

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGE IN TWO TURKISH VILLAGES: SARAY AND GICIK

by

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This is a brief report of research in the villages Saray and Gicik, Ankara, Turkey, during 1984-86. The study, based on participant observation supplemented by questionnaires, discusses the significance of exposure to the facilities of the Ankara-Kastamonu highway and the urban way of life. A comparative analysis is made of the respective changes in the material culture and social structure of the villages with emphasis on the duration of exposure, occupation, residential patterns and kinship relationships. The analysis suggests that, on the rural-urban continuum, Saray is midway, while Gicik is somewhere between midway and the rural end.

With the prospect of the world becoming a »global village«, interest in acculturation has taken a new turn. However, acculturation arising from contact with urban centres is still the main concern in rural studies of developing countries, the U.N.E.S.C.O. resolution of the decade of cultural development being a recent contribution to this issue.

Ever since the 1920s, with the new Turkish Republic, Turkey has been one of these developing nations casting off its former shell partly moulded by traditions influenced by Islam, on the basis of it obstructing the aspired development. From the 1950s efforts to modernize have led to a shift from the railways to highway transportation, the implementation of technical aid programmes in agriculture and an exodus from Eastern hinterland to the more promising Western regions of Turkey, the change being accelerated by development in the mass media.

An interest in the anticipated outcome of all these brought about a limited number of social studies on rural Turkey by native scholars, the common denominator being the impact of the increase in transportation

facilities, as well as the effects of developments in the mass media and agricultural technology (including new cash crops) on the rural way of life. Detailed analyses showed that certain members of Turkish rural communities tended to adopt an attitude of »seeking more than was on hand«, thus stimulating change in their respective communities, leading to a display of rural and urban characteristics side by side (Yasa, 1955 and 1969; N. Erdentuġ and T. Tepiltepe, 1967; Balaman, 1969; Tuġac et. al., 1970:25-31, 94-109, 191-205; G. Ergil, 1971; Ozankaya, 1971; Emiroġlu, 1972; Gucbilmez, 1972; Gencler, 1973; Eserpek, 1979; N. Erdentuġ, 1981:28-35; Aziz, 1982; Saran, 1985).

The findings were, in fact, not a far cry from Foster's attempts at a model of change in traditional societies (Foster, 1962) in which he drew attention to the ripple-like stimulants from urban centres leading to acculturation in rural areas, the degree being dependent upon the closeness to and frequency of contact with the urban centre, and on the extent to which enforced innovations were met with suspicion, if not resistance, by the rural people in the initial stages. He also showed the significance of opportunities for cash crops and wage labour, and the latter's role in promoting individualization in such a medium.

Apart from the achievement motivation, an increase in individualism is considered an important facet of the transition from the traditional to the modern or urban (the LeComtes, 1973:1975-177). In addition, less traditional attitudes are attributed to intercultural contact and education, the resistance to father's authority being highly dependent on education (the LeComtes, 1970:18-19)

Such overtones also exist in previous studies on rural Turkey. However, the concentration on a comparative analysis of the degree of acculturation of the villages exposed to the urban way of life has been limited. This paper attempts to contribute to this focus of study, with respect to the time of entry into the facilities of the transportation system and mechanization in agriculture, analyzing the occupational structure, the material culture, and the social structure at the villages Saray and Gicik.

Saray is a very old village of 250 households. Situated 16 km. from Ankara, it developed contact with the capital as of 1952-53, with the construction of the road to the new Esenboġa airport. This route forked off from the existing one to Kastamonu, that became a dual carriageway after 1978, facilitating commuting to the capital.

Gicik (or Lower Gicik) is about 6 km. further away, near the Airport-Kastamonu junction. It is, in fact, an annex of 87 households to the old settlement Upper Gicik, that is about 8 km. inland, up in

the highlands. Upper Gicik has been isolated for centuries until in 1936, the Old Men's Council bought the new territory beside the Kastamonu road with the intention of curbing migration to the capital due to lack of schooling and employment facilities for the increasing population, for whom agricultural land had ceased to be sufficient. However, migration to the new territory started as of 1957, with the development in transportation facilities that occurred at that time. It gained impetus in the 1970s, leaving behind 23 households in the old place.

The Occupational Structure

Because of the opportunities for wage labour at the enterprises mushrooming in the vicinity, the ready availability of certain material goods, better schooling, medical facilities (Public Health Centre) and good transportation, besides chances for wider social contacts through work. Saray has become a temporary or permanent residence for the influx of outsiders seeking wage labour. Thus, Saray is heterogeneous not only in occupational structure but in ethnicity, dwelling types and life style, to the extent that the indigeneous five lineages resent the presence of the outsiders, while Gicik still preserves its ethnic homogeneity due to its kin groups and the relatively few outsiders being recent arrivals.

Whith respect to the occupational structure, Saray is no longer a typical agricultural society. By virtue of being beside a highway with heavy traffic, expropriation and the introduction of mechanization in agriculture through state-imposed technical aid programmes in the early 1950s, the majority of Saray residents were obliged to change sectors at an earlier date without migrating from the village. Unskilled and semi-skilled blue-colour workers and civil servants account for 76,5% of the population, the attainment of primary schooling, the highest level of education (83,9%) achieved among household heads, having been instrumental in access to such jobs. The rest of the inhabitants are occupied with the cultivation of local cash crops such as wheat and lentils, besides alfalfa for the dairy cattle (100-150 heads per household) introduced by the state.

On the other hand, at Gicik, the villagers themselves adopted mechanized agriculture in the late 1960s, 10-15 years later than Saray, on recognition of the economic advantages of this novelty. However, in spite of the fact that the introduction of dairy cattle had occurred at the same time in both villages, again self-motivated at Gicik, because

of lack of capital it is not yet on as large a scale at Gicik as it is at Saray.

In the agricultural community of Gicik, mechanization has enabled some of the menfolk to support their budgets with off and on seasonal labour at neighbouring dairies and a soft drink plant, a primary schools diploma (65,9%) again becoming an important asset. In fact, 70,5% of the inhabitants of Gicik are now mainly seasonal workers, lower status civil servants being a rarity. Women, regardless of age, carry out their traditional roles, including working together with the menfolk in the fields, 43,2% of them being illiterate and only 36,4%, the younger generation, having had primary schooling.

At Saray, the middle-aged and elderly women, who account for the 25% illiteracy among the female population, carry on with agricultural work, while the young wives do not participate in cultivating. The younger generation of women, constituting the 56,3% having a primary school background, fulfil their roles as housewives and mothers, dependent on the wage or salary income of the husband. The income of the urban-oriented middle-aged household heads is often supplemented by grain etc. given in return for labour at plots owned by relatives. Feminization of agriculture or substitution does occur in some cases where the husband is in wage labour and there are no sons to work on the plot.

Material Culture

Saray is well ahead of Gicik in possession of urban goods and commodities and in adjusting itself to a transitional period. Gicik has not yet been able to attain the economic power for this. Saray males have been in the secondary and tertiary sectors for a longer period, some have been even retired, receiving premiums. In addition, some of the households at Saray have extra income, receiving their share of the expropriation activities on their land. At Gicik, however, aside from the pioneers, former migrants to the capital who returned to the village on retirement to build a house on the new territory with their savings and premiums, the majority are new to additional income outside the meagre agricultural existence.

At Saray, constant exposure to the urban way of life has resulted in an amalgam of urban and rural traits. Varieties of shops have come into existence to cater for the needs of the urban-oriented villagers, whereas, at Gicik, apart from the motorized vendors replacing the

traditional peddler, the consumption of home-made products is still the predominant mode.

There have been radical changes in dwelling types. At Saray, the village has developed in all directions around the old core »Koyortasi«, while Gicik has been inhabited according to a certain settlement plan. The type of houses seen in the old core of Saray are two-storeyed mud-brick constructions, the ground floor consisting of the stable and a granary around an enclosed courtyard, while the second storey consists of 2 to 4 rooms opening onto a central one. In spite of the similar houses in Upper Gicik, those migrating to the new settlement did not carry over this pattern. The majority of the houses in Gicik are also two-storeyed mud-brick dwellings, but both storeys are inhabited; the stable, if any, is annexed to the house.

In both villages there have been certain modification to the old type of mud-brick houses, such as red-tiled roofs, the installation of electricity, sinks and even water taps, the latter usually in the courtyard as an alternative to the village fountain. However, a bath is still taken on a small squarish platform raised at the sides, in the corner of a room, with water heated elsewhere; or in a larger tin or plastic basin anywhere in the house. The outdoor privy is a very common sight, annexes for this purpose being at awkward places, especially in Gicik, like one end of an external balustrated platform with access from the platform.

The new urban-type houses have been built somewhat arbitrarily around the core in Saray, whereas in Gicik they are mostly seen on the recently inhabited right hand side of the road passing through the village. They range from red or perforated brick modifications of the old types, to the urban bungalow, and to two/three storeyed constructions. Nevertheless, even in the new types of dwellings the kitchen, bathroom and WC in the house are not functional in the urban sense. Bathrooms used as lofts have been observed. This is partly due to the lack of a sewage system preventing full usage of the indoor plumbing, as well as to villagers' insistence on the old ways.

The old houses at Saray still utilize a multi-purpose room (»ashane«) with an earthen stove at one side. At Gicik, though, there is a novelty in the form of a small (2*2, 5*2,5 m³) annex or separate construction (»tandır evi«) for cooking purposes, non-existent in Upper Gicik culture. The tiled, urban type of kitchen, with sink and water taps, fridge, and stove attached to a portable propane tube, is as yet a novelty in both villages. A transitional type of kitchen is more common, in which a corner of a multi-purpose room is used for cooking, on portable gas

cookers. A new type of stove («kuzine«), specific to »rurban« settlements in Turkey, is another novelty, placed usually in front of the old earthen stove.

The situation with electrical appliances is more of a case of imitation of urban ways. In spite of cheap electricity rates for rural areas, expenditure on electricity is considered costly. The fridge, T.V., radio and cassette-player and, in some households breeding dairy cattle, the buttermilk («ayran«) machine, are functional, but most of the others, including washing machines (with rollers), are status symbols. The women still prefer to use the village fountains for washing. A community laundry with washtubs was rejected on the grounds of there being no elbow room for beating the laundry. Observations showed that the village women, in fact, cherished the socialization at the fountain.

In addition, the furnishing and usage of rooms in the dwellings are also a mixture of the old and new. The urban type of furniture, except for beds, is more of a status symbol, to be used occasionally. The villagers eat out of a large round tray put on the floor and prefer the »kilim« or rug-covered floor, if not the divan, when sitting down; they also use the divan or mattresses rolled out at night for sleeping. In some households, there is a room referred to as »the bride's room«, full of urban household goods demanded by the girl's family when arranging the terms of marriage. It is used occasionally, as a »guest room« for important visitors, until the anticipated departure of the young couple from the paternal household.

Another noticeable change has been in dress, the young and old Saray males being more urbanized in this matter. Principles of avoidance and head-covering for womanfolk from the age of 11-12 yrs. persists, being a subject of concern in both villages. Girls shed their scarves only during classes at school, due to regulations. Otherwise, in contrast to menfolk, the women continue with the traditional loose oriental type of trousers («salvar«), apart from a modified version in the form of a long-sleeved dress worn over »pyjama« pants, only donning a scarf, dress, stockings, shoes and a jacket or overcoat, regardless of temperature, when going downtown.

Social Structure

Being a culture where, traditionally, the patrilocal extended or joint family and patrilineal coparcenary inheritance are the case, the respect shown to agnatic kin maintains its importance in Saray and Gicik.

Avoidance of agnatic and foreign males continues in both, together with the custom of refraining from cuddling a child in front of elder agnatic kin.

Family-oriented extended corporate kin group relations, on the basis of reciprocity, prevail in both villages. However, at Saray, there is increasingly more contact with friends found among workmates, illustrated by the fact that the percentage of relatives acting as best man («saḡdic») at weddings is on the decline. At Gicik, however, relatives are still the most popular choice on all occasion.

Most of the rituals concerning mate selection, engagement and marriage maintain their traditional characteristics at Gicik while some have either lost their former importance and have been discarded or have undergone modification at Saray. For example, the practice of the married, elderly female («yenge») initiating the girl to the nuptial night has not been observed in marriages of the past decade at Saray, through rejection by the young on the grounds of impracticality. The duration of marriage ceremonies has been cut down to three days instead of a week, the ceremonies starting on Friday and ending on Sunday night, enabling relatives working at full-time jobs to attend. Again at Saray, high costs have affected wedding banquets; even fast food in the form of »stuffed pides« can be brought in to save time and expenses. However, the exhibition of the girl's trousseau and the blood-stained nuptial sheet retain their importance. The »bride price« has never been a custom at either village, negotiation over golden ornaments and household goods for the girl being more the norm within the indigenous population.

Formerly, in both villages, the civil marriage demanded by law was irrelevant compared with the religious one, which was of utmost importance. Today, fathers at Saray insist on a civil marriage immediately prior to or after the religious one, having fully realized its social and economic benefits, with those in Gicik following in their footsteps. Since there is an increasing willingness to accept hospitalization along with a desire for maternal and child health (birth control being introduced at an earlier date at Saray and accounting for the high rate of those using IUD), civil marriage to a suitor with a full-time job is considered the best means of access to such services. Likewise, the age of marriage for both sexes in both villages has risen, becoming 17-21 yrs. for females and 20-24 yrs. for males, as a result of the prerequisite for the groom to have completed his military service and found a job, apart from the reluctance of parents to impose on their daughter the responsibility of a premature marriage.

Endogamy is the rule among the ethnic groups in the villages. Nevertheless, families do not prevent alliances with urban suitors, regardless of their ethnic groups, since it is a prestige factor for the girl's family. On the other hand, there is an increasing trend to refrain from cross - and parallel cousin marriages, especially at Saray, due to its medical disadvantages being publicized in the mass media, and unfortunate familial experiences.

Though only a couple of cases of levirate existed in the villages, sororate and levirate are still considered the best solution for the care of orphaned children. Uxorilocality («ic güveyi»), along with polygyny, was most common during the War of Liberation, due to a reduced male population. Today the former is non-existent while polygyny, though not socially acceptable any more, still continues; there are a few cases at Saray only, the reasons for it being »lustful«, coupled with occasional contempt for the first wife, considered to be »dull« compared to urban women met in later life. Again at Saray, the couple of cases of adultery committed by both sexes that ended in divorce have been attributed to contact with the urban way of life.

There is a trend towards nuclear and stem families, the latter being in the form of the older generation residing with the married youngest son. Disintegration of the paternal household is mainly due to demographic factors, apart from the tendency among fathers at Saray to open separate quarters for the married son, in order to give him responsibility at an earlier age. Even in such cases, these nuclear families are of the dependent type, independent nuclear families being seen only among migrant ethnic groups. Also, in the case of generational mobility, where the son surpasses the income and sometimes the level of education of the father, he will seek a separate household after urging by his wife. Even if the married son has moved out due to a dispute, the utmost care is taken to preserve family ties.

The new cultural pattern of »quasi-neolocality« is observed only after the newly-wed couple live for some time in the husband's parental household. The young couple move out to live in the storey below or above the parental household. They may also move to a semi-detached or separate dwelling near by. This quasi-neolocality is more the case at Saray, the indigeneous population having higher incomes than that of Gicik; thus, the age of 51.6% of household heads is *under* the age of 40 at Saray, while, at Gicik, 61.8% of them are *over* the age of 40.

Authority patterns have undergone some change at Saray, with the

young women participating in decisions concerning the household budget, durable goods to be purchased, and whom to visit, besides being able to go downtown with other women. At Gicik, however, the men take decisions in all matters, thus maintaining their rural roles.

There has also been a change in terms of address. In both villages, young couples address and refer to each other by name, something very resented by the older generation, especially those women used to addressing their husbands by calling out the name of one of the children or exclamation, since it was considered disrespectful to call a husband by his name. When addressing wives, men used to call out as if to their daughters, or by an epithet used for womenfolk in the village. Terms of reference among the old and middle-aged continue to be descriptive, denotative or teknonymous terms.

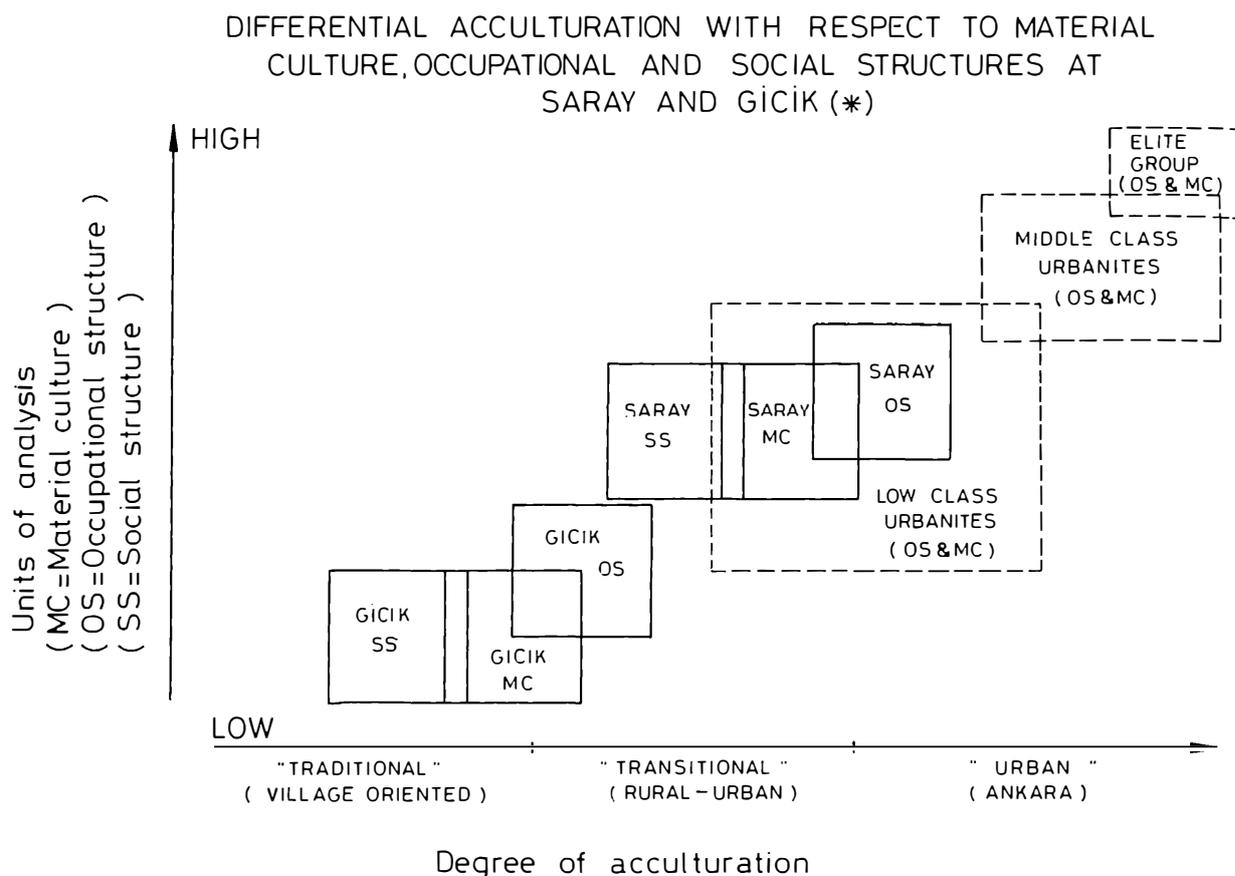
Accordingly, the cultural pattern of avoidance of conversation between daughter-in-law and father and mother-in-law («Gelinlik etme») has also undergone a modification at Saray, in contrast to Gicik. The new bride is no longer expected to avoid such conversation for long periods, the time being cut down to a couple of days with the mother-in-law and a week or two with the father-in-law. She is still expected to speak in a whisper, and to raise her voice only after giving birth to a son, she has access to authority in the household when a mother-in-law.

Inheritance patterns retain their agnatic emphasis at both villages in spite of the Civil Law adopted in 1926 giving equal shares to all children. In practice, girls are obliged, out of fear of being shamed, to leave parental household possessions and land to their brothers. At Saray, some do receive their share of the land in payment but the amount paid is usually nominal. There are still fathers who, in order to prevent the girls from having their share, distribute their land among their sons while still in good health.

Conclusion

The degree of acculturation at Saray and Gicik, with reference to G.D. Spindler's study of differential acculturation (Hoebel and Weaver, (1979:322-323), can be crudely illustrated as follows:

At both villages, the means of livelihood and material culture have been the first to undergo change, with the social structure lagging behind, justifying Ogburn's theory. The increasing opportunities for schooling and wage labour, freeing the male from parental dependence, has contributed to the trend toward »individualization« at Saray, whereas,



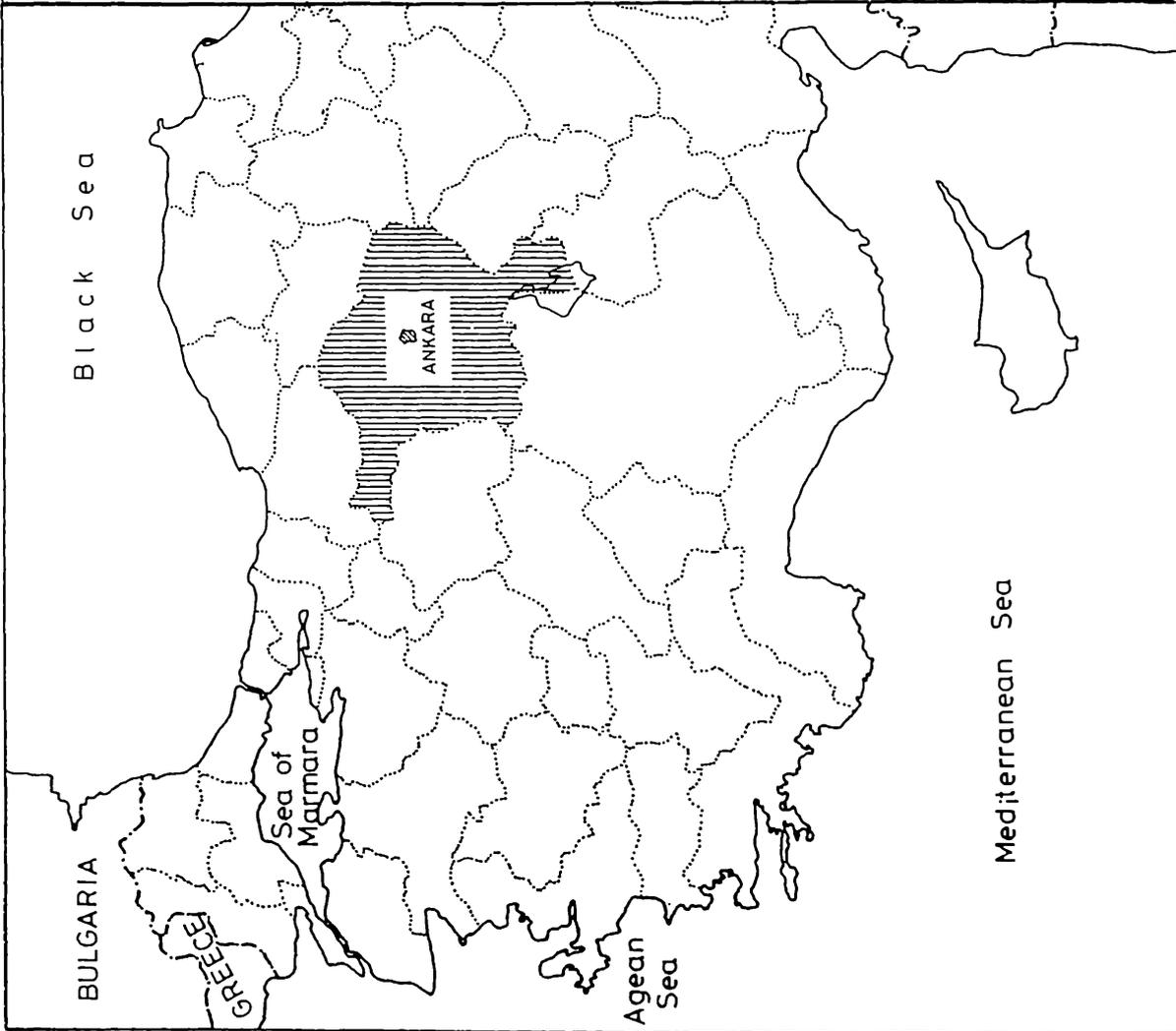
(*) Adapted from G.D. Spindler in E.A. Hoebel and T. Weaver, Anthropology and the Human Experience, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979, p. 323

at Gicik, the old structure continues. At Saray, the significant changes in the social structure can be attributed to the younger generation acquiring aspects of urban culture, a challenge to traditional norms, through constant contact with the capital, the mass media and the rise in the level of schooling of both sexes. The drive to possess urban goods at both villages, if not the adoption of the behavioural patterns that go with them, has been strong, the prestige accounted to them being far more important than their function. All the commercial and urban development have greatly disturbed the homogenous and rural style of Saray, turning it into a semi-village. It is bound to become a suburb of Ankara in the near future, the present situation being suggestive of the occupational structure and material culture of low class urbanites of the city. Analysis of low class social structure has not been included in this assessment, in spite of its influence on the social structure of Saray, owing to the »islands« of sub-cultures on the outskirts of Ankara, where these people live.

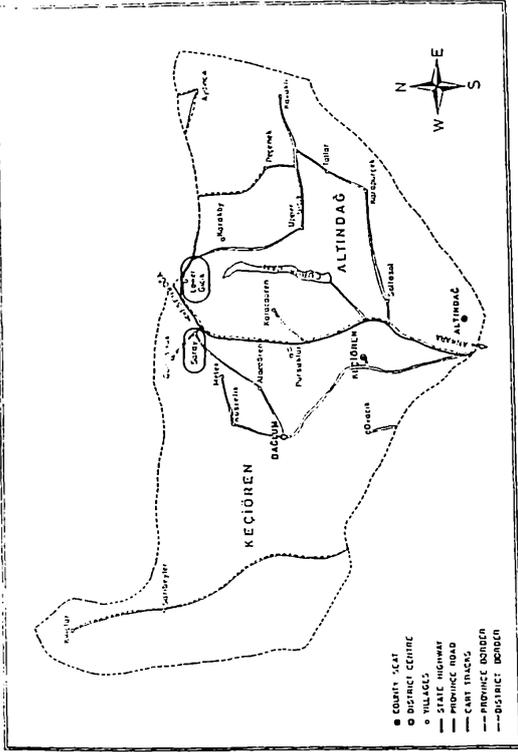
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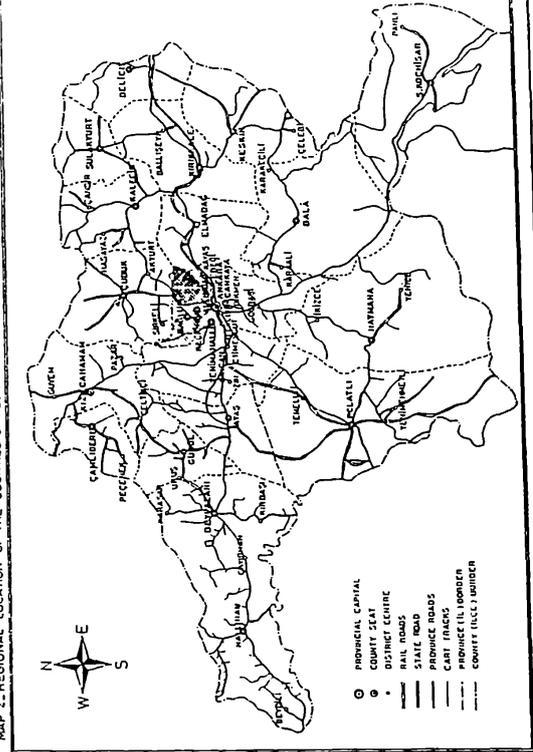
MAP 1- LOCATION OF THE PROVINCE OF ANKARA IN TURKEY



MAP 3 LOCATION OF SARAY & GICIK IN THE COUNTIES OF KECIOREN & ALTINDAĞ (1984)



MAP 2- REGIONAL LOCATION OF THE COUNTIES OF KECIOREN AND ALTINDAĞ IN THE PROVINCE OF ANKARA (1984)



MAP 4_ ENVIRONS OF SARAY & GİCİK (1984)

