'tir. Köyün ilk kadrolu imamı Ördekçili Ramazan Hançer'dir. Köyde ilk *ata* [sic] arabası alan kişi: Sütçü Mehmet Yıldırım'dır. Köyde ilk traktör alan kişi: Kemal Öztürk'tür 1973 yılında Massey Ferguson marka bir traktör almıştır. Köyde ilk defa araba alan kişi: Hasan Karadağ Almanya'dan 1975 yılında Ford marka bir minibüs getirmiştir. [...] Köyümüze ilk defa modern bir yol; Muhtar Mustan Aydoğmuş zamanında 1968 yılında yapılmıştır. İlk asfalt yol ise oğlu olan Muhtar Ramazan Aydoğmuş zamanında 2000 yılında yapılmıştır. Köyümüze ilk elektrik muhtar Hasan Karadağ zamanında 1975 yılında getirilmiştir. Köye gelen ilk televizyon; 1975 yılında Hasan Karadağ tarafından getirilmiştir. [...] Köyümüzden ilk göç; 1963 yılında Mehmet Ali Çelik ve Mustafa Çetinkaya tarafından Isparta'ya göçmek suretiyle yapılmıştır." Isparta, Gelendost, Keçili village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.kecili.gen.tr/

their past. These lists provide concrete information regarding the history of the villages. Besides the uniqueness of the manner of presentation and its possible interpretations, these lists allow us to see the village history itself at the micro history level. The local information in these lists would be very hard to obtain, if it were not given out spontaneously in this manner. One would have to think about asking these questions, or actually live in the village for some time and obtain the information spontaneously from the villagers. I find these lists quite important, because they allow us to see some aspects the relationship between the villagers and the state. However, I have to clarify at this point that none of the lists have an explicit response or direct criticism about the state policies. The lists seem like a different way to present the history. The reason why I evaluate them under the title of "Responses to the State Policies and Urban Dwellers" is that the lists provide important information regarding what is missing in the relationship between the state and rural areas. In this sense, the lists can used to extract and interpret the symbolic, underlying meanings that the villagers do not explicitly give. In the Geertzian sense, the lists and their entries can be read as "cultural manuscripts."

It is hard to say how this manner of presentation emerged and became popular, however, it can be said that the administrators of the web-sites influence each other, and ideas and applications easily spread in the world of village web-sites. Most of the time, a list of firsts is given in addition to the historical narratives prepared for the web-site. If a web-site does not have a narrative, in general it still has a list of firsts which covers a wide range of events and time frame regarding the history of the village. However, the lists rarely include the Ottoman period, perhaps because the current members of the village could not have any direct memories regarding pre-Republic times. In other words, these lists, in general, cover the events from the lives of the current generation, or at best, the last two generations, and are shaped around the

Republican period of the country.

Lists of firsts can be organized in very different ways. While some villages provide their lists in chronological order, some emphasize the events which played important roles in the village life. For instance, Sarıabat village, located in Denizli, compiled their list by using the following titles: television, van, bus, truck, computer, telephone, grocery, barber, electricity, Europe, artificial fertilizer, agricultural pesticide, midwife, sanitarian and stove. The web-sites barely provide any information about such titles; there are at most some short sentences describing each. For the case of Sarıabat, the reader can understand that the village got its phone line in 1953-54. The coffee shop, which is a quite important element of village life, was opened by someone named Mustafa Ayvaz. The people who first went to Europe were Mustafa Sarabat and Ramazan Batur. Electricity came to the village in 1974, and new agricultural techniques started to be used by the villagers in 1969, which is also when artificial manure and pesticides arrived in the village. It is also striking to see the stove on the list. It is evident that the passage to modern heating techniques from the traditional furnace was found important enough to be mentioned.[14]

The lists may also cover some unusual events that left their impression in the minds of the villagers. Durak village, located in Konya, includes to the first village member that was given the death penalty, the first member who killed someone from a nearby village, the first who died due to a lightning strike, and the first person who committed suicide. The list also covers some traffic accidents that happened around the village, and people who died in these accidents.[15]

Sometimes the lists emphasize the persons who achieved the firsts, instead of dates. Harmancık village, for example, provides the names of the first person who opened a grocery

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[14] Denizli, Tavas, Sarıabat village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.sariabat.org/tarihce/koyumuzde-ilkler.html

[15] Konya, Derebucak, Durak village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.durakkoyu42.com/

store, the first person who owned a car, brought a gramophone, bought a radio, television, computer, internet access; the first person who went to İzmit (town center near the village), Germany, France; the first person who became a military personnel, building technician, teacher, police officer, doctor, urban planner, financial consultant, athlete, judge, academician, archeologist, fireman, politician, specialist in mechatronics, electrician, industrial engineer; the man and woman who lived the longest; the president of the village association; the person who created the first web-site, and the people who wrote for the web-site.[16]

The contents of the lists partly depend on the local agricultural activities, and obviously, to the personal choices of the people who prepared the lists, but there are some components that can be seen consistently in many villages throughout Turkey. The emphasis on educated people is striking, and I believe that this emphasis may be considered as a response to the common opinion in the urban centers towards "illiterate villagers." It would be fair to say that Turkey cannot provide equal opportunity for all citizens. Citizens in the east and southeastern parts of the country in particular, have not had easy access to formal education.[17] The access is even harder for villagers, and this increases the value of being educated, resulting in a strong emphasis on the educated members of the villages on the web-sites. The emphasis on the first doctors, teachers, lawyers, etc., is perhaps due to the villagers' will to demonstrate that they, as villagers, can be educated individuals. It is also evident that these educated people are sources of pride for the community. At this point, let us remember again Makal's book *Bizim Köy.* Nurgüz, by the end of the 1940s, could be one of the places with the highest rate of illiteracy in Turkey. As an educator, throughout *Bizim Köy*, Makal was using the picture of the illiterate villager as the main discussion point. And if the book, as some argue, had the effect of an atomic bomb on urban

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[16] Gümüşhane, Merkez Harmancık village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.harmancik.net/

[17] İsmet Şahin, Yener Gülmez, "Social Sources of Failure in Education: The Case in East and Southeast Turkey", *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Jan., 2000), 83-113.

centers and politicians, this was because of the level of illiteracy conveyed by Makal. Six decades later, the villagers are drawing a different picture on the web-sites. Being educated, or being modernized matters a lot for the villagers.

Now, I would like to consider these lists as an opportunity to see the first contacts of the villagers with the state, and the modernization project of the Republic, as seen from the village web-sites. In order to develop my argument, I would like to begin by reversing the narrative on the Keçili village web-site, which I introduced at the very beginning of this chapter:

In Keçili village, there was no school before 1955, and no mosque before 1939. There was no paved road to the village until 2000, and no road at all, until 1968. There was no electricity before 1975, no telephone until 1965. The villagers had no tractors before 1975, and until when the villagers neither had access to water in their homes.

Keçili is a village of ex-nomads, and on their page titled "our history", they state that they came to Anatolia right after the Battle of Manzikert (*Malazgirt Savaşı*) in 1071. According to this page, the nomadic community that they belonged to started to settle permanently around the 1800s, and somehow pointing at the first home built in the village as evidence, they argue that the people of the village settled down in the region in 1910. They do not provide any information on their history during the early Republican period. Their list of firsts seems to suggest that there was nothing worth mentioning until the 1950s. My database of web pages suggests that this is a common situation; the state or its services are barely mentioned in village web-sites in relation to events from the pre-1950 period of the Republican era. Quite consistently, lists of firsts show that before the 1950s, the villagers barely had any contact with the life outside the village, and with the state.

In order to clarify the lack of state existence in the rural parts of the country before the 1950s, a glance at the railroad system may provide a clearer picture. Although both the Ottoman and the Republican administrations invested into railroad building projects, neither saw them as a tool that could enable them to reach the rural population. During the Ottoman Empire, more than 8000km of railroads were constructed in different parts of the country, including Balkans, Syria and Anatolia, and the longest line (2224 km.) was laid between Istanbul and Baghdad.[18] Donald Quataert, in an article on the Ottoman railroads, argues that "A railroad, it was believed, would transform the plateau region into the new granary of the imperial seat and the residents of Istanbul, accustomed to receiving their wheat and flour supplies from Russia, Rumania, Bulgaria, and European Turkey, soon would be consuming loaves made from Anatolian grains."[19] During the foundational years of the Turkish Republic, the railroads were to be seen as an important part of the modernization project, and more than 3000km were added to the existing railroads inside the borders of the newly formed country in the first decades of Republic.[20]

As argued by Quataert, for Ottomans, the main goal was economic, and the primary aim of the project was not to reach the isolated parts of the Empire and provide services there. For the Turkish Republic, the main motivation behind the laying of the new lines was to reach the minerals throughout the country to put them to use in the fledgling industry. The Second Five Year Industrialization Plan of the Turkish Republic would be based on electrification, minerals, and the chemical industry. In the 1970s, John Kolars and Henry J. Malin, in their article on the railroad routes and policies in Turkey, emphasize that "the lack of social ties between the urban-

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[18] The numbers were taken from the official web-site of Turkish State Railways, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.tcdd.gov.tr/tcdding/tarihce_ing.htm

[19] Donald Quataert, "Limited Revolution: The Impact of the Anatolian Railway on Turkish Transportation and the Provisioning of Istanbul, 1890-1908," *The Business History Review*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (Summer, 1977), 141.

[20] Philip Ernest Schoenberg, "The Evolution of Transport in Turkey (Eastern Thrace and Asia Minor) under Ottoman Rule, 1856-1918," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Oct., 1977), 362.

centered Ottoman elite and the rural Anatolian society resulted in little popular demand to connect these two populations."[21] In short, railroads, obviously, were used to create a more industrial and developed country overall, the main aim was not to connect the people who live in different parts of the country.[22] It did not help bring services to the rural parts as much as it brought valuable resources from there to the urban centers.

Postal services provide another example indicating the communication problems between the urban and the rural parts of the country. When he was teaching in Nurgüz, Makal wrote in his notebook: "To begin with I found it very odd, but in time I got used to it, a letter or newspaper posted in the summer reached me during the autumn, one posted in autumn reached me during the winter, while one posted in the winter reached me in the spring. I began to accept it it as something quite natural. Is there anything which human beings cannot learn to tolerate in time?"[23] It seems to me that the last question, asked in Makal's allusive style which can be observed throughout the book, explains a lot regarding the villages. They had been tolerating the situation for centuries, and the lack of connection between the rural and urban areas caused serious problems in the long run, in terms of state policies. If the state cannot reach a village, its policies cannot reach that village, either. The only state policy which could reach the village in a very successful way was the changing of the village names. Since no one had to go to a village to change its official name, this was the easiest policy to apply.

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[21] John Kolars and Henry J. Malin, "Population and Accessibility: An Analysis of Turkish Railroads" *Geographical Review*, Vol. 60, No. 2 (Apr., 1970), 241.

[22] Kolars and Malin also argues that "the lack of rail service through the relatively densely populated area that includes the cities of Corum, Yozgat, and Merzifon is a curious omission. Whether a correlation exists between the absence of this line and an administrative antipathy during the early days of the First Republic toward the area because of the bloody Capanoglu anti-Kemalist revolt in the summer of 1920 is a question of history left unanswered." 243.

[23] Makal, *A Village in Anatolia,* 62.

5.3. *Changing Names*

In this section, I would like to highlight villagers' responses to the official policies that forced them to use new names for their villages. The narratives that I use in this section can be considered the most direct "responses to the state", in line with the title of this chapter.

Recently, an increasing number of villages started to use a standard template for web-sites, provided by a privately owned company.[24] The main components of this template are as follows: home page, short history, geographical features, foundations and institutions, associations, and contact. Under the title short history, the template provides seven titles: general short history, the ancient civilizations that lived in our village, formation of our village, firsts in the village, the village during the Ottoman era, the village during the Republican era, and finally, the old name of our village, and its meaning.[25]

As it can be seen, the template suggests that the changing of the village name is a normal part of the history of the village, and most village web-sites confirm this. A great number of villages briefly mention the old name of the village and indicate the date the name was changed, and do not discuss the issue any further. Yet, for some cases, we see that the preparers of the web-sites felt compelled to reflect their own opinion regarding the issue. I will provide some examples below.

One sees two kinds of responses to the policy. Some villages use the new official name when they are dealing with the state, but emphasize that they do not use this new name in their daily life. An example from the web-site of Koryana, a village in Trabzon:

> The Ministry of Internal Affairs apparently had the belief that they could improve the way of life in the village by changing the name of the village. Our village was named Acısu instead of Koryana. (Acısu can be translated as bitter water.) Authorities assumed

[24] Köy dernek sitesi (Village Association web-site), accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.koyderneksitesi.com/

[25] An example of the template can be seen at Çanakkale, Çan, Asmalı village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.asmali.net/index.php

> that the water source in the village, Ayazma, was its most distinctive feature, and decided to name the village after it. However, Ayazma means "sacred water", not "sour water". Even though the new name is being used by the villagers for matters of state, we still identify ourselves as people from Koryana. Wherever we go, people do not recognize us when we say that we are from Acısu.[26]

On the web-site of Berne, a village in Bayburt, we see another reaction to the policy:

> After the proclamation of Republic, the name of Bayburt's villages were changed, and new names were given to them. We were also affected by this policy, and our village was renamed Balca, due to the production of good quality honey in the village. Due to the ignoring of certain criteria by the state when the new names were being picked (in general, new names were not relevant to the places), the villagers insist on using the old names. The name Berne comes from Iskit Turkish, where *ber* means a place where the sheep gather, so Berne means a place with an abundance of sheep, or a place famous with its sheep.[27]

Certain villages went as far as taking legal action to revert to the old names. For example, the village Bahadun decided to take back their old name after forty years. This example strikingly shows that, in fact, they never got used to the new name the authorities forced them to use:

> The name of the village, Bahadun, was changed to Sarıçubuk [yellow stick] because the village was surrounded by yellow oaks. The name Sarıçubuk has been used by the villagers for forty years. In the year 2000, the villagers applied to the authorities, and the name of the village was changed again to Bahadun with a court decision.[28]

In the case of Hartlap, we see that the villagers refer to the historical and cultural roots of

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[26] "İç İşleri Bakanlığı eski adları değiştirme kararı alarak, köyleri kalkındırma safdilliliğine inanmış olacak ki; Koryana adı yerine "Acısu" verildi. Ayazma Suyu Koryana'nın en önemli özelliği sayılmış olacak; yeni adı bu sudan esinlenmiş oluyordu. Aslında "Ayazma" nın anlamı Acısu değil, "Kutsal su" ya da "Kutlusu"dur. Devlet işlemlerinde Acısu kullanıla gelmesine rağmen, nereye gidilirse gidilsin bizi "Koryanalı" deyince herkes tanır. Acısu'danım denildiğinde çoğu yüzümüze orası neresi dercesine bakardı." Trabzon, Akçaabat, Acısu village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.akcaabat-acisu.com/

[27] "Cumhuriyet ilan edildikten sonra Bayburt'taki köy isimleri değiştirilmiş ve yeni isimler verilmiştir. Köyümüzde bundan nasibini alarak, çok ve kaliteli 'Bal' üretildiğinden dolayı 'Balca' ismi verilmiştir. Ancak köylere isimler verilirken bazı kriterler dikkate alınmadığından (genelde alakasız isimler verilmesinden dolaysıyla) halk hala eski isimleri kullanmakta ısrar etmektedir. Berne İsminin Anlamı Berne ismi İskit Türkçesi'nde, Ber: koyunların toplandığı yer; anlamına gelmektedir. Yani: Berne: koyunları bol olan yer; ya da koyunlarıyla ünlü yer; anlamına gelmektedir." Bayburt, Merkez, Balca village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.balcakoyu.net

[28] "Önceleri 'Bahadun' olan ismi, 1960 yılında; köyün ormanlık sarı meşelerle kaplı olmasından dolayı ismi 'Sarıçubuk' olarak değişmiştir.1960 yılında ayrıca köyün ilkokulu yapılmıştır... 'Sarıçubuk' isimi yaklaşık 40 yıl kullanılmıştır... 2000 yılında yetkili makamlara yapılan müracaat ve açýılan davayla yeniden 'Bahadun' olarak ismi değişmiştir." Sivas, İmranlı, Bahadun village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.sivasbahadun.net/

their old name.

> The village had been called Hartplap since its foundation, then, in 1960, the name was changed to Elmacık, with the reason given being that Hartlap was not a Turkish word. This name was not recognized by the people of the region, and even though the official name remained Elmacık, Hartlap continued to be used among the people. Since the village was well known by the name Hartlap around nearby villages and town centers, and Hartlap knife was famous around the town centers and cities, and its name came from the Hartlap tree that grows in the region, and this fact was recorded in historical documents, in 1996, the headmen of the village Mustafa Alagöz applied to the Minister of Interior Affairs, and the name of the village was changed to Hartlap in 1997.[29]

In this narrative what is striking is how the villagers produced an argument against using the new names. Apparently, the old name was not only a name, but was also a part of their culture, having relations to their dominant economic activities, and one of the distinct geographical features of their village.

Throughout the history of Turkey, village names were changed by the authorities with various motivations. Mostly, the villages were renamed with Turkish names, instead of those from other languages. Names with origins in Kurdish, Greek, and other languages were considered as a threat. Nationalization of the names was not the only aim; the names of the villages that contain the words church and bell were also changed, and the names that had the word red were changed due to the communist connotations of the color. So, Islamization and the aim to protect the country from communism were also important motivations. It is estimated that more than 12,000 village names were changed since the foundation of the Republic, in other words one in three of all villages in Turkey were renamed.[30]

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[29] "Köy kuruluşundan itibaren 1960 yılına kadar 'Hartlap' olarak anılmış, daha sonra Hartlap kelimesinin Türkçe olmadığı gerekçesi ile 1960 yılında 'Elmacık' olarak değiştirilmiştir. Bu ad yöre halkı tarafından benimsenmemiş ve resmiyette Elmacık olmasına rağmen halk arasında Hartlap olarak kullanılmaya devam etmiştir. Çevre köy ve kasabalarında Hartlap ismiyle meşhur olması, Hartlap bıçağının Maraş merkez ve ilçeler ile çevre illerde isim yapması ve ismin yörede yetişen Hartlap ağacından geldiği ve tarihi kayıtlarda da yer aldığı gerekçeleriyle 1996 yılında köyün muhtarı Mehmet Alagöz'ün müracaatı üzerine, [...] köyün ismi tekrar 'Hartlap Köyü' olarak değiştirilmiştir." Kahramanmaraş, Merkez, Hartlap village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.hartlap.com

[30] Harun Tunçel, "Türkiye'de İsmi Değiştirilen Köyler" (Renamed Villages in Turkey) *Fırat University Journal of Social Science,* Vol.: 10, No: 2, (2000), 25.

For urban dwellers and intellectuals, the official renaming of the villages is an ongoing topic of discussion, and most of the time people emphasize the damaging feature of the policy. The renaming of every village that was thought to have a "non-Turkish" name took away from the multicultural aspects of Turkey, and perhaps left irreparable damage in public memory. The villagers' responses show that public memory of the place names cannot easily be erased by state decisions, at least for the examples that we see on the web-sites. Of course, we have to keep in mind that we are not able to provide any data on the renamed villages that do not emphasize the changing of their name on their web-site.

The kinds of criteria that were used during the Turkification of the names come forward as an interesting question. Since the renaming was done by various authorities at different times, it is hard to describe all the criteria they used in detail. According to the Minister of Interior Affairs, the village names that contain the words Kurd, Georgian, Tatar, Circassian, Laz, Arab and immigrant were changed in order to prevent "separatism?",[31] which is a most frightful thing according to the official discourse of the Turkish Republic. In order to have a more united and harmonious society, all ethnic and cultural components of the society were attempted to be erased from public life and also, memory. The changing of these names can be given as a concrete example of these efforts.

Was it possible to create a nation under one ethnic identity, and one religion for all the people that live in Turkey? To a certain degree, authorities were successful in the urban centers, however, at the local level, the villagers show a different kind of picture, which is hard to guess by looking only to the urban parts of the country. In next section, I will focus on the identity problems which I believe play a role in the villagers' desperate urge to tell the foundation stories of their villages.

[31] Tunçel, "Türkiye'de İsmi Değiştirilen Köyler," 28.

5.4. *Foundation of the Village or Problem of Identity*

Any scholar who wants to study the sense of identity in Turkey has to look at the origins of Turkish nationalism. In an illuminating article, Stefanos Yerasimos draws a very clear framework regarding the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the modern Turkish Republic. He argues that founders of the Turkish Republic simply tried to forget the Ottoman past. Ottomans lost their Balkan territories in 1912, which can be thought of as the loss of the soul of the Empire. They also were defeated during World War I, and the last decade of the Empire produced many political and military controversies which continue to shape modern Turkey's political life. Yerasimos emphasizes that Ottoman heritage was a heavy burden that is hard to carry for the new Republic. At a time when the surrounding, newly formed countries were trying to create their national identities, Turkey proceeded to build her own. After the Independence War and the Treaty of Lausanne, Thrace and Anatolia formed the homeland for the new Republic. Being Muslim was considered as an essential feature of the new country. Existing ethnic diversity was considered a threat, and the policies which would end up shaping Turkey were constituted in this period. The Ottoman past had to be forgotten, and people living within the borders determined by the National Pact (*Misak-i Milli*) had to be counted as Turks regardless of their ethnic backgrounds.[32] Moreover, with the help of rising nationalist movements throughout Europe in the 1930s, Turkey tried to resurrect the Central Asian Turkic roots.

Up to this point, this thesis introduced examples that support this framework from different periods of the Turkish Republic. Reforms were made for becoming more western, attempts were made at saving the Turkish language from its Ottoman components, and the names of places were changed. It would be possible to further expand this picture by showing the

[32] Stephanos Yerasimos "Toprak Saplantısı ya da Hayalet Uzvun Acısı" (Obsession of Lands or the Pain of Phantom Limbs)" *21. Yüzyılın Eşiğinde Türkiye* (Turkey in the Very Beginning of 21st Century). (İstanbul: Kitap Publishing House, 2005), 44-50.

relentless efforts at creating a nation in unity and harmony, under one ethnic identity, and one religion, throughout the Republican history. Instead I would like to focus on the villages, in order to investigate whether these efforts have succeed at the local level. I will use narratives from the village web-sites in order to show how people in the most isolated geographical parts of the country, and people who belong to the most culturally alienated components of society, reflect their sense of belonging. I will argue that certain aspects of the foundation stories are directly linked to problems of identity. Foundation stories are where the villagers can position themselves in the flow of history, and point out where their story begins.

For concreteness, and in order to focus on a manageable amount of material, I will present three types of villages with different ethnic or cultural backgrounds: Villages with a Turkish ethnic background, or villages that do not emphasize any ethnicity besides being Turkish; Circassian villages; and villages of Balkan immigrants. I will argue that the people of all three types of villages themselves, to some degree, as descendants of immigrants that settled in Anatolia at various points in history, and present their identities accordingly.

For ethnically Turkish villages, it is evident that there is a certain sense, or awareness of the history of Anatolia before the Turks, but the foundation date of the village is thought to be directly related to the Muslim heritage. Their stories may start with a brief discussion of the history of the Hittites or the Byzantine Empire, and sometimes even more ancient settlers of Anatolia. During the initial phases of my research, I found the ties the villagers saw between their village and the Hittites very interesting, however, as I progressed in my research, the picture became clearer.

During the 1930s, one of the important aspects of Turkish nationalism was a suggested connection between the Turks and ancient civilizations of Anatolia. Such civilizations were even

considered as the first Turks in history. An excerpt from a newspaper article published in 1934 demonstrates this point of view:

> An old Village in Tavşanlı: Moymul
> Moymul village is a big village with 325 houses, and a population of 1200. The people of the village are of Hittite descent. The village was founded 1500 years ago. These villagers are the first Turks who migrated to Anatolia.[33]

Let us recall a sentence from a village web-site that I used in the "Turkish Village and Village Web-Sites" chapter: the villagers of Çamalan argue that "The region where our village is located hosted Hittites, who were Turks in the pre-Islam era."

Of course, neither claim is historically accurate. The nationalist perspective tried to prove that the Turks had always been the real owner of Anatolia, and in order to develop this perspective, the ancient heritage of the country, whose physical evidence can easily be found all over Anatolia, was used. Apparently, this perspective still resonates with some of the current villagers in Turkey. However in many cases, the villagers seem aware of the cultural richness of Anatolia, and prefer to keep their distance with this rich heritage. Their distance perhaps stems from their ultimate view of themselves as "outsiders" in a "foreign" land. In the web-site of Fasıllar, a village located in the southwestern part of Turkey, the authors emphasize that there are many historical monuments located in their village. They present some information on the Roman or Byzantine ruins around the village, but they express their belief that the village was founded in 1813. As proof, they offer the oldest gravestone they could find in the Muslim cemetery of the village.[34] Some villages argue that the date the mosque of the village was built was also the date the village was founded. In short, they do not see any connection between their villages and the historical ruins.

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[33] "An old Village in Tavşanlı: Moymul", *Son Posta,* August 3, 1934, 4.
[34] Konya, Beyşehir, Fasıllar village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.fasillarkoyu.com/

For villages of Turkish ethnicity, one of the most important events in history is the Battle of Manzikert, which was fought between the Byzantine Empire and Seljuq Turks in 1071.

Almost every village web-site narrative that refers to Manzikert, in the end, tries to prove how the village is a real Turkish village.

> It is a historical fact that, before we settled down in the village, Christian Byzantines used to live here, because Turks arrived in Anatolia with the Battle of Manzikert in 1071. According to the fact that the Byzantine Emperor Diogenes was defeated by Sultan Alparslan, it is clear that Anatolia was under the reign of Byzantines. Moreover, the name of some places in our village prove the existence of Byzantines before us in the region, such as *Haçlıtarla* (field with cross), *Kiliseardı* (back of the church), *Haçlıkaya* (stone with a cross), and *Papazkayası* (stone of the priest), etc. In addition, there are some graves which do not show the direction of Mecca. […] There is no sign towards the assimilation of formers villagers, in other words, the Byzantines. Thus, our village is full blooded Turkish.[35]

In fact, the Battle of Manzikert was only the military side of the beginning of the Turkification of Anatolia, but it was a great tool to be used as a base of the national identity in the foundational years of the country. With the help of the Battle of Manzikert, Turkish historians focused on the Turkification and Islamization of Anatolia. After the catastrophic end of the Ottoman Empire, this period seemed much more promising for the official Turkish history writing; at least it was not a disappointing story. In a recent study which discusses the myth of the Battle in Turkish society, the author Hollendar points out that the quality of Turkish academic studies on this subject were not always very high: "the topic of Manzikert was seized on eagerly, though not immediately, by Turkish historians, although their achievements reflect varying levels of scholarly accuracy and little recourse to Western scholarship on the subject. It is certainly hard

[35] "Bizler Aydoğan Köyüne yerleşmeden evvel, köyümüzde Hristiyan Bizanslıların yaşamış oldukları tarihi bir gerçektir. Çünkü 1071 Malazgirt Savaşı ile Türkler Anadolu'ya ayak basmışlardır. Bu savaşta Alpaslan, Bizans İmparatoru Romen Diyojen'i yenmiş olduğuna göre, Anadolu'nun Bizans hakimiyeti altında olduğu su götürmez bir gerçektir. Zaten köyümüzdeki bazı yer isimleri de bizden evvel Bizanslıların yaşamış olduklarını şüpheye mahal kalmayacak şekilde doğrulamaktadır. Haçlı Tarla, Kilise Ardı, Haç Kayası ve Keşişin Taş gibi. Ayrıca mezarlıkta da yönü kıbleye olmayan mezarların var oluşu gibi. […] Dedelerimiz ise değişik zamanlarda ve değişik yerlerden gelerek köyümüze yerleşmişlerdir. Daha evvelki köylülerin, yani Bizanslıların asimile edildiğini gösterecek en ufak bir işaret, herhangi bir iz yoktur. Bu nedenle de köyümüz halkı öz be öz Türk'tür. Sivas, İmranlı, Aydoğan village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.e-aydogan.com/

to admire scholarship which provides a continuous narrative that suppresses the variations in the accounts of the primary sources and has few or no footnotes."[36]

In Turkey, the anniversary of the Battle of Manzikert is celebrated every year at the state level, perhaps reminiscent of the commemoration of the conquest of Istanbul every year. Both of these annual celebrations clearly show that the Turks are still trying to prove that the lands that they have lived in for almost a thousand years, belong to the Turkish nation.

In the context of village web-sites, the attention and importance given to this battle which happened almost a millennium ago, hint towards a certain political point of view. The massive number of references to the Battle of Manzikert on village web-sites show that the nationalistic perspective created during the foundational years, and -mostly- pursued by the following governments, is alive and well at the local level. Up to this point, I have argued that villages and urban centers are culturally different and disconnected. Then, how can the Battle of Manzikert still be alive in the villagers' worlds? I believe the answer lies in the history textbooks. Throughout the history of the Republic, history textbooks have focused on battles, victories and they suggest that Turks were always a military-nation throughout history. On the other hand, the same textbooks do not seem to have affected the views of local Circassians towards their background.

Circassians, one of the indigenous groups of North Caucasia, started to migrate to the Ottoman Empire in the middle of the nineteenth century, and it is estimated that more than three million Circassians live in Turkey. They were first settled in the Balkans, and when these lands were lost, resettled in Anatolia and Syria.[37]

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[36] Carole Hillenbrand, *Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol The Battle of Manzikert*, (Edinburg:Edinburg University Press, 2007), 204.

[37] Seteney Shami, "Disjuncture in Ethnicity: Negotiating Circassian Identity in Jordan, Turkey, and the Caucasus." *New Perspectives on Turkey 12* (Spring,1995), 82-83.

The village web-sites might be one of the few places where one can see the emphasis the Circassians place on their ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and express their concerns against assimilation. In general, they tell their story in detail in the foundation sections of their web-sites. Fuadiye village can be given as an example for this kind of narrative:

> The first inhabitants of the village came here during the migration waves due to the 1864 exile. The region where they decided to stay has many remains from earlier civilizations. Despite the fact that there is no information about these people, the remains and ancient gravestones give an idea about their cultures. The inhabitants of the village belong to the Aşuwa branch of North Abaza's. […] When the Russians occupied their lands, the Abazas and other communities fought against them, and they were exiled to the Ottoman Empire in 1864 with other Circassian tribes. The population of the village, which was founded in the 1870s, reached eighty houses in a period, then, during the 1960s, the village lost its population rapidly. Today, there are around twenty five houses in the summer time, but the number is decreasing to sixteen and eighteen during the winter time. In the village, the inhabitants speak the Abaza language in the Aşuwa dialect. However, the fraction of those who speak the native language is decreasing day by day due to immigration, marriages with outsiders, and the television culture. In particular, the inhabitants of the village who are under thirty years are having a hard time speaking the Abaza language.[38]

On other hand, there are a few Circassian villages that do not emphasize their ethnic identity. The web-site of Caferiye village is an example for this kind of narrative, and it also seems important due to the discussion it provides on the first encounter between Circassians and Turks in Anatolia.

> In 1877, Açba Cafer Bey who had to left his homeland, stepped on the Ottoman lands in Igneada since there was no life safety and increasing Russian cruelty in Abhazya.

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[38] "Köyün ilk yerleşimcileri 1864 sürgününden hızlanan Kafkasya'dan göç dalgalarının birine kapılarak buraya gelmişlerdir. Yerleşim için seçilen bölge, daha önceki medeniyetlerden de izler taşımaktadır. Bu halklar hakkında her ne kadar kesin bilgi bulunmamakta ise de mevcut antik mezar kalıntıları ve bazı bölgelerde rastlanan eşya parçacıkları bu eski kültürler üzerine bize fikir vermektedir. [...] Abazalar, diğer Abhaz ve Adige topluluklarıyla birlikte Rus işgaline karşı topraklarını savunmak için sonu gelmeyen savaşlara katılmışlardır. Ancak 1864'de kazanan tarafın Ruslar olarak kesinleşmesiyle Abazalar da diğer Çerkes boylarıyla birlikte Osmanlı topraklarına göç etme durumunda bırakılmışlardır. Nüfusu: 1870'li yıllarda kurulan köy, bir dönem 80 haneye kadar ulaşmışsa da 1960'li yıllarda hız kazanan yoğun bir kente göç hareketiyle ciddi oranda bir nüfus kaybı yaşamıştır. Bugün köyde nüfus yaz aylarında 25 hane civarında iken bu rakam kış döneminde 16-18'e kadar düşmektedir. Sosyo-ekonomik ve kültürel yapısı: Köyde Abazacanın Aşuwa aksanı konuşulmaktadır. Ancak günlük yaşamda anadil kullanma oranı günbegün düşmektedir. Bunda köy dışına verilen göç, yabancılarla yapılan evlilikler ve televizyon kültürünün yaygınlaşmış olması büyük rol oynamaktadır. Özellikle 30 yaşın altındaki köy sakinleri Abazaca konuşmada güçlük çekmektedir." Yozgat, Çekerek, Fuadiye village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.fuadiye.com/

> There, he defused a Russian detachment with the help of his friends, and turned them in to the Ottoman troops. Due to his success, he was valued by the Ottoman sultan of that period Abdulhamit II, and prized by an imperial order which allowed him to settle down wherever he wanted. Cafer bey preferred the location of our village since it looked like his homeland, and his friend and their grandson lived there. The first person who came to the village and pioneered the others' arrival was Recep Efendi. However, it was not easy for Cafer Bey and his friends to settle down to the village. Before them, the Turkoman beys objected their settlement since they used their location as meadow. The imperial order, and Cafer Bey and his friends' consistent attitudes made Turcoman beys give up. Inspiring his name, the friends of him as their leader named the village as Caferiye. Cafer Bey was poisoned by on of his enemies and died in 1897 when he was 58, and his grave is located in Caferiye village.[39]

In a recent innovative study on non-Turkish immigrants in the South Marmara region of Turkey, Gingeras argues that "The historic ties between the sultan's palace and the North Caucasus helped facilitate the infusion of the new immigrant elite."[41] On the other hand, in the same book, it is also noted that "By 1926, Adige and other North Caucasian languages, as well as use of the epithet *Çerkes*, were banned in Turkey."[42] Many things changed for Circassians and Turks between the first immigration wave that occurred in the Ottoman Empire in the middle of nineteenth century, and in 1926. Circassians' national consciousness caused a tension in the Aegean part of the country during the Independence War, and as it can be seen, Circassians became one of the non-Turkish populations of Anatolia that had to be Turkified in the newly founded country. However, this has not succeeded. A very recent survey among the Circassian

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[39] "1877 yılında Abhazya.daki Rus zulmünün artması ve can güvenliğinin kalmaması sebebi ile anayurdunu terk etmek zorunda kalan Açba Cafer Bey Osmanlı topraklarına ilk olarak İğneada da ayak basmıştır. Buradaki bir Rus müfrezesini arkadaşlarının yardımı ile etkisiz hale getirip Osmanlı kuvvetlerine teslim etmiş, bu başarısından dolayı dönemin Osmanlı Padişahı 2. Abdülhamit tarafından takdir ile karşılanmış ve istediği bir yerde halkı ile yerleşmesini sağlayacak bir ferman ile ödüllendirilmiştir. Cafer Bey yerleşim yeri tercihini hem anayurduna benzeyen hem de kendisinden önce gelip yerleşen arkadaşlarının [...] Köye ilk 1856 yılında gelen ve diğerlerinin de gelmesine önayak olan kişi ise Recep Efendidir. Ancak; Cafer Bey ve arkadaşlarının bu köye yerleşmeleri çok kolay olmamıştır.onlardan önce bu toprakları mera olarak kullanan Türk Beyleri buna karşı çıkmış, aralarında uzun ve hararetli tartışmalar yaşanmıştır. Hem Padişah Fermanı hem de Cafer Bey ve Arkadaşlarının kararlı tutumları Türkmenlere geri adım attırtmıştır. Köye; Cafer Bey.in adından esinlenerek, Onu liderleri olarak gören arkadaşları tarafından Caferiye adı verilmiştir. Cafer Bey 1897 yılında 58 yaşında bir düşmanı tarafından zehirlenerek öldürülmüştür ve mezarı Caferiye köyündedir..." Sakarya, Kocaali, Caferiye village web-site accessed April 7, 2011, http://web.archive.org/web/20071224225239/www.caferiye.com/koyumuz.php

[41] Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores Violence Ethnicity and the End of the Ottoman Empire 1912-1923,* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2009), 26.

[42] Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, 147.

diaspora in Turkey shows that while homeland for 27 percent of the Circassian population is Turkey, 38 percent of the population says it is the Caucasus. The rest of the population sees Caucasus and Turkey both as homeland.[43]

More interestingly, the same survey also indicates that Circassian villages and villages with other different ethnic backgrounds commonly have preconceptions against each other. The people to whom the author spoke in Anatolian villages say that "Laz people do not like Circassians", or "Avşars [a community of Turkic descent] find Circassians as 'enemies". So, in the village, a closed environment, people still keep their ethno-cultural boundaries.[44] If we return to my argument suggesting that if the state cannot reach a village, the policies cannot reach there, either, we may explain these boundaries.

Circassians have been one of the most invisible components of the Turkish society until very recently. During the time this chapter was being written, in April 2011, while Turkey was preparing for the upcoming general election in June 2011, Circassians, for the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic, openly stated their wishes that citizenship of the Turkish Republic be seen as a supra identity. They consider Turkey as homeland, but they want their identity to be recognized openly by the official authorities.[40] By a gathering in Ankara, Circassians stated their request of a new constitution for Turkey which allows education opportunities in their native language.

At the local level, the survey shows that Circassians have a good relationship with Balkan immigrants, which are one of the most culturally alienated groups in Turkish society. Next, I

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[43] Ayhan Kaya, *Türkiye'de Çerkesler Diasporada Geleneğin Yeniden İcadı* (Circassians in Turkey Reinvention of Tradition in Diaspora), (İstanbul:İstanbul Bilgi University Press, 2011), 142.

[44] Kaya, *Türkiye'de Çerkesler*, 170-171.

[40] Artanç Savaş, "Güçlü bir Türkiye'den Yanayız"(We are for a Strong Turkey), *Sabah*, April 10th, 2011, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.sabah.com.tr/Yasam/2011/04/10/guclu-bir-turkiyeden-yanayiz

would like to present some "foundation of the village" narratives from Balkan immigrant villages to show how the migration to Turkey shaped their identities, even after a century.

Its is estimated that during the Ottoman-Russian War, almost 1,5 million people immigrated to the Ottoman Empire. However, this immigration wave was just the beginning of a massive population movement from the Balkans to Turkey that would take place throughout the twentieth century. The second migration wave started in 1908-09, and it reached its peak during the Balkan Wars. Following the Balkan Wars, during the World War I, and finally, during the population exchange between Turkey and Greece, Muslim components of the Balkans started to live in Turkey. In the middle of the century, in 1950-51, 150,000 more people migrated again from Bulgaria to Turkey. Finally, the last migration wave took place at the end of the 1980s.[45]

Through the villagers' narratives, one can easily see the massive population movements that took place at the end of the Ottoman Empire. The immigrants who came during the Balkan Wars, were to live through two more major wars: World War I, and the Independence War. In order to give an idea about the turmoil that they found themselves in in that period, I would like to give a complete narrative from Kocapınar village, located in Balıkesir:

> The current residents of the village started to settle down in the village after the Russian War, also known as the War of 93. The first settlers were Pomaks who could not stay there during the Russian occupation, and escaped to the interior of Anatolia. While a part of them settled down in Koyuneri village, a lesser number of families came to Kocapınar. At that time, Roums and Bulgarians used to live in the village. It was indicated that the number of houses in the village was then over 400. The village had a church, school, bazaar, blacksmiths, moneylenders, a monk, grubber, wineries, laundries, and a dairy, etc. The village was surrounded by vineyards, and gardens. In particular, the fruits mainly consisted of grapes for wining, almonds, and walnuts. During the following years, the outburst of the Balkan wars disturbed the people who lived here. Just as the people who escaped to Anatolia after being disturbed in the Balkans, they gradually started to leave the place. Pomaks, Albanians, and Bosnian Muslims came to the village after being invited by the early comers. Thus, while the population of the Roum and the Bulgarians decreased, their seats were taken by Pomaks and other Balkan people. Then

[45] Kemal H. Karpat. *Osmanlı Nüfusu 1830-1914*, (Ottoman Population 1830-1914), (İstanbul:Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2003), 119.

> the outburst of World War I resulted in the drafting of all men. The village men contributed to the War as 300 horseman. Very few of them came back. Again, during the Independence War, we see that the people of Kocapinar helped the national resistance. Lastly, after the 1924 Population Exchange, Roums and Bulgarians who used to live here were exchanged with Pomaks who came from the Balkans. During the following years, the mode of production was completely changed. Previously, the production was based on vine growing and making wine, animal breeding, and agricultural tools. After the arrival of the current residents, the mode of production was changed to animal breeding (sheep and goat) , and agricultural activities. Corn and grains gained importance, and vine growing was diminished. Moreover, part of the vineyards was cut and burned.[46]

This anonymous narrative was obviously written by a villager that identifies himself as a non-immigrant. In the last part of the narrative, newcomers are explicitly accused of changing or disturbing the local mode of production. In the beginning of the narrative, we see a village portrait with prosperity during the Ottoman times, then the emphasis shifts to the perceived negative effects of the newcomers. The narrative provides a short history of the village, but does not cover any discussion about the current situation of the immigrant villagers. In this sense, it reflects a certain amount of tension between the newcomers and local settlers.

Among the Balkan immigrant villagers of Turkish descent, it is commonly known that Ottoman governors resettled a large number of Turkish people in the Balkans during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in order to make the new lands Turkish. The Balkan immigrants generally

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[46] "Şu anda ikamet eden köy halkının tamamı 93 harbi olarak da bilinen Rus Savaşından sonra yerleşmeye başlamışlardır. İlk yerleşimciler Balkanlarda Rus Ordusu işgalinde kalmayıp kaçak şekilde Anadolu içlerine gelen Pomaklardır. Bunların bir bölümü Koyuneri Köyüne yerleşirken Daha az sayıdaki aile de Kocapınar'a gelir.O tarihte Kocapınar'da Rum ve Bulgarlar yaşamaktadır. Köy hane sayısının 400 üzerinde olduğu belirtilmektedir. Köyün kilisesi, okulu, çarşısı, demircileri, sarrafları, papazı, sabancısı, şaraphaneleri, çamaşırhanesi , mandırası vb vardır. Köy etrafı bahçelikler ve bağlıklarla çevrilidir. Özellikle meyve çeşitliliği şaraplık üzüm , badem,ceviz ağırlıklıdır. Daha sonraki yıllarda Balkan savaşlarının patlak vermesi burada yaşayan halkları tedirgin etmiştir. Tıpkı balkanlarda tedirgin olup Anadolu'ya kaçan Müslümanlar gibi yavaş yavaş burasını terk etmeye başlamışlardır. Balkanlardan gelen Pomak, Arnavut, Boşnak Müslümanları da önceden gelen diğerlerinin çağrısı ile köye gelmişlerdir. Böylece Rum ve Bulgar nüfusu azalırken yerleri Pomak ve diğer balkan halklarından olan nüfus ile doldurulmuştur. Ardından 1. Dünya savaşının çıkması tüm erkeklerin savaşa çağrılmasına neden olmuştur. Köy erkekleri seferberliğe 300 atlı olarak katılmıştır. Bunlardan çok azı geri dönmüştür. Yine kurtuluş savaşı yıllarında Kocapınarlıların Kuvai Milliyeyeye yardım ettiğini görürüz. [...] En son 1924 mübadelesi sonrasında buradaki tüm Rum ve Bulgar aileler Bulgaristan'dan gelen Pomaklarla yer değişmiştir. Sonraki yıllarda buradaki üretim biçimi tamamen değişmiştir. Önceden bağcılık, şarapçılık, hayvancılık ve tarım araçları üzerine olan üretim ilişkileri, şimdiki yerleşimcilerin gelmesi ile daha çok hayvancılık (Küçükbaş hayvan keçi ve koyun) ve tarım olarak şekil değiştirmiştir. Sadece mısır ve tahıllara ağırlık verilmiştir. Bağcılığı ise tamamen köreltmişlerdir. Hatta bağların bir bölümünü kesmişler veya yakmışlardır." Balıkesir, Gönen, Kocapınar village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://kocapinarkoyu.com/

called themselves as "children of Fatih" (*evlad-ı Fatihan*) referring to Sultan Mehmet II who expanded the Ottoman lands into the Balkans. This naming, in fact, contains an emphasis on their ethnic identity which they would need when they came back to Anatolia. They faced serious problems upon their return, and they had to prove whether they were still Turks or not. Taşlık village is one of the villages that had a hard time with their identity issues.

> During the Ottoman times, Rums used to live in this village, which is a Rum village. In the village, houses, barns, and a church were left from the Rums. After the departure of Rums for Greece and our arrival in the village during the population exchange, the church was converted into a mosque. […] It is to be seen that some use strange expressions like Salonika emigrants towards the people of Taşlık, who, indeed came to Anatolia from Salonika as immigrants during the population exchange. Moreover some consider us as equals to Salonika renegades who caused the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. [...] However, the people who came from Rumelie are immigrants, not emigrants.[47]

In this narrative, we can easily see an effort to feel a sense of belonging to the community. Kirişçi, in his article, exhibits that during the foundational years "Turkish immigration and refugee policies have been biased in favor of people of Turkish descent and culture and then only as long as such persons were of Sunni-Hanafi background.".[48] Turkish Republic was not eager to accept the people from other religions and nations, but having a Turkish descent, and Sunni-Hanafi background did not help the immigrants to be seen as Turks in their new (old) lands. They were considered as foreigners, since the lands that they came from were outside the country, and they lived very close Christian nations. That was the reason why

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[47] "Taşlık Köyü ismini, köyün çok taşlık olmasından almıştır. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu döneminde, bir Rum köyü olan köyde Rumlar yaşamıştır. Köyde, Rumlardan evler, ahırlar ve birde kilise kalmıştır.
Taşlık köyünde oturan Rumların mübadele ile Yunanistan'a gitmesinden ve bizlerin Taşlık köyüne gelmesinden sonra kilise, camiye çevrilmiştir. […] Selanik'ten mübadele ile Anadolu'ya "muhacir" olarak gelen, biz Taşlıklılara, "Selanik göçmeni" gibi yadırgayıcı ifadeler kullananlar görülmektedir. Hatta Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nu yıkan Selanik dönmeleri ile ecdadımızı aynı kefeye koyan nice bilgisizlere bile rastlanmaktadır. Zaman zaman Selanik'ten gelen Müslümanlara, "Selanikli" kelimesi rasgele kullanılarak, incitici, acımasız davranışlarla büyük bir haksızlık yapılmaktadır. Bu tür değerlendirmeler, tarihimizi bilmeyen, cahilce bir tutumun sonucudur. Halbuki, Rumeli'den savaş sonrası gelen Müslüman halk, "göçmen" değil "muhacir"dir. Selanik'ten gelen Taşlık Köyü halkı da"göçmen" değil, toprakları işgal edilerek gelen "muhacir"dir." Kayseri, Özvatan, Taşlık village web-site, accessed April 7, 2011, http://www.taslikkoyu.com/

[48] Kemal Kirişçi, "Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration Practices", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Jul., 2000), 4.

Taslik villagers define themselves as incomer (*muhacir*). They sharply refuse the term "emigrant" (*göçmen*). Moreover, almost six decades after the immigration of the people of Taşlık, immigrants who came from Bulgaria in 1980 were also culturally alienated from the society, due to the same reasons.

Needless to say, not all Balkan immigrants were the descendants of the first Turcoman communities that were placed in the Balkans during the fifteenth century. Throughout the twentieth century, non-Turkish immigrants came to the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. Albanians, Macedonians, Bosnians, and Pomaks can be considered as such groups, and these are probably the most assimilated people in the history of the country.[49]

The Balkan immigrants, during the foundation of the Republic, were resettled throughout the country, and some of them were relocated several times. As Bora and Şen argue fairly enough, the invisibility of Balkan immigrants, whether they have Turkish or non-Turkish backgrounds, points towards one of the most problematic issues in the history of Turkey. Here I tried to show that people from the Balkans were treated in the same way when they arrived in Anatolia, whether they have Turkish, or non-Turkish descent.

In conclusion, for Turks, Circassians, and immigrants who came from the Balkans, having came from somewhere else seems to be a part of their identity. All narratives include information on the time they came to the region, how the village was founded, who was there, and what the conditions were like. In fact, there are many villages who only tell the foundation of the village, and they do not tell anything else regarding their history. For Turks, the story of their arrival in Anatolia, which is a story belonging to a distant past, is a tool to construct their ethnic identity. For Circassian villages, coming to Anatolia was a beginning of their long time

[49] Tanıl Bora and Bayram Şen. "Saklı bir Ayrışma Ekseni Rumelililer Anadolulular," (A Hidden Axis of Seperation: Rumelians and Anatolians), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasî Düşünce*, Vol. 9, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009), 1149.

exile, and for the immigrants from the Balkans, coming to Anatolia was another episode of facing problems in new lands.

In the beginning of 1920s, Anatolia provided an asylum for a number of different ethnic groups. While these people were moving into the country, the authorities pursued a deliberate policy in the villages, in order to create an increasingly Turkic nation. In his book titled *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Turkey Who is a Turk?* Çağaptay discusses how different kinds of non-Turkish immigrants were resettled in Anatolia with various concerns. The authorities suggested that "non-Turkish Muslim immigrants would not establish a demographic base in any part of the country."[50] Kurds and Turks were resettled in the same villages, Circassians were settled in different parts of the country, and Balkan immigrants were distributed throughout Anatolia. Now, on the village web-sites, people tell what they remember or what was told to them about those years, and for some cases, we clearly see how the identity problems were seeded at the local level.

[50] Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Turkey Who is a Turk?*, (New York:Routledge, 2006), 85.

6. CONCLUSION

In 1997, a very short book, with the title *Sakızköy Güncesi* (Sakızköy Diary), was published by a prominent publishing house in Istanbul. The author, Azad Ziya Eren, was an elementary school teacher in Sakızköy, a village in southeastern Turkey. The book starts with this fragment: "While educating the new 'Mamıdefendi's after 52 years..."[1]

The word that he uses, *Mamıdefendi,* in fact, consists of two words: *Mahmut* and *efendi*. This was the way the villagers in Nurgüz referred to Mahmut Makal in the 1950s. For the villagers of Nurgüz, Mahmut Makal was an educated *efendi*, not a villager anymore.

Teaching in another isolated village of Anatolia half a century after Makal, Eren identifies himself with the teachers of the Village Institutes. The book contains some very short sketches from the author's personal life and observations from the village. On the second page of the book, he asks an important question: What have we changed in the last 52 years? After reading the book, the reader sees his clear answer: "Not much!"

There are striking similarities between Makal's and Eren's stories. Eren also struggles with the ignorance of the villagers and the primitive conditions of village life. In addition, he has a further difficulty which did not exist in Makal's time: he has to struggle against the village guards. For a village in Turkey, it seems like time is not running forward.

Throughout the text, I argued that the villages and villagers were neglected by state, particularly during the foundational years of the country. For the urban dwellers, villagers were only subjects in novels and in academic research. When the internal migration started during the 1950s, urban elites were not "ready" to live alongside the villagers. Villagers spoke different languages or dialects, they had different social values, moreover, they had different points of view. They did not like each other, and the increasing number of people coming from villages led

[1] Azad Ziya Eren, *Sakızköy Güncesi* (Sakızköy Diary), (İstanbul:Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1997), 4.

to some serious infrastructural and social problems in urban life, further expanding the gap between the two groups.

Village web-sites are, perhaps, the first medium where the villagers can tell their own stories in their own voices, and be heard. There is, admittedly, a sort of "selection bias"; the preparers of the web-sites are perhaps the more educated members (or ex-members) of the villages. Still, a close study of the narratives on these sources provides invaluable clues into how the villagers see themselves, their past, their ethnic identity, their relations with the state, their daily life, language, and customs. In this thesis, I focused on the narratives they provide on village histories, and used these narratives to investigate their responses to various state policies, and the effects of various events in history on their sense of ethnic identity and belonging. I believe I have barely scratched the surface. There is much more to be investigated, and I believe this new, exciting, spontaneously developed resource will be invaluable to many researchers, including ethnographers, anthropologists and linguists.

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