

Contested spaces in landscapes of violence

Displacement and return in Diyarbakır at the turn of the 21st century

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During the bitter war with the guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in the 1990s, the Turkish army and paramilitary »village guards« depopulated and burned villages in southeastern Turkey in a systematic manner. Clearance of the countryside and resettlement of the rural population, from which the PKK drew membership, logistical support and intelligence, was considered crucial for successful counter-insurgency. From 1993 onwards, the evacuation and burning of villages were no longer simple reprisals against villages suspected of supporting the guerrillas, but part of a »draft or destroy« policy that imposed upon villagers a frightening dilemma. Either they could militarize their villages by becoming members of the village-guard militia and take up arms against the PKK, or face punitive measures, including expulsion and destruction of their villages, which aimed at the forced resettlement of civilians to urban centres, where state forces were better able to control and supervise the population.

Return entered the political agenda in 1995 and since then several return projects were announced, yet generally have not been implemented. In the absence of official return schemes, displaced villagers have been re-migrating by their own means since 1999. International human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch (HRW), the London based Kurdish Human Rights Project (KHRP), and the Turkey based Human Rights Association (İnsan Hakları Derneği, İHD), Human Rights Foundation (Türkiye İnsan Hakları Vakfı, TIHV), and Mazlum Der (İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar için Dayanışma Derneği) have documented at great length official obstacles to returning to the villages. These include lack of transparent policies and support, denial of permission from authorities, obstruction by the army, fear of, and attacks by village guards, and the danger posed by the presence of landmines. Most reports are concerned with the legal right of the displaced to return to the former residential areas, but sociological studies of return have not previously been conducted.

1 This article is based on a chapter from my PhD thesis submitted to Wageningen University (Jongerden 2006).

This article will provide data about who returns and how the activity of return develops. It will also give evidence concerning new settlement structures and patterns emerging in the area. Although this article is mainly concerned with qualitative data, it will also briefly discuss return statistics. The qualitative data from the village studies disclose a reality behind the bare numbers, and reveal that return takes very different forms. In many cases it transpires that people do not exchange their urban accommodation for a rural one; instead, the evidence suggests that dual or extended settlement patterns emerge. Furthermore, not all segments of the population return in equal proportions; rather, the evidence suggests that young men and young families are underrepresented among the returnees.

Statistics

In the absence of reliable statistics, it is difficult to assess the exact dimensions of village evacuation and destruction. Government statistics indicate that between 3,000 and 4,000 villages and hamlets were evacuated and destroyed, displacing 55,000 households or between 350,000 and 380,000 people, most of them Kurds. The number of settlements depopulated and destroyed is not really in dispute, but the number of people affected is a subject of great controversy. Human rights organizations claim that Turkey deliberately presents low numbers to camouflage the magnitude of the displacement.² They variously estimate the number of displaced persons at 1.5 to 4 million. Others, such as the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) consider the number of three to four million displaced persons, as suggested by international organizations and NGOs, a rather high estimate.³

Both official and non-official figures indicate that some 93 per cent of the displaced people wish to return to their villages, and clearly it makes a vast difference if this percentage is related to 380,000 people, or to 4 million. A close reading of government statistics on return suggest that villagers are heading home in great numbers. The Regional Development Administration of the Southeast Anatolia Project (Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi, GAP) reported in 1999 that 34,509 people (3,593 households) returned with the support of governors to 97 villages and 82 hamlets, a total of 179 settlements.⁴ Emergency Region Governor Gökhan Aydın said on 7 August 2001 that 18,600 people had returned (16,000 less than GAP had reported in 1999) and the Interior Ministry stated in November 2001 that

2 KHRP 2002.

3 Aker et al. 2005: 8.

4 GAP 2000: 1.

as many as 30,224 villagers had returned since 2000. Government sources informed the US State Department that 26,481 people had returned by the end of 1999, and 35,513 between June 2000 and December 2001, which makes a total of 61,994 returnees. The figures lack clarity because they are never accompanied by lists of settlements to permit cross-checking. Civil society organizations claim government statistics are exaggerated and that the beneficiaries are village guards, suggesting that the village return programme is not open to everyone. Not only do official figures lack clarity, moreover, data collection by civil society organizations is obstructed. For example, the Interior Ministry banned a study of the Diyarbakır municipality to collect data on the numbers of displaced.⁵

Table 1: Villages where return occurred, returning households and persons on 1 January 2004 according to an inventory of the Diyarbakır office of Göç-Der

| District | Villages where return is observed | Returning households | Returning population | Villages receiving support from authorities |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| Centre | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Bismil | 19 | 133 | 5,695 | 0 |
| Çermik | 2 | 40 | 175 | 0 |
| Çınar | 10 | 156 | 1,242 | 0 |
| Dicle | 14 | 710 | 8,220 | 2 (a) |
| Eğil | 3 | 18 | 96 | 0 |
| Ergani | 10 | 377 | 2,613 | 1 (b) |
| Hani | 6 | 127 | 664 | 0 |
| Hazro | 10 | 121 | 665 | 0 |
| Lice | 32 | 2,375 | 10,310 | 0 |
| Kocaköy | 3 | 137 | 872 | 1 (c) |
| Kulp | 32 | 2,664 | 13,511 | 1 (d) |
| Silvan | 18 | 224 | 1,341 | 0 |
| Total | 159 | 7,082 | 45,404 | 5 |

a) Villagers returning to Değirmen (Zixir) and Aşağı Haçek received support (undisclosed what kind of support).

b) Villagers returning to Ergani-Karşıbağlar (Zilan) received material for the construction of shelters.

c) Villagers returning to Kocaköy-Şaklat (Şeqlet) received material for the construction of shelters.

d) In Kulp-İslamköy village guards were settled in a reconstructed hamlet and a new constructed settlement near the old village. In Hamzalı (Şeyh Hamza) 200 of the 258 households that were evacuated returned with support as village guards, in Yaylak (Eskar) 50 of the 300 households returned with support as village guards, and in Zeyrek 220 of the 280 households returned with support as village guards.

5 HRW 2002: 25.

Statistics collected by the migrant organization Göç-Der indicate that until 2004 more than 45,000 people returned to 159 settlements in Diyarbakır province (see table 1). A great majority of these returnees were civilians (and not members of village guards). It is difficult to determine the proportion of returnees to the number of displaced persons, as we can only guess the exact number of evacuated settlements. The human rights organization İHD published a list of evacuated settlements amounting to 432 in Diyarbakır by 1996. I was not able to obtain reliable statistics for the period from 1996 onwards, but since most evacuations occurred in the period between 1991 and 1995, the total number of evacuated settlements in Diyarbakır is not likely to be more than 500 to 600, which would imply that the proportion of return is about 25–30 per cent. The statistics further indicate that this return is confined to a low proportion of the households (33 per cent) and population (35 per cent) that inhabited the settlements previously. In addition, the statistics reveal that return in Diyarbakır province is significant, but almost without any support from the authorities.

Methods of data collection

The statistics reveal the magnitude of return; however qualitative methods of research are needed to gain insights in the way return takes place. The main methods of qualitative research which were used to collect data in this study were case studies and field trips. The case studies provided details about return in a particular, clearly demarcated area (a settlement) by use of multiple sources of data (observation, open ended interviews, secondary sources), while travelling allowed me to collect data in a larger territory. Today, travelling is mainly associated with leisure and tourism, but in earlier times (at the turn of the 20th century) it was an important method for gathering data (among others, in the area under research in this study) and its findings appeared in scientific journals.⁶ Practitioners were in many cases diplomats and military officers, such as the former British military attaché in Constantinople Francis Richard Maunsell, the British honorary embassy attaché and military officer Mark Sykes, or Captain Louis Molyneux-Seel. The work of those men, linked to (British) colonial policy and imperialism, could be described as political geography⁷ and anthropology.⁸ I revived travelling as a method suited to the conditions of this study to obtain a bird's-eye overview on village return (although it was difficult to make estimates of the

6 Maunsell 1894; Yorke 1896; Sykes 1907; Molyneux-Seel 1914; Frödin 1944.

7 Maunsell 1894; Sykes 1907.

8 Molyneux-Seel 1914.

magnitude of return, it was apparent that village return did occur throughout the southeast, as I passed several places on my journeys where return had taken place).

For a more detailed study of developments, four settlements in Diyarbakır province were selected. In alphabetical order: Beruk, İslamköy, Matrani, and Mira.⁹ I will introduce them briefly.

On the highway from Batman to Diyarbakır we pass Beruk. The land suffers from a shortage of water, which clearly affects the wheat and lentils that are grown on it. The most important source of income is wheat production and animal husbandry, predominantly sheep. Beruk found itself on a PKK trail and was evacuated and destroyed in 1991. In 2002 the authorities granted permission to three families to settle in the village. These families had never lived in Beruk, but acquired part of the land and found shelter in ruined buildings abandoned in 1991. At the time of my first visit to the village, one year after the families had taken residence, it was hard to find material signs of inhabitation: the power pylons did not carry electricity cables to the village, the water tower was severely damaged, and the houses were still in ruins.

İslamköy is located in the Kulp district in the north of Diyarbakır province. Families used to earn a living with arable farming on small plots measured in tenths of a *dönüm*¹⁰, animal husbandry, and silk production. At the beginning of the 1990s the PKK practically administered the village, until the Turkish army evacuated and destroyed the site in 1994. Today, there is not one İslamköy, but two. One was constructed by the authorities in 2000/2001, on the bare slopes of a mountain not far from the original location of the village. This new İslamköy is inhabited by paramilitary village guards. The other, old İslamköy, is the original village to which the displaced civilian population returns too, in spite of hardship and the opposition of both village guards and authorities.

Matrani is located near the Tigris River in Diyarbakır province. The land is divided into plots of medium size, a couple of hundred *dönüms* per household, and is cultivated with wheat. The wheat is of good quality but water resources are scarce. Animal husbandry is therefore an important additional source of income, as is *koruculuk*, participation in the village-guard militia, and, as later became apparent, the drugs trade. The village is inhabited by Kurds from Viranşehir and Turks from Bulgaria. But most of the Bulgarian settlers have migrated to the west of Turkey, notably the city of Bursa,

9 Beruk and Mira are not the real names of the villages.

10 In Turkey, nowadays one *dönüm* is officially fixed at 1,000 square metres, ten *dönüms* are one hectare. At different places, however, the area considered to be a *dönüm* may still vary according to local tradition.

south of İstanbul. This migration began in the 1970s. The war was an additional reason for the Turkish Bulgarians to join the migration caravan in the 1990s and not a single family returned.

Mira is located between the provincial capitals Diyarbakır and Batman. In the distance, mountains rise up impressively, but rolling hills characterize the geography in the immediate surroundings of Mira. Wheat waves in the wind as far as the eye can see. Small streams and brooks cut through the fields. The land—about 25,000 *dönüms*—was the sole possession of a Kurdish sheikh, but is now divided among his grandsons and great-grandsons. The landowners kept well away from the village as the war intensified and by 1995 had developed an extended settlement pattern. In 2000 and 2001 they returned, but not to the old village. Most of the landowners avoided settlement in the village and settled on their own land, as a result of which Mira developed from a small, but compact settlement into a cluster of hamlets and settlement cores.¹¹ The authorities intended to concentrate the population of the small settlements in a new compact settlement (which they called a village town) but the idea was abandoned.

Each of the cases is an example in itself, telling a story of return. The cases were not selected randomly, but in accordance to similarities and differences (they are at the same time most similar and most different cases). For example, İslamköy and Beruk have in common that they have been evacuated and destroyed in the course of the war between Turkish armed forces and guerrilla fighters of the PKK in the 1990s. The difference between the two villages is that İslamköy is the scene of an official resettlement project, while Beruk was selected as a resettlement site, but implementation failed to materialize as a result of opposition by the displaced villagers. Mira and Matrani have in common that they have not been evacuated and destroyed. Yet most of the inhabitants of Mira left the village as a consequence of violence and pressure to become village guards in the second half of the 1990s. Many of them returned after 1999. Matrani experienced little out-migration, but those who left the village did not return. Mira and Beruk are distinguished from Matrani and İslamköy in another characteristic. Mira and Beruk have no paramilitary village guards, but they are present in Matrani and İslamköy. Repetitive »mirroring« between negatives and positives as I travelled brought me to the selection of these four villages (see also table 2).

11 The Village Act defines hamlets (*mezra*) as settlements with a population of less than 150 inhabitants, but more than 50 inhabitants, or as settlements that are composed of at least five houses and have a minimum population of 30 inhabitants. If an inhabited area does not conform to this standard it is not considered to be a »settlement« but a »settlement core« (*iskan çekirdeği*).

Table 2: Characteristics of selected villages

| | Mira | Beruk | Matrani | İslamköy |
|--------------------------|------|-------|---------|----------|
| Evacuated and destroyed | – | + | – | + |
| Return (state sponsored) | – | – | – | + |
| Return (by own means) | + | + | – | + |
| Village guards | – | – | + | + |
| Mountainous | + | – | – | + |
| Plain | – | + | + | – |

The cases were selected sequentially. İslamköy was the first on my list. I chose İslamköy because it was evacuated and destroyed in the course of the war, selected as a village return project by the governor of Diyarbakır and a rural development project by the Southeast Anatolia Project GAP (Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi) in 2001. I selected Beruk because it was evacuated and destroyed, selected as a resettlement site, but when rejected by its inhabitants, turned into a location where people returned without receiving support. I then selected Mira and Matrani, villages which experienced migration but have not been evacuated and destroyed, to contrast with Beruk and İslamköy as evacuated villages.

Evacuation and return

If a traveller had visited the villages under study in 1984 and 2004, he or she would have encountered very different places. In 1984 the villages under study were of a compact kind—or in the case of İslamköy, composed of dispersed but compact quarters. Twenty years later the villages—with the exception of Matrani—were reduced to the size of a settlement core, or fell apart into several settlement cores and hamlets. The various processes that lead to this fragmentation are discussed below.

Evacuation and return: the case of Beruk

Prior to its evacuation Beruk was a compact settlement comprising 35 houses with a population of about 220 people. Three hamlets nearby were dependent on the village for administrative issues and public services, such as a primary school. These hamlets named Karasu, Yumaklı, and Adaklı counted 18, 15, and 10 houses respectively, making a total population of about 250 people. The families living in Beruk and Karasu are the grandchildren of two brothers, whose origins are in Lice, a district north of Diyarbakır. These brothers had left Lice somewhere around 1935 because of a blood feud (*kan davası*) and settled as farm workers in Beruk and Karasu, two villages of an *ağa* who owned several settlements in the surroundings

of Diyarbakır. The children of these two brothers bought the villages and the land, some 5,000 *dönüms*, in 1967. Inter-marriage created ties of kinship between the families in Beruk and Karasu on the one side and those of Yumaklı and Adaklı on the other side, however relations with the population of Adaklı deteriorated and eventually were broken after they joined the village-guard militia.

The land in Beruk and Karasu is divided among the grandsons of the two brothers, about ten heirs, who own plots of land of a size between 400 and 600 *dönüms*. The land is not very productive because water is scarce. The four wells provided for drinking water only. Agriculture was rain-fed. The villagers earned a moderate income from wheat, lentil, and chickpea production and some animal husbandry, mainly sheep and goats. Extensive arable farming on semi-arid soil gave space for many flowering grasses and herbs and thus opportunities for bee keeping. Some vegetables were grown for home consumption.

Beruk was located near a trail developed and used by PKK guerrillas seeking access to the city of Diyarbakır. Occasionally guerrillas stayed during daytime in hideouts in the vicinity of Beruk. They laid ambushes for Turkish armed forces and there were repeatedly clashes between the guerrillas and the army. In 1991 unknown assailants killed the teacher of the village school. The army accused the PKK, but the PKK pointed its finger at the army. The villagers too suspected security forces of assassinating the teacher, who had been arrested previously. The authorities did not assign a new teacher to the village, leaving the children without lessons and the classes empty.

In the months that followed, security forces put pressure on the villagers to become village guards. The inhabitants of Yumaklı and Adaklı joined the village-guard militia, but the inhabitants of Yumaklı resigned in 1997. The inhabitants of Beruk and Karasu refused («The state is our state and those in the mountains are our brothers, how can we choose between the state and our brothers?»). As a consequence of the refusal to become part of the paramilitary militia, the village was evacuated. The village was plundered by village guards from Yolüstü, a village on a crossroad to Diyarbakır. Wheat stocks and animals were stolen and window frames and doorjambes were broken out of the houses and removed.

The evacuation of Beruk was part of a violent army campaign in the 1990s marked by summary executions, burning of houses and possessions, killing of livestock and destruction of crops and orchards. Despite its responsibility for the displacement, the government failed to provide alternatives and compensation to the displaced population. Beruk was no exception. The villagers left for Diyarbakır, where they rented flats. They returned to prepare their fields and sow wheat in the spring of 1992. Yet when they came for harvest, the military and village guards gave no permission. The next year the military

and village guards allowed the villagers to prepare their fields and sow wheat, but again they were not allowed to harvest. Evicted and deprived of alternatives some of the villagers sold their land, either to ensure basic needs, buy a house, or start a coffee house.

The land was bought by one lineage, Mala Ferho, composed of three households, two brothers and their cousin (*amca oğlu*). The Mala Ferho owned land near Beruk, but resided in a village at Karacadağ, southwest of Diyarbakır. Following the decision of fellow inhabitants in Karacadağ to become village guards in 1991, Mala Ferho settled in Diyarbakır. In the years that followed, Mala Ferho bought land in Beruk with money they had earned in the sheep-trade, buying sheep in Iran and selling them in Turkey.

At the time they bought the land, Beruk and its surroundings were part of a military restricted area. The population of inhabited settlement units had joined the village-guard militia. Civilians were not allowed in the area. In 1999 the members of Mala Ferho asked permission to »return« to the village. The governor allowed them to go to their fields on a daily basis, but not to stay in the village overnight. The two brothers and their cousin headed to their fields after sunrise and left again before evening.

In the spring of 2002 the families received permission to settle in Beruk, after they had signed a form absolving the state from responsibility for their displacement. The villagers also had to register the names of the »returning« family members and leave a copy of their identity-cards at the police headquarters in Diyarbakır. This was not only to register return activity, but also to determine the exact physical whereabouts of returnees and allow surveillance.

The Mala Ferho families did not consider return to their original village in Karacadağ a viable option, since they did not want to live together with the village guards. The members of Mala Ferho refer to these village-guard families as *Türkeşçiler* (i.e. followers of Alparslan Türkeş, the late leader of the extreme right Turkish nationalists). Yet these village guards are not Turkish nationalists. However, by categorizing those families as Turkish extreme nationalists the Mala Ferho were in fact indicating that they considered the village guards as *the other* and would not establish relations with them again. As Becker argues, the importance of categorizing people is not so much a matter of meaning but of doing.¹² Saying that something is (or is not) something is a way of indicating how to behave towards the persons categorized. In effect, Mala Ferho intended to keep their distance from the *Türkeşçiler*.

Mala Ferho settled in a ruined village. One family found shelter in the former primary school. The other two families settled in tumble-

12 Becker 1998: 158.

down houses. They expect that economic gains from agriculture will enable the construction of new houses in the near future. Apart from the housing problem, other difficulties the families had to face were shortage of water and lack of electricity. Security forces had filled three of the four wells with concrete. The remaining well is a little outside the village, and drying out. The water tower has not been in use for thirteen years and is rotten. The pylons supposed to carry electricity to the village were stripped of their cables immediately after the evacuation of the village in 1991. The families received a transformer and 2,000 metres of electricity cable from the electricity company TEDAŞ in 2003. They then hired workers to connect the village to the electricity grid in Diyarbakır, for which they had to pay 7 billion Turkish liras (about 4,500 euros).

Provincial officials expect that village return to Beruk will increase. In 2001 a plan was proposed to build a compact settlement comprised of 500 houses in Beruk. The population from the surrounding hamlets were to be resettled in the new village, but the authorities also intended to settle forced migrants from other areas in the new village. Mala Emê, a lineage comprised of ten families, which had not sold its land, opposed the plan and lodged a complaint at the office of the prosecutor. Because the land the village was to be built on was property of Mala Emê, the authorities abandoned the plan.

Mala Emê did not return to the village for several reasons. First, the lineage consists of ten families, and return of the lineage would imply the construction of ten houses. Since they had become used to the comfort of residing in the city, the families indicate that they would not be satisfied with the simple village houses they used to live in before the evacuation of the village. But financially they cannot afford the construction of ten »urban type« houses. Second, the road to Beruk runs through the village of the village guards, and the Mala Emê say they fear harassment.

While the Mala Emê does not return because they cannot meet rising expectations and fear the village guards, other families will not return because they have sold their land. With their land they sold their customary right to residency in the village. They are now considered strangers by the new owners, the Mala Ferho. Besides, inhabitants who sold land have no source of income, since agriculture and animal husbandry are the only sources of income in the village.

Since village return is not likely to occur, an unintentional side effect of eviction is *hamletization*. Three years after permission was granted only three households settled in Beruk. The case shows that under the heading of »return« new settlement took place and that it is not possible to use pre-eviction population figures for estimating the potential for return. It is unlikely that the displaced inhabitants who sold their land will ever return to the village and the families

who still have land do not have the financial means to construct residences that meet their »urban« expectations.

Evacuation and return: the case of İslamköy

İslamköy is located some 25 kilometres north of the district town of Kulp, again about 130 kilometres northeast of the provincial city Diyarbakır. The district of Kulp, and subsequently İslamköy, is located in an area of volcanic soils and precipitous mountain slopes. The district is also known for its many caves providing outstanding hideouts, most convenient for rural guerrilla warfare. The village is a patchwork of small settlements. It falls into four main parts, referred to as quarters (*mahalle*) by its inhabitants, and located at a distance of one to three kilometres from each other. There are also seven dependent settlements, either referred to as hamlets (*mezra*) or settlement cores (*iskan çekirdeği*) (see table 3 for an overview of settlements in the composite village İslamköy).

Table 3: Population of İslamköy before evacuation in 1994

| Name of location | No. of houses | No. of inhabitants |
|------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Kuyû (Centre) | 36 | 290 |
| Vank | 37 | 274 |
| Xuş | 25 | 185 |
| Tur | 20 | 148 |
| Goma Şavat | 9 | 67 |
| Vaşık | 8 | 60 |
| Hamık | 8 | 59 |
| Lahasor | 7 | 52 |
| Lerik | 7 | 52 |
| Ahda | 7 | 30 |
| Mezradit | 6 | 44 |
| Total | 170 | 1,209 |

The four settlements that form the centre of İslamköy are Kuyû, Vank, Xuş, and Tur. The peripheral settlements referred to as hamlets or settlement cores are Vaşık, Lerik, Ahda, Goma Şavat, Lahasor, Mezradit, and Hamık. Their size ranges from three to fifteen houses. In Kuyû, the centre of the composite village, there was a nursery, a primary school, a health clinic, and a mosque. The total number of houses in the village was about 170, giving shelter to some 1,200 people. The pattern of land ownership contributed to the dispersed building of houses in İslamköy. Most families own small plots of two to five *dönüms*, and established houses on their land.

The land in İslamköy does not provide much of an income, which was a reason for much of the out-migration from the village, in particular since the second half of the 1980s. The main factor was not war, but neo-liberal politics. Before 1984 silk was an important source of income, but from 1984 onwards, production in Turkey collapsed as a result of Özal's »open door« policy.¹³ Cheap silk from China started to enter the market in Turkey and put pressure on prices. Today, the returns from silk production are modest. Families produce between 15 and 150 kilograms silk per year, which yields revenues of about 120–1,200 euros. In spite of the fall of prices, the families still consider silk production an attractive source of income because the production cycle is short (forty days from the beginning of May) and production costs are low (the silk larva is raised on leaves from the mulberry tree).

The silk is produced in-house, in a room on the ground floor. Directly after the reconstruction of İslamköy in 2001 only village guards were able to produce silk, as they were the only inhabitants with proper shelter. Over the years, civilian returnees started to reconstruct houses, and gradually became involved in silk production. A bottleneck in the production is the availability of mulberry leaves, as many trees were burned during the evacuation of the village.

Some wheat, vegetables, and fruits (from walnuts to grapes and apples) are grown in İslamköy. Most production is for household needs. A meagre surplus finds its way to the market. Before evacuation and destruction of the village most families raised sheep and goats and sold surplus milk, yogurt, and cheese. Today, only the village guards raise livestock. The civilian returnees raise some sheep and goats near their houses, but are rather hesitant to recommence animal husbandry. It needs a large investment to purchase animals, and the villagers are unwilling to make this investment, as they fear renewed evacuation. Besides, animal husbandry also implies the herding of animals at summer pastures in the mountains, for which permission is lacking. Near the village marble and chrome resources are found, however these resources are not exploited.

The names of the settlements Vank, Tur, and Xuş do not carry any meaning for their inhabitants. The villagers recognize these names as Armenian, a foreign language for the Kurdish inhabitants of the village (the village is said to be a settlement formerly inhabited by Armenians). It is suggested that most Kurds moved into the area after the massacre of Armenians, but people claim that the area was inhabited by *yerli* (native) Kurds too.

13 Up to the 1980s buyers competed for the silk, but today only the Kozabirlik (Kozas Tarım Satış Kooperatifleri Birliği), a cooperative, which has been established by silk producers in Bursa, Bilecik, Adapazarı, Mihalgazi and Alanya, buys the cocoons. A buyer of the cooperative also visits producers in Kulp, but they are not member of the cooperative.

This suggestion is reflected in the folk etymology of place names. According to an imam from the village, Kuyû is derived from the Zaza word *ku*, which means »mountain«. Others argue that the word Kuyû is derived from the Kurmancî word *kudere*, which means »where«. The name is said to make reference to the evacuation of the village in ancient times and the diaspora of its inhabitants. The »where«—it is said—queries the whereabouts of villagers (killed or scattered) and the village (destroyed). According to oral accounts, the village was evacuated and destroyed eight times, but the villagers can only assign dates to the last two occasions (1915 and 1994). This folk etymology—whether correct or not—illustrates the place of forced migration in the collective memory of villagers.

In 1990 the PKK had established itself strongly in the district of Kulp. The party controlled large parts of the rural and mountainous areas in the district and had some presence in the district town itself. In between 1990 and 1992 the PKK was able to control İslamköy (in PKK terms the village was »liberated«). The nearest army base was at Kulp, at 25 kilometres distance, and at intervals a large force of gendarmes arrived in İslamköy, occasionally burning houses.¹⁴ The defence of İslamköy against the PKK was entrusted to the village guards, who were established in the village in December 1993.

About fifty families joined the paramilitary system. Among them were all twenty families from Tur; thirty families came from Kuyû, Vank, Xuş, and some of the dependent settlements, such as Hamık. According to government statistics, the number of village guards in İslamköy was about 500 persons, but this seems improbable for fifty families, especially since only males were eligible for participation. The most obvious explanation for this inflation of numbers is the illicit claiming of salaries. Numbers notwithstanding, they were no match for the PKK. The village-guard families adopted an extended settlement pattern, staying most of the time in Kulp. Allegedly, the PKK demolished some of the houses of village guards, as a reprisal against the village guards, who had kidnapped and tortured some villagers.

The destruction of houses by the army and forced migration of villagers started in 1993, but in May 1994 the Turkish armed forces evacuated and destroyed İslamköy completely. One of the villagers watched the burning-down of İslamköy standing on the roof of a house in a nearby village. He recalls:

»An airplane flew low over the village. It looked as if it sprayed some kind of smoke over the houses, which burst into flames a moment after. The fire it produced was so hot that stones melted.«¹⁵

14 Selçuk & Asker v. Turkey 12/1997/796/998–999.

15 Anonymous villager from İslamköy, 15 April 2004.

Pressure from village guards had contributed to the evacuation and destruction of İslamköy. In the village, the village guards were sitting ducks face to face with the PKK and preferred to settle in Kulp. They knew that as long as İslamköy was inhabited, the army would expect them to maintain a presence. Evacuation allowed the village guards to settle permanently in Kulp, where they helped with the defence of the district town. By 1993 Kulp was under siege from the PKK. The civilian population, under suspicion of siding with the PKK, were not allowed to settle in Kulp and migrated to the provincial capital Diyarbakır.¹⁶ Some of them later migrated to Mersin, İstanbul, and İzmir.

In 1998 plans were made for the re-population of İslamköy. Five institutions were involved: the governor of the State of Emergency Region (*OHAL Valisi*), the Minister of Internal Affairs, the provincial governor of Diyarbakır, the district administrator, and the district army command. On 13 April 1998 official procedures started with the formal request made by the Kulp district administrator to the governor of Diyarbakır to designate İslamköy as a centre for concentrated settlement (*cazibe merkezi*). On 7 October 1998 the governor of Diyarbakır approved the application and designated the projects as a »return-to-village project«. The state-of-emergency (OHAL) governor decided on 11 July 2000 to regard İslamköy as a centre-village settlement. In September 2000 building activities started and within two months the first houses (with an area of 75 square metres on a 225-square-metre section of land) were to be handed over to the new inhabitants. In 2001 the building activities were completed. The village was not reconstructed on its old location, but in consultation with the gendarmerie, a couple of kilometres to the north, close to Tur. The new village was constructed at a higher altitude, looking down on the valley where the old village was located, and on the agricultural lands. Army officials had inspected the new location to determine if it could provide security, but the main reason for the selection was the opportunity that it provided for compact building. In the old village, houses were built according to the patchwork distribution of private land. But the land on which the new village was built on is claimed by the state, and therefore a new İslamköy could arise as a compact and geometric grid. On the other side of a road, Tur was rebuilt in a similar fashion. Settlement Act 2510 provides the authorities with the legal means to rebuild İslamköy on a place different from the original.

New İslamköy, as I will call the remake from 1998, was planned as a settlement of 178 houses. 108 houses were to be built in New İslamköy, the other 70 houses in Tur. The authorities anticipated that

16 Many displaced villagers from İslamköy settled in and around Koşuyolu, in the Bağlar quarter.

Village guards

In İslamköy fifty families joined the village-guard militia by the end of 1993. All thirty families from Tur and Hamık (twenty from Tur and ten from Hamık), relatives of each other, and twenty families from Kuyû, Vank, and Xuş joined the militia. In particular the families from Tur and Hamık belonged to the poorest in the village. The families were landless or owned only very small pockets of land and earned a small income by hiring their labour to others in the village. Their ancestors were migrants from Solhan (Bingöl), who moved into the area two generations ago (most likely in the 1930s) and established the two settlement cores Tur and Hamık. The families from Tur left the village in 1992, after a violent incident, and did labour as seasonal workers in Bismil, but returned in 1993 as village guards to İslamköy. In return for participation in the village-guard system the villagers received a small wage, in 2004 it was about 250 million Turkish liras a month, approximately 150 euros. The integration into an armed institution at war with the PKK also inversed the social order in the village. The guards became the masters of the village, not only because they carried arms, but also because they were supported unconditionally by the Turkish armed forces and the civil authorities in Kulp and Diyarbakır, e.g. the district administrator and governor. One of the civilian inhabitants remarked:

»In the village, every single village guard has a power equal to that of the chief of the general staff.«

A village guard can decide over matters of life and death, as long as he can categorize his conduct as »anti-terrorism«.

The village guards and civilians live separately at large. Both village guards and civilians maintain their own minibus connection between Kulp and Diyarbakır. They do not trust each other and have their own livelihood. While the civilians do not feel comfortable in the village, the village guards are on the alert in Diyarbakır. The guards consider the civilians to be potential terrorists. »There is no doubt about whose bread they eat,« said one of the guards, suggesting that the civilian villagers are working for the PKK. Other inhabitants of İslamköy call the village guards *caş* (donkey foal), historically a term used to designate the Kurdish armed collaborators with the Iraqi regime.

The villagers look upon these *caş* as »unprotected« (*sahipsiz*). In fact, these *caş* are outcasts. They are despised by the civilian inhabitants in the village and also the state does not take full responsibility over the guards. They are left to face the guerrillas, although they can ask for army support whenever necessary. Even though they are employed by the state and paid a wage, they do not have rights to social security or pensions. The shelters provided by the state in 2001 are of low quality. ■■■

New İslamköy would increase to a village of 200 households and that Tur would grow into a settlement of 100 households to provide shelter for 1,500 people. The GAP Regional Development Administration transferred 933 billion Turkish liras (approximately 780,000 euros) to the governor of Diyarbakır in 2001. By the end of 2001 about 670 billion Turkish liras (approximately 540,000 euros) had been used for the construction of houses in İslamköy and the hamlet plus development of infrastructure, in particular a sealed road between İslamköy and the highway between Diyarbakır and Kulp, securing good access to the new settlements. Instead of the planned 178 houses only 50 houses were constructed, 30 in İslamköy and 20 in Tur. Lack of resources is the official explanation for the reduction from 178 to 50 houses.

However, the decision to reduce the number of houses built was the result of the refusal by 130 evacuated families to become village guards and their insistence on returning to the old village, instead of resettling in New İslamköy. The villagers rejected participation in the village-guard system, rejected resettlement in the new village, and pitched their tents on the remains of the old village. They stayed until winter fell, and as weather conditions worsened returned to Diyarbakır. Some of the villagers had filled in a »return-to-village form« in which they exonerate the state from the responsibility for burning down their village and shift responsibility to terrorism. The form, filled in in triplicate, was handed over to the *muhtar* (village head), the *kaymakam* (district officer), and the gendarmerie. Inhabitants from a neighbouring village also filled in the form—a condition for return—but permission was nevertheless withheld.¹⁷

By 2004, 45 families had returned to the old village and rebuilt their houses (28 in Kuyû, 9 in Xuş, and 7 in Vank). Villagers returning to the old settlement organized their own resettlement from Diyarbakır, not only by rebuilding their houses, but also by connecting their houses to the electricity grid in the region. They tapped electricity from the system established by the authorities for providing electricity to the settlement of the village guards. The villagers had to face bitter disappointments too. To re-connect Vank and Kuyû they wanted to rebuild the bridge over the stream, however the district officer (*kaymakam*) refused permission. Likewise, the highest civilian authority in the district did not permit the rebuilding of the school, even though the villagers offered to pay the costs.

17 The village known under its new name Akdoruk (old name Gajvas), a little west from İslamköy, comprised 96 houses and was evacuated in 1992. The official reason for the evacuation was that security could not be provided. But evacuation followed the refusal of the villagers to become village guards. The villagers asked permission to return from the district office in 2001. They had to sign a prepared form, the same as the villagers in Beruk signed, and eventually were granted only permission to return for five days to carry out agricultural work.

As a consequence of the rebuilding of İslamköy on a new location by the authorities and its inhabitation by village guards, and the rebuilding of houses in the old location by the civilian villagers themselves, two settlements arose. Each set of inhabitants claims that their settlement is *the* village. The civilian returnees claim the place they have reconstructed is *the* İslamköy, because it was the village in the past. The village guards claim the new location they live in is *the* village. They argue that they are entitled to the village, because they have spilled blood in »defence« of the village. Nine village guards are considered »martyrs«¹⁸ since they died in the war against the PKK.

The civilian inhabitants of İslamköy reject the claim of the village guards by challenging the social legitimacy of the village-guard institution, referring to their bad reputation. In fact, the village guards are known to be the least trained and disciplined of the government's security forces and have been accused repeatedly of corruption, common crimes, and human rights abuses, also in İslamköy.

The village guards for their part argue that the civilians' presence hinders the war on terrorism. Off and on village guards make complaints about male returnees to the gendarmerie. They report—or claim to have reported—the presence of »suspects« (possible guerrilla combatants) and suspicious movements at night in and around the village. As a consequence, some villagers left the village, not only because they fear arrest and assault by the gendarmerie, but also because village guards have pointed them out as targets, and could kill them should the opportunity arise.

Village guards and civilians are in bitter conflict with each other over scarce resources like land and water. Two villagers accused the local chief of the village guards of having confiscated 40 *dönüms* of their land, cultivating part of the land with wheat and putting another part aside for grazing animals. The confiscated land, close to Tur, had been fallow for decades, but according to the land register, it was the shared property of two villagers who then decided to take legal actions. A court of law in Diyarbakır decided in May 2002 that the land belonged to the civilian families, and that the local village-guard chief should vacate the land. In spite of requests to execute the verdict, neither the district officer nor the district police took any action, and so the land remained occupied by the village guard chief.

In New İslamköy water resources are scarce. Therefore water is pumped from the old village to the new site to be used for drinking and irrigation. The inhabitants of the old village claim that this jeop-

18 Nine village guards died a violent death, but the cause of death of one of them is not clear. The authorities claim that he stepped on a mine, but some of the villagers argue he died as a consequence of an internal fight among the village guards.

ardized their water rights. These villagers had earlier developed a system to irrigate the land in turns of 17 days. Through this means every owner of land is supplied with water for a period of 3–12 hours, depending on the size of the land. The civilians now feared the water supply to New İslamköy will exhaust the resource and disrupt their own distribution system. The matter rested after the pumping station, which is located in the old village, broke down. The authorities, who constructed the pumping station, do not take responsibility for its repairs, while the village guards do not have the money for it.

The conflict between the two sets of residents is also lived out in regard to the village's administration and the establishment of public services. Before the evacuation and destruction of İslamköy in 1994 the *muhtar* held office in Kuyû. After the forced migration of the civilians the office of *muhtar* was taken over by the local village-guard chief's younger brother, an inhabitant of Tur. In the wake of the local elections of 28 March 2004, about 108 villagers who claimed to have returned to the old settlement wanted to register themselves as voters. They requested voter-registration forms from the new *muhtar*, but he refused to hand them out. Subsequently the villagers lodged a complaint to the *kaymakam*, who asked the gendarmerie to investigate the issue. The gendarmerie concluded that since the complainants did not live in the village for the whole year and used their shelters in the village as summer resort only, they could not be registered as voters.¹⁹ Additionally, some requests were turned down because those villagers allegedly had not filled in the »return-to-village form«.

The villagers claim that if they had managed to register themselves as voters in İslamköy, they would have been able to swing the vote for the *muhtar*'s office. Together with 44 voters registered already—they had registered without opposition at the time of the national elections in 2002—the civilians would have made up a total of 152 voters. As they claim to have voted as a bloc they would have outnumbered the 120 village-guard votes.²⁰

A year before the elections, in 2001, the civilian returnees took the initiative to establish an İslamköy Association (*İslamköy Derneği*). The association was supposed to represent the whole village (both village guards and civilians). The board of the İslamköy Association was to be composed of one representative from each of the four quarters: Kuyû, Vank, Xuş, and Tur. This implied that the civilians would have three board representatives and the village guards only one. Since the association is legally entitled to act as the spokesperson of the vil-

19 The villagers argued that their main place of residence is İslamköy and that they lived in the village eight months a year.

20 In the local elections, the villagers registered in the old settlement voted as a bloc for SHP, while the village guards voted AKP.

lagers, among others with governmental institutions, the association would have provided the civilian villagers with an alternative line of communication, separate from the village-guard *muhtar*. However, the establishment of the association failed to materialize after procedural »mistakes«. The statutes were not submitted within the legally determined period of time, but two days late. Therefore establishment of the association was rejected, and according to Turkish law, an association with the same name cannot be established within the following five years. The civilians blame the representative from Tur, a son of the village-guard leader, for this mistake, and suggested this was done deliberately in order to sabotage the attempt to establish an alternative line of communication to the outside world.

After the failure of establishing an association and to register as voters, the inhabitants of the old village lacked a direct line of communication with the *kaymakam*, who has the authority to decide about the establishment of services and infrastructure in the village. The villagers searched for other means to express their concerns. Communication between the inhabitants of the old village and the *kaymakam* now took the form of written requests and complaints, for example a request to establish a school in the old village, distinct from the school in the new settlement, and a complaint against the establishment of the health clinic in New İslamköy. The *kaymakam* turned down the request to reconstruct the old school. He argued that there were no pupils, yet the villagers argue that there are no pupils because there is no school. The complaint of the villagers against the establishment of the clinic in the new village was not in vain. Because of the discordance between the two sets of residents, the Health Care Directorate (*Sağlık Müdürlüğü*) declined to establish the clinic in either of the villages. This created a deadlock since neither of the locations was acceptable. Establishing the clinic somewhere on the road in between the villages was mooted but implementation failed to materialize in the period this research was executed.

In the process of village return two different settlements took shape. The first settlement is what is referred to as the »new village« or the »village-guard village«. This new village comprises two settlement units, the old quarter Tur and a newly constructed settlement unit close to it. This new village is inhabited by village guards. The second settlement is what is referred to as the »old village«, or the »civilian village«, and comprises three quarters, Kuyû, Vank, and Xuş. These quarters are inhabited by civilians, mainly elderly people. During holidays youth and young families come to the village to spend some time. The villagers therefore refer to their village as a »village for elderly people«, »sleeping village«, and »holiday village«. The new settlement pattern with elderly in the village and younger generations in the city gave birth to an extended *rurban* settlement pattern. The returnees to the vil-

lage supported the livelihood of younger family members in the city, mainly by growing vegetables and other crops for home consumption.

Evacuation and return: the case of Matrani

Matrani is located east of the city of Diyarbakır, near the bank of the Tigris River and alongside the road to Silvan. The village is of a compact kind, the 45 houses are established on the road which like a twisted ribbon cuts through the landscape. The village is one of the few in the area which has not been raided or attacked by either military or guerrilla, even though villagers joined the village-guard system and became a party to the war. Participation in the village-guard system constituted a source of additional income for many of the inhabitants, who earned a living from the production of wheat and some animal husbandry. Some inhabitants also have other sources of income, such as being independent truck drivers, a job between the labour-intensive periods in agriculture (preparing the fields, sowing, harvesting). It appeared that Kurdish village guards also had some income from the drug trade. On 3 October 2004 a narcotics team of the gendarmerie, disguised as buyers, arrested some village guards and confiscated fifty kilograms of marihuana.²¹

Two population groups inhabit the village: Kurds from Viranşehir and migrants of Turkish origin from Bulgaria. The Kurds came to the village around 1895 as Hamidiye militia and never left. The Bulgarian Turks came to the village in 1939, having been given land and houses by İsmet İnönü, the second president of the Republic of Turkey.

Murat Amca is one of the Bulgarian settlers. He had lived with his family in the proximity of Varna in Bulgaria. In the Ottoman era Varna was a garrison town and major trading port, with intensive commercial relations with Constantinople, Venice and Dubrovnik. The nationalist carving out of Bulgaria, and later Turkey too, from the Ottoman Empire went hand in hand with population exchanges and ethnic cleansing. Murat Amca had lived the early years of his life in a village called Türkarnavut, which was said to have been established by a Turk (*Türk*) and an Albanian (*Arnavut*).

Murat Amca, together with his older brother, two sisters and parents, and other Turks from the village, left Varna for İstanbul in 1939. At that time he was nine years old. He and other Turks from Bulgaria were brought to İstanbul in large vessels. The group of Bulgarians Murat Amca was part of was then put on a train to Diyarbakır. These *göçmen* (migrants), as they were called, were settled in about sixteen villages and the three urban settlements in the triangle Diyarbakır–

21 *Zaman Gazetesi*, accessed through internet on 11 October 2004 at: <http://www.zaman.com.tr/sdk_hepsi.php?trh=20041003>.

Bismil-Çınar. The area had plenty of land since many of its former Christian owners had been deported or killed. In Matrani the state constructed 109 houses in twelve rows. The houses had two rooms, a guestroom, a store, and a kitchen and stood out because of their orange roofing tiles and gable roofs. Attached to the house there was a shelter for animals. Today there are only two of these houses left.

According to secondary sources, 4,725 immigrants, most of them from Bulgaria, were settled in the triangle under the provisions of Law 1505 and Law 2510 (see table 4). Apart from the Bulgarians, migrants from Palestine, Romania, and Yugoslavia were also settled in the area.

Table 4: Resettlement of Turkish Bulgarians and other immigrants in Diyarbakır (source: Beysanoğlu 2001: 1028)

| Diyarbakır | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Center | Bismil | Çınar | Ergani | Silvan | Total |
| Abbas | Ambar | Çınar | Ergani | Şımşım | |
| Karabaş | Çöltepe | Beşpınar | Herbetu | | |
| Kabı | Göksu | | | | |
| Köprübaşı | Mollafeyyat | | | | |
| Tavuklu | Salat | | | | |
| Matrani | Ulam | | | | |
| Şemami | | | | | |
| Yeniköy | | | | | |
| 461 houses 1,903 people | 535 houses 1,926 people | 159 houses 612 people | 52 houses 259 people | 5 houses 25 families | 756 houses 4,725 people |

Law 1505 (passed on 11 June 1929) regulated distribution of land and Law 2510 (14 June 1934) provided a general framework for resettlement. The authorities distributed among the migrants 54,769 *dönüms* of land according to one source²² and 164,070 *dönüms* of land, 284 ploughs, 636 oxen, 2 mares, 2 donkeys, 22 shops, 61 cars, 51,975 kilograms of seed, and 68,906 kuruş in cash according to another source.²³ Murat Amca recalls that every head of a migrant family was given 35 *dönüms* per family member. So his father, having a wife and four children, received 210 *dönüms*.

After their settlement in the Diyarbakır-Bismil-Çınar triangle the Bulgarian Turks were left to their own devices. In 1941, the village was struck by drought and bad harvest, which brought famine and caused the death of several migrants, among them the father of Murat Amca. At that time his older brother, then eighteen years old, was serving

²² Beysanoğlu 2001.

²³ Anonymous 1938.

a four-year period in the military as a private in the city of Samsun. Murat Amca, only eleven years old, was the oldest male member of the family, and together with his mother had to take care of the land.

In Turkish literature, resettling Turkish populace from abroad in Anatolia is identified with the advancement of a Turkish identity and an economic revival in the area.²⁴ The communities of Bulgarian Turks, however, did not establish domestic centres of Turkishness. On the contrary, in the course of time most left the area. Those who stayed were »Kurdicized« in the linguistic meaning of the word. The Bulgarian Turks lived among Kurds and learned to use Kurdish in their daily life.

It is widely considered that migrants from the Caucasus contributed to the development of animal husbandry, migrants from the Crimea are responsible for the development of wheat production in the Ankara–Eskişehir–Konya triangle, and that the introduction of the potato in Anatolia is related to the establishment of distinct migrant communities.²⁵

It is hard to find evidence for the migrant-innovation theory in the Diyarbakır–Bismil–Çınar area. The Turkish-Bulgarian migrants in Matrani claim they tried to raise modern dairy animals, but gave up because the cows were plagued with diseases. In the Özal era (second half of the 1980s) buildings for the establishment of modern dairy farms were constructed. One of these buildings was constructed on land belonging to the villagers of Matrani. But the buildings were never used for modern agricultural production and remained empty. Villagers removed the red bricks and used them for different ends, such as the construction of barns for their houses, and over time the dairy farm buildings fell into ruins. Concrete skeletons are the only leftovers in the landscape.

The migrants stuck to local sheep and goat races, and the *manda*, a kind of buffalo, which is looked upon by developmentalists as a sign of »backwardness«, but praised by the villagers since these animals are robust and produce a constant 4 to 6 kilograms of milk a day.²⁶ The villagers speak highly about the quality of the *manda* milk, which has a fat percentage of 7 per cent (compared to 3 per cent in cow milk), and is said to be very tasty when mixed with cow milk, and a little salt and mint, into *ayran*.

Over the years, all but a few Turkish-Bulgarian migrants have left the village. Socio-economic hardship and increasing violence drove

24 Karpat 1985: 76; Tekeli 1990: 58.

25 Tekeli 1990: 58.

26 Modern cows may produce four to five times more milk a day. But modern breed needs constant medical care, as they are susceptible to diseases. A veterinary doctor remarked that he earns a good living in areas with modern breed, but is unemployed in an area with *mandas*.

most of them away. The war between the Turkish armed forces and the PKK contributed to a further migration of Turkish Bulgarians from the village. The Turkish-Bulgarian migrants sold their land and settled in Bursa, a city with a large community of Turkish Bulgarians. These migrants will not return, because a landless villager does not earn much of a living. One household, including three generations stayed in the village. Although the members of this household bought some land in Bursa, they did not migrate.

Evacuation and return: the case of Mira

Until the mid-1980s Mira was a settlement of a compact kind. The village was organized around one extended family, Mala Abdulselam, which owned all the land in and surrounding the village, totalling around 25,000 *dönüms*. As a matter of fact, Mala Abdulselam owned the village. The family provided shelter to several agricultural workers and their families. But these families were looked upon as temporary occupants or tenants, who were given lodging in return for labour, and not considered »inhabitants«. In 2004, Mira was a mere shadow of the old village. The compact village had turned into a scattered group of houses spread over the 25,000 *dönüms* of land. In the course of time Mala Abdulselam had disintegrated and fallen apart in new *mals*, which had separated from the village and established their own settlement cores.

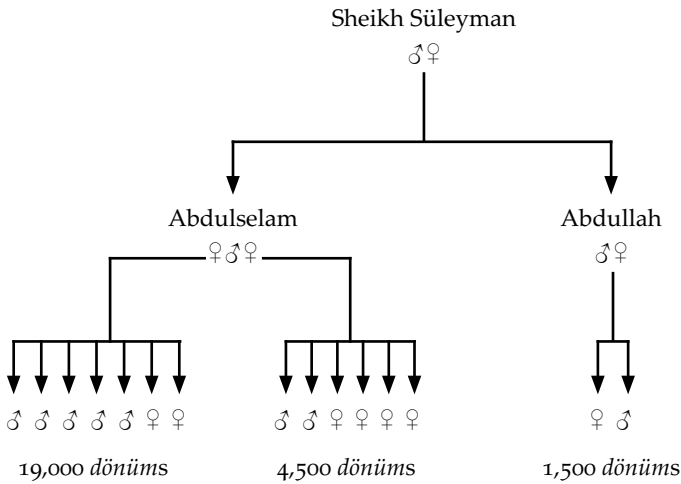
The process of separation was contingent on several »events«. Above all, the disintegration of Mala Abdulselam and the division of land between the newly established *mals*, but also the decision to include the land of the village into the total amount of land to be shared out; the war between the PKK and the Turkish armed forces, which divided households and families and infused relations with distrust; the replacement of governors and the transfer of military; and the national government's agricultural subsidy policy, which will all be discussed below.

In 1915 the father of Sheikh Süleyman obtained Mira from its Armenian inhabitants. Sheikh Süleyman divided the land among his two male sons, but not in equal shares. For the purpose of understanding the land division, I have composed a genealogical tree (see table 5).

At the start of the relevant section of the family's history, somewhere around the 1920s, Mala Süleyman was composed of Sheikh Süleyman and his wife. They had two sons, but the youngest of them, Abdullah, died in his early twenties, leaving behind two young children, a son and a daughter.

Sheikh Süleyman died in 1950, and his oldest son, Abdulselam Ağa, became the head of the family. Abdulselam Ağa had two wives, his first wife gave birth to two daughters and five sons, his second wife to four

Table 5: Genealogical tree of Mala Süleyman



daughters and two sons. His *mal* also comprised the wife of his deceased younger brother, and their two children. Abdulselam Ağa ruled his *mal* as a patriarch. His authority was absolute and undisputed. After the sudden death of Abdulselam Ağa at the beginning of the 1970s his *mal* disintegrated within a short time. This disintegration was contingent on the division of the land of Mala Abdulselam among the male inheritors and the way this division was organized.

First, Abdullah Ağa's son Murat Bey was »bought out« in 1975. The sons of Abdulselam Ağa gave Murat Bey 1,500 dönüms of land at a distance of three kilometres from the village. Murat Bey was annoyed by the distant location of his land, but even more by the size of his share. He claimed that his father's share was about half of the 25,000 dönüms, and he, as his only son, was entitled to that share, a claim that is upheld by Murat Bey's sons. But Murat Bey could not prevail over the seven sons of Abdulselam Ağa. He separated from the village in anger, and constructed a house on the land allocated.

Second, after Murat Bey was given a share of the land, the sons of Abdulselam Ağa divided the remaining land among themselves. The land was divided into six shares of about 4,000 dönüms. The number of shares is not equal to the number of sons. Instead, the five sons of Abdulselam Ağa's first wife, who were the eldest, and organized the division, decided that the two sons of the second wife, one of them still in his teens, should be given one share of approximately 4,000 dönüms. They divided the other shares of approximately 4,000 dönüms among themselves.

Third, the sons of Abdulselam Ağa decided to include the village land into the total amount of land to be divided. This decision is in

contradiction with the village law, which says that the village land is to be considered as common property, but the *muhtar* was one of Abdulselam Ağa's sons. As a son he participated in the decision to include the village land into the heritage to be divided and although he was the *muhtar* he failed to enforce the village law.

After the division of land, the new landowners started to bicker over the course of pathways alongside the crops, which were supposed to mark the borders of their land, and animal trails. The bickering over borders and trails became more serious in the next generation, between cousins (*amca oğlu*), and between cousins and uncles. Squabbles became conflicts and these conflicts appear to have been a ritualized way to establish authority over the land and to determine definite borders.

At the end of the 1980s a new actor moved into the village: the PKK. At the turn of the 1990s PKK guerrillas visited the village on an almost daily basis. The guerrillas made propaganda, established relations, and drafted recruits. The villagers provided the guerrillas with food and supplies. The PKK developed good relations with two social categories of people in the village. The first category was the teenage children of landowners, the second category agricultural workers. They were stirred to enthusiasm by the leftist discourse of social change and the idea of independence. Both provided the PKK with intelligence, not only about the authorities but also about the landowning families (e.g. about agricultural production which was used to levy taxes).

The relations with the landowners were less friendly. The PKK levied taxes, but more important was the PKK's leftist theory and practice. The landowners were alarmed by the socialist rhetoric of the PKK, which was associated with land reform. But the guerrillas attitude towards the *ağas* was unprecedented. In the summer of 1994, two women guerrillas beat up one of the landowners in the village after villagers' had complained about what they described as exploitive behaviour. The fact that the corporal punishment was executed by women was a greater humiliation than the punishment itself, and is still related with twinkling eyes by some of the women in the village.

The punishment of the landowner underscored that the authority in the village had shifted from the *ağas* to the PKK. In an attempt to regain control over the village, the two oldest sons of Abdulselam Ağa, among them the landowner who was beaten up by female guerrillas, proposed that the villages volunteer in the village-guard militia. The proposal met strong opposition from other family members. The proposal was abandoned, partly as a result of this opposition, but also because the landowners did not want their sons to become involved in the armed struggle against the PKK, which might have cost them their lives.

While this issue was resolved the violence in the village continued. Two villagers, grandsons of Abdulselam Ağa, who had kept close contact with the PKK and lent them a helping hand, were dragged out of their houses at night and killed. Their mutilated bodies were found in the fields near the village. The army accused the PKK of murdering the men, the PKK accused the army. And both PKK and Turkish armed forces tried to turn the dead men into *their* martyrs, and to link the villagers to their struggle.

The village-guard issue and the killing of the two men contributed to the development of an extended settlement pattern among the landowners. They left the village and settled in Diyarbakır, Mersin and Ankara, only returning to the village to monitor sowing and harvesting done by agricultural workers, who were hired on a daily basis. By 1996, permanent inhabitation was reduced to one family—the one who had inherited the village—and three workers and their families. This situation continued for almost four years.

In 1999, when the war between the PKK and the Turkish armed forces came to an end, the landowners started to return. The authorities, in the person of a captain of the gendarmerie, who came to the village every so often, floated the idea of establishing what he called a village-town, but this proposal meant nothing more than constructing a compact settlement. The captain inspected a location near a creek and decided that this was an appropriate location for the compact settlement.

The captain's idea struck a chord in some of the families, but was rejected by others. The proposal revived old tensions among kin. Those who welcomed the idea of a compact settlement had also proposed the idea to volunteer for the village guards back in 1994. Those who rejected the idea of resettlement in a compact village were those who had resisted the village-guard proposal. When the captain was posted to another area and the idea abandoned tensions decreased, but the families remained suspicious of each other. One landowner after another constructed a house on his land. Fractionalization resulted in fragmentation of the village.

Unintentionally, the government was supporting the social fractionalization and physical fragmentation of the village. This was further stimulated by an agricultural policy implemented from 2000 onwards. This agricultural subsidy policy granted a subsidy to farmers in accordance to the size of his land. This support was about ten euros per *dönüm* and as most of the landowners in Mira owned an average of 4,000 *dönüms* of land, they received a subsidy of about 40,000 euros per year. The money was not invested, but used for the acquisition of new cars and the construction of new houses, away from the village.

Conclusions

Evidence from village studies (Beruk, İslamköy, and Mira) indicates that the authorities preferred concentrated and compact settlement. In Mira a military officer floated the idea of constructing a compact settlement, but the plan was abandoned before it was fleshed out in any detail. The authorities actually planned to reconstruct İslamköy and Beruk as compact settlements comprising 178 and 500 houses respectively, but in both cases the intentions failed. In the case of Beruk, plans for concentrated settlement were abandoned after legal objections by the villagers. In the case of İslamköy the authorities succeeded in constructing a new, compact settlement unit, but the civilian population refused to settle there and started to reconstruct the old village, even though this was met with resistance on the part of the district authorities. As a result of this the new settlement unit did not become *the* compact settlement, but simply became a compact settlement (composed of two quarters of twenty and thirty houses respectively) of the old village. A side-effect of this development was a division of populations over different settlements: the village guards in the new settlement, the civilian returnees in the old settlement.

It has been stated that return entered the political agenda in 1995 and since then several return projects were announced, but implementation failed to materialize. Although reliable statistics are not available, return seems to take place on a significant scale. The village studies further indicate that in the absence or failure of schemes, the initiative to return is taken by people themselves. This return takes place in the form of what may be called a *countertrack*. The return may be called a *track* because it lacks the general organization and coordination that characterizes a scheme and evolves as processes of movement of people from cities to previously inhabited areas in the countryside. It may be called *counter* because it (a) does not result in a restoration of the old settlement structure and (b) interferes with plans and approaches of the state to construct compact and concentrated settlements.

The concept of »village return« asserts *the right* of displaced villagers to return to their villages, from whence they were evacuated by brutal force and illegal means. However, evidence from the village studies indicates that we have to be careful with the use of the concept of return. Return has the connotation of going back to a prior location (home) or to a previous state (restoration). Yet not all people who establish themselves in the evacuated and destroyed villages are returnees (as the case of Beruk showed). In cases where there is return of former villagers, this does not imply restoration. A return of people from the city to their land does not necessarily imply

a return to the old village, as households with access to sufficient land may and often do prefer to settle on their land, resulting in the establishment of new settlement cores and a new settlement structure, which is less compact and more dispersed than before.

Changes in the control of a household over land affect the way return and *resettlement* takes place. In the case of Mira, *fragmentation* of the village ended in *hamletization*. The disintegration of Mira as a compact settlement and its reconstruction as a dispersed one was caused by the coincidence of various factors, of which the war was only one (others were the disintegration of the household that controlled that land up to the 1970s and the particular division of land among the male members of that household). In the case of Beruk, changes in the control of households over land did not result in fragmentation of the village, but in a low level of »return«, and consequently *hamletization*. After the evacuation of the village, most of the households sold their land, and because residence is based on ownership of land, these villagers will not return. Those who did »return« appeared to be new inhabitants, who had not lived in the village previously, but bought village land. The low level of return to İslamköy was caused by reluctance of the authorities to establish public services, and the persistence of the village-guard system.

Finally, the article indicated that a close look at the way »return« takes place reveals the development of a new settlement pattern. This settlement pattern is best described as »rurban«, an extended settlement pattern in which rural and urban settlement are linked up with each other. In the cases under study this rurban settlement pattern took two different forms. In Mira, the rurban settlement pattern is temporally successive. The returning landowners did not permanently return from the city to the village, but settled in both the city and the village at different times of the year. The landowners stayed part of the year in the village (during sowing and harvesting, on religious holidays) and part of the year in the city (during the cold days in winter and the hot days in summer). In İslamköy the rurban settlement pattern was not temporally successive but spatially segmented. In most families, only the elderly returned to the village, while the younger members of the family stayed in the city. The rurban settlement pattern was developed within a family. Had in the past migrants moved from the village to the city to help to sustain the livelihood of those who remained in the village, now the returnees to the village helped to sustain the livelihood of family members in the city, who are provided with village products (both vegetable and animal products). What is referred to as village return is a multifaceted process of (re)settlement, leading to a new settlement structure and new settlement patterns.

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