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1960S TURKEY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS

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1960S TURKEY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS

A Master's Thesis

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1960S TURKEY FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF
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ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims to examine the memoirs and interviews of the Peace Corps volunteers who served in Turkey to display their image of Turkey in the 1960s. Peace Corps was active in Turkey from 1962 to 1971. Peace Corps Turkey volunteers served in every region of the country in villages, towns, and cities. They lived and worked with Turkish people for two years. Thus, they had an intimate first-hand experience and interesting observations about various topics. This thesis will argue that the volunteers viewed Turkey with the outlook of modernization theory. They observed a country that needed development and modernization. They noticed the traditional gender roles and gender separation in Turkish society. Turkish women needed to overcome these difficulties to modernize. They also noted the underdevelopment of infrastructure and healthcare system as major hindrances. They commented that the Turkish government worked hard to modernize the country, but there was some resistance to its efforts by the Turkish people.

Keywords: Peace Corps, Modernization, Peace Corps Turkey volunteers, 1960s Turkey

ÖZET

BARIŞ GÖNÜLLÜLERİ’NİN GÖZÜNDEN

1960LARIN TÜRKİYE’Sİ

Ünal, Muhammed

Yüksek Lisans, Tarih Bölümü

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Bu tezin yazılış amacı, Türkiye’de görev yapmış Barış Gönüllüleri’nin gözünden 1960ların Türkiye’sini incelemektir. Barış Gönüllüleri 1962-1971 yıllarında Türkiye’de bulunmuştu. Gönüllüler ülkenin her bölgesinde, köylerde ve şehirlerde iki yıl boyunca görev aldılar. Halkla iç içe çalışıp yaşadılar. Bu sayede hatıratlarında ve röportajlarda ülke hakkında detaylı ve ilgi çekici yorumlarda bulundular. Bu tez gönüllülerin Türkiye’yi modernleşme teorisinin bakış açısıyla yorumladıklarını savunuyor. Gönüllüler ülkedeki cinsiyete dayalı görev dağılımı ve sosyal hayattaki cinsiyet ayrımını modernleşme perspektifiyle açıkladılar. Ayrıca, Türkiye’nin altyapı eksikliğini ve sağlık sistemindeki sorunlarını da modernleşmek için gelişmesi gereken alanlar olarak gördüler. Türk hükümeti ise ülkede modernleşmeyi gerçekleştiren ve yöneten güçtü. Fakat, gönüllüler halkta hükümetin bu yöndeki çalışmalarına karşı çıkan grupları da gözlemlediler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Barış Gönüllüleri, Modernleşme, Barış Gönüllüleri Türkiye Programı, 1960lar Türkiye’si

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1961, the United States international development assistance program Peace Corps served in Turkey between 1962 and 1970. During the mid-1960s, the Turkey program was one of the largest programs of the Peace Corps. Peace Corps Turkey was terminated by a mutual agreement between the Turkish government and Washington due to high-level anti-American sentiment in Turkey, creating a heated opposition to the Peace Corps. Peace Corps volunteers who served in Turkey had life-changing experiences. They served in every region of the country, living with the local people in large cities, small towns, and distant villages. They worked in schools, universities, orphanages, hospitals, and various government projects. In short, they observed and experienced the 1960s Turkey intimately.

Dozens of volunteers shared their experiences in Turkey with interviews and memoirs. While serving as Peace Corps volunteers, they viewed Turkey as an underdeveloped or developing country. According to them, Turkey was technologically backward. Its infrastructure was underdeveloped. Its society was traditional. However, there was also a strong desire to develop and modernize. The Turkish government was the main force behind the modernization in Turkey. The government wanted to develop the Turkish economy and society in both urban and rural areas to reach the level of modernization in Western countries. Turkey also had

a Westernized "modern" class of people, mostly in large and developed cities such as Ankara and Istanbul.

This thesis aims to analyze Peace Corps Turkey volunteers' memoirs and interviews and examine 1960s Turkey. The studies on Peace Corps Turkey mainly focused on whether the program served American interests rather than Turkey's and whether the volunteers were CIA agents infiltrating Turkish society. This thesis will examine a new aspect of the Peace Corps Turkey, focusing on volunteers' experience in Turkey and the image of 1960s Turkey as a pre-modern country.

After this introduction, the first chapter will explain the basic information necessary to understand the topic and the discussions around it in the thesis. The first subchapter will be a brief history of the Peace Corps, explaining the program's establishment and purposes. The second subchapter will briefly discuss the Peace Corps Turkey program. The program's history in Turkey and its accomplishments and failures will be examined. The third subchapter will contextualize the thesis. The thesis will argue that during their assignments, the volunteers viewed Turkey with the outlook of modernization theory. The fourth subchapter will be a literature review.

The second chapter will examine gender separation and gender roles in 1960s Turkey. The volunteers focused more on Turkish women and their conditions than on Turkish men. So, this chapter will also discuss Turkish women more than Turkish men. The first subchapter will analyze the gender separation in Turkey from the volunteers' point of view. Gender separation was one of the most challenging aspects of Turkish society for the volunteers. The subchapter will focus on its effects and results on Turkish society and the volunteers. The second subchapter will examine the gender roles in Turkish society, which they viewed as very traditional. In

addition, the volunteers recognized a class of Turkish women who were modern and different from traditional Turkish women.

The third chapter will display the living conditions in 1960s Turkey from the volunteers' experiences. The first subchapter will show the underdevelopment of Turkey's infrastructure. Nearly seventy percent of Turkey's population lived in villages in the 1960s. However, most villages did not have access to electricity, running water, or proper roads. In addition to villages, the volunteers did not describe most cities and towns as modern either. The second subchapter will examine how the volunteers and the Peace Corps viewed Turkey's hygiene and healthcare conditions. In their view, Turkey needed to develop its hospitals and healthcare, and food safety was another major concern.

The fourth chapter will examine the relationship between the Turkish people and the government. The first subchapter will show that the volunteers viewed the Turkish government as the modernizing force in Turkey. The government created various urban and rural development projects to modernize the country. Also, the Peace Corps was a partner of the government in many development projects. The second subchapter will analyze the resistance to the Turkish government's modernization efforts. According to the volunteers, two groups who resisted the government's projects were unconvinced villagers and Turkish leftists.

1.1 A Brief Overview of the Peace Corps and Its History

Gerard T. Rice, in his book *The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps*, states that President John F. Kennedy made two critical and conflicting decisions in the early months of his presidency. The first was to send five hundred young Americans to

underdeveloped countries where they would ideally help their development process, teach practical skills in several fields, and learn from the locals. These young Americans were the first Peace Corps Volunteers. By 1963 there would be seven thousand of them in forty-four countries. His second decision was to send five hundred additional military advisers into South Vietnam to help in the war against the north; by 1963, the number of American advisers would increase to seventeen thousand.¹

Vietnam left scars on the American people. They experienced pain, shame, and defeat. However, in many ways, Kennedy's other initiative was the opposite. For more than half a century later, it still continues to inspire Americans and the rest of the world to help those in need, create better understanding between different peoples and nations, and works for a better future.² Harris Wofford, one of the two people Kennedy appointed to create the Peace Corps, argues that the Peace Corps is the most successful social invention of the sixties and Kennedy's most affirmative legacy.³ Wofford also states that the Peace Corps revived the idea of volunteer service in American life and applied it as a new form of foreign politics on a global stage. Having both global and domestic effects is one of the main reasons why the Peace Corps have benefits for both the United States and the receiving countries.

There are several ways to look into establishing the Peace Corps and several places to start its foundation. As a nation, the history of the United States can be traced back to missionaries and religious groups, such as the Puritans and Quakers. By the

¹ Gerard T. Rice, *The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps*, First Edition (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 14–17.

² John Coyne, "To Preserve and to Learn - Establishing the Peace Corps," 1999, <https://www.peacecorpswriters.org/pages/1999/9911/911pchist.html>.

³ Harris Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings: Making Sense of the Sixties* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992), 243.

nineteenth century, Christian evangelists from the United States traveled overseas not only to convert people to their sects but also to build schools, teach skills, and educate. One of the Peace Corps' first overseas directors claimed that the Peace Corps Volunteers only carried out "in greater numbers and without religious connotations much of the same work which church and church-inspired groups have done for many years."⁴ Moreover, one of Kennedy's inspirations for the Peace Corps was the Mormon Church's requirement of full-time voluntary service in overseas countries by its young members.⁵ There were also church administrated volunteer programs which directly influenced Peace Corps in its establishment. Volunteer programs such as Brethren Volunteer Service and International Volunteer Service inspired the government officials who supported the Peace Corps with their organization and involvement of young Americans for foreign assistance. They also submitted suggestions and acted as consultants during the creation of the Peace Corps.⁶ So, it is not out of place to make connections between the United States' missionary legacy and the Peace Corps. However, Harris Wofford explains that the goal of the Peace Corps was to be a new form of overseas work. The volunteers would not be the same as missionaries, business people, government workers, researchers, or intelligence agents who worked in foreign countries.⁷

They would go in a new capacity – to teach or build or work in the communities to which they were sent, serving local institutions and living with the people they were helping. Without any aspersions on the 33,000 Catholic and Protestant missionaries then said to be overseas or the businessman, government officers, and scholars working abroad, Peace Corps volunteers would be different: they would go with a different purpose, operate in a different relationship to their host country colleagues, and presumably return with different results.

⁴ Coyne, "To Preserve and to Learn - Establishing the Peace Corps."

⁵ Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 245.

⁶ E. Timothy Smith, "Roots of the Peace Corps: Youth Volunteer Service in the 1950s," *Peace & Change* 41, no. 2 (2016): 246–47, <https://doi.org/10.1111/pech.12187>.

⁷ Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 259.

Thus, although there are similarities and connections between the Peace Corps and American missionaries, the Peace Corps differs in its goals, human resource, and political context. In all the readings of the Peace Corps volunteers in Turkey, there was a noticeable lack of interest in religion compared to the country's other cultural and political aspects. The only religious connections present in this context were the Turkish right-wing conservatives' criticisms of the Peace Corps volunteers. They claimed that the volunteers were here to convert Turkish people to Christianity, but this was never an intention or interest of the volunteers, and many of them left Turkey with a new or better understanding and respect for Islam.

There were several government-funded volunteer groups in the United States before the Peace Corps. The first was President William McKinley's program for the newly conquered Philippines. Several hundred volunteers called "Thomasites" after the ship in which they sailed to their post, the U.S.S. Thomas, went to live and work in the barrios of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War of 1898 to ease the American presence and rule there and help build a connection with the locals through aid projects.⁸ President Franklin D. Roosevelt started another vital volunteer program. During the Great Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) emerged as a high-profile domestic youth volunteer program. Over two million students and three million unemployed young people joined this program, making it the most popular New Deal program.⁹

The actual genesis of the Peace Corps started in the 1950s. Two key people in Congress, Henry Reuss (Democrat-Wisconsin) and Hubert Humphrey (Democrat-Minnesota) proposed the idea of the Peace Corps before Kennedy. In 1957 Henry

⁸ Coyne, "To Preserve and to Learn - Establishing the Peace Corps"; Müslim Özbalkan, *Gizli Belgelerle Barış Gönüllüleri*, 1st ed. (İstanbul: Ant, 1970), 13–14.

⁹ Coyne, "To Preserve and to Learn - Establishing the Peace Corps."

Reuss visited Cambodia to inspect American foreign aid projects. The most important project of the assistance program was a state-of-the-art highway built by the United States between the nation's capital to the coast. In his visit, Reuss observed that although this project made the Cambodian government very happy, it had little to no effect on the ordinary Cambodian. However, when he met with a group of United Nations workers helping local villagers build an elementary school, he witnessed the love and respect the locals showed to the UN group. Inspired by his trip, Reuss proposed changing the US foreign aid policy. Instead of sending military equipment and building massive engineering projects, the US should incorporate the UN foreign aid policy similar to what he observed in Cambodia and directly connect with the local people. He called this new program "The Point Four Youth Corps," named after the Point Four technical assistance agency founded by President Harry S. Truman. Reuss believed that this way, foreign assistance could be much more effective for the receiving countries and their people, and it would demonstrate "the genuine and generous interest that Americans have in the well-being of developing nations and their people."¹⁰

Senator Hubert Humphrey also advocated for a volunteer foreign assistance program and used it as one of his central programs for his unsuccessful campaign for the 1960 Democratic nomination for President.¹¹ In June 1960, Humphrey introduced a bill in the Senate to send "young men to assist the peoples of the underdeveloped areas of the world to combat poverty, disease, illiteracy, and hunger." The significance of this

¹⁰ Karen Schwarz, *What You Can Do for Your Country: An Oral History of the Peace Corps*, 1st ed (New York: W. Morrow, 1991), 16–17.

¹¹ Schwarz, 17.

bill is that this was the first time the specific name "Peace Corps" was used for the program.¹²

According to John Coyne, a writer and a Peace Corps volunteer who served in Ethiopia from 1962-1964, many other influential people were supporting the idea of the Peace Corps program at the time: General James Gavin; Chester Bowles, former governor of Connecticut and ambassador to India; William Douglas, associate justice of the Supreme Court; James Reston of the New York Times; Milton Shapp, from Philadelphia; Walt Rostow of MIT; and Senator Jacob Javits of New York, who tried to convince Republican presidential candidate Richard Nixon to adopt the idea. However, Nixon did not accept it.¹³ Curiously, Wofford reveals that Kennedy rushed to adopt the Peace Corps program for his campaign just before the election because he falsely believed Nixon was about to adopt it very soon. Wofford, who was actively working for Kennedy's campaign at the time, also states that although the Peace Corps was a big win for the campaign and a contributor to Kennedy's victory, it was not a calculated thing or a cunning political play. It was the circumstances of the time which made Kennedy support the program.¹⁴ Kennedy supported an idea similar to the Peace Corps even back when he was a Representative of Massachusetts. In 1951, he gave a speech in Massachusetts, calling for a government program where young college graduates would go to the Middle East and bring technical advice and assistance to the "underprivileged and backward."¹⁵ However, he waited until his presidential campaign to back up this idea with the Peace Corps.

¹² Coyne, "To Preserve and to Learn - Establishing the Peace Corps."

¹³ Coyne.

¹⁴ Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 250.

¹⁵ Laurence Leamer, *The Kennedy Men: 1901-1963*, Perennial edition (William Morrow Paperbacks, 2002), 535-36.

According to its founding documents, the Peace Corps had three purposes: first, to help the peoples of interested countries meet their needs for a trained workforce; second, to help promote a better understanding of the American people on the part of the people served, and third, to have a better understanding of other peoples on the part of the American people.¹⁶ In addition to these goals, it is imperative to consider the context of the cold war and domestic, political and social developments during the program's foundation.

There were several reasons for the US government to establish the Peace Corps. For instance, one of the less overt purposes of the program was caused by a dramatic development in demographics in the United States. After the Second World War, millions of American soldiers returned home, married, and started the Baby Boom, significantly increasing birth rates. By the time Kennedy was the President, the Boomers were becoming teenagers, and many would start attending colleges. This new generation was very energetic. Also, they were very interested in politics. It would have been a great challenge to handle all these idealistic youth, let alone find jobs for all of them. So, the Peace Corps was a great way to channel their idealism to foreign assistance, teach them technical and social skills, and hopefully keep them away from domestic politics.¹⁷ Although the Peace Corps was successful for the first two, the American government could not prevent a tumultuous and politically rich decade spearheaded by young Americans.

Another important reason for the Peace Corps' existence was the image of incompetent American diplomats and other foreign officers, exacerbated by one of

¹⁶ Schwarz, *What You Can Do for Your Country*, 19.

¹⁷ Tom Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea: On the Road with a Travel Writer* (Concord, MA: Travel Info Exchange, 2005), 55.

the most popular novels in the US at the time. *The Ugly American*¹⁸ by William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick was published in July 1958. In just four months, it had gone through twenty printings. It was so influential that in later paperback editions, its cover proclaimed that "President Kennedy's Peace Corps is the answer to the problem raised in this book."¹⁹

The book's main character was Homer Atkins, a skilled technician, and volunteer committed to helping the locals in a fictional foreign country at a grassroots level by building water pumps, and bridges, digging roads, and being genuinely helpful. He was only called the "ugly American" because of his grotesque appearance. As a volunteer, he lived and worked with the local people. By the end of the novel, they loved and admired him. At the same time, the American diplomats in the country were condescending, uninterested, and ignorant about the country they worked. In contrast, the Soviet diplomats spoke the local language and directly connected to the local people. In the novel's epilogue, the authors warned that if the incompetent and ineffective American diplomats continued to serve, the United States would inevitably lose its power and influence in foreign politics. They advised that a new cadre of well-trained foreign officers who could speak the local language, leave their comfort zones in the embassy and understand local culture and history should replace the current "handsome" American diplomats.²⁰ In a survey done with Peace Corps Turkey volunteers by Zafer Parlak, most of the volunteers admit that they were affected by the book and its representation of humble, hardworking, and helpful Homer Atkins.²¹ Many of the Peace Corps volunteers would later work in American

¹⁸ Eugene Burdick and William J. Lederer, *The Ugly American* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999).

¹⁹ Coyne, "To Preserve and to Learn - Establishing the Peace Corps."

²⁰ Burdick and Lederer, *The Ugly American*.

²¹ Zafer Parlak, "Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Talat Sait Halman," in *1. Dil, Kültür ve Edebiyat Çalıştayı - Talat Sait Halman'a Armağan Kitabı* (Antalya: Akdeniz Üniversitesi, 2015), 50–51,

foreign affairs offices and study and teach sociology, history, and literature of the countries they served and help create a better understanding of these countries in the US. In this regard, the Peace Corps is a great success for America.

Less than a week before the 1960 presidential election, Kennedy gave a speech at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. Directly referring to the criticisms in *The Ugly American* for the state of the American foreign officers, Kennedy pointed out that seventy percent of all new Foreign Service officers had no foreign language skills whatsoever; only three of the forty-four Americans in the embassy in Belgrade spoke Yugoslavian; not a single American in New Delhi could speak Indian dialects, and only two of the nine ambassadors in the Middle East spoke Arabic. He also explained that the US foreign officer lacked compassion and interest for the countries they were assigned to and their problems. Moreover, Kennedy called attention to the Soviet foreign policy, which was the opposite of the American one. He stated that “out of Moscow and Peiping and Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany are hundreds of men and women, scientists, physicists, teachers, engineers, doctors, nurses, studying in those institutes, prepared to spend their lives abroad in the service of world Communism” and these people would spend years of their lives in underdeveloped countries as volunteers to aid them. However, Kennedy had a proposal to deal with these problems and challenges.²²

I, therefore, propose that our inadequate efforts in this area be supplemented by a **peace corps** of talented young men and women, willing and able to serve their country in this fashion for three years, as an alternative or as a supplement to peacetime selective service, well qualified through rigorous

https://www.academia.edu/19705455/Amerikan_Bar%C4%B1%C5%9F_G%C3%B6n%C3%BCll%C3%BCler_i_ve_Talat_Sait_Halman.

²² “Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy at the Cow Palace, San Francisco, California, November 2, 1960 | JFK Library,” accessed March 14, 2023, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/san-francisco-19601102>.

standards, well trained in the languages, skills, and customs they will need to know.

Kennedy had already adopted the Peace Corps program to his campaign prior to the Cow Palace Speech. He had met with Senator Humphrey, discussed his idea of the Peace Corps, and believed it could be an effective way to gain youth votes for the election. His speech at Michigan State University on October 14 is considered the starting point of Kennedy's Peace Corps. He asked the students there.²³

How many of you who are going to be doctors, are willing to spend your days in Ghana? Technicians or engineers, how many of you are willing to work in the Foreign Service and spend your lives traveling around the world? On your willingness to do that, not merely to serve one year or two years in the service, but on your willingness to contribute part of your life to this country, I think will depend the answer whether a free society can compete. I think it can! And I think Americans are willing to contribute. But the effort must be far greater than we have ever made in the past.

After the explosive response he got there from the students and thousands of people already volunteering before Kennedy was even elected or the program was officially founded, Kennedy made the Peace Corps one of his central policies during his presidency.²⁴ On March 1, 1961, he signed the executive order to establish the Peace Corps "to help foreign countries meet their urgent needs for skilled manpower." He also emphasized that the "Peace Corps is not designed as an instrument of diplomacy or propaganda or ideological conflict." Its purpose was "to exercise more fully their responsibilities in the great common cause of world development."²⁵ Kennedy had appointed his brother-in-law Sargent Shriver to organize and direct the Peace Corps. Shriver had the same attitude toward the Peace Corps. He wanted it to be free of cold war conflicts and political goals despite the constant pressure from Congress to

²³ "The Founding Moment," accessed May 21, 2023, <https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/history/founding-moment/>.

²⁴ Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 248.

²⁵ "Statement Upon Signing Order Establishing the Peace Corps, March 1, 1961, JFK Library," accessed March 14, 2023, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/peace-corps-establishment-19610301>.

control and use the program as an instrument of foreign policy against communism.²⁶

In a phone call with President Kennedy, Shriver reports that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was trying to infiltrate the Peace Corps by sending their people as volunteers into the program despite Kennedy's instructions.²⁷ It is impossible to know if the CIA succeeded in their attempts. However, it would be very optimistic and maybe naïve to think there were no CIA spies among the Peace Corps volunteers who are numbered over 240.000 people up to this day.

It would also be wrong to take the Peace Corps out of the Cold War context and directly believe Kennedy's or Shriver's statements on the subject. Kennedy himself explained the program in a cold war context. He envisioned the Peace Corps Volunteers working against the Soviet volunteers who worked to advance the cause of world communism. He believed the Peace Corps volunteers were going to work to "overcome the efforts of Mr. Khrushchev's missionaries."²⁸ The first director of the Peace Corps, Sargent Shriver, was known for his strict policy to keep the Peace Corps out of the US foreign political agenda. For example, after Algeria gained its independence, the US government wanted to send Peace Corps to the country to woo the head of the Algerian government Ahmed ben Bella to the American side. Ben Bella and Algeria had crucial importance for the US to keep them away from socialist and pro-Soviet policies. Against immense pressure and official complaints from high-ranking government officers, Shriver did not accept to send volunteers to Algeria, refusing his program to be used as an instrument in the US geopolitical cold war strategy.²⁹ (Wofford, 280) However, on some occasions, even Shriver was

²⁶ Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 279–80.

²⁷ Gökhan Eşel, *Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri*, Birinci basım (İstanbul: İleri Yayınları, 2016), 225.

²⁸ Schwarz, *What You Can Do for Your Country*, 17.

²⁹ Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 280.

adamant about using the Peace Corps in the cold war struggle against communism. After a discussion with Guinea's socialist President Ahmed Sékou Touré about sending Peace Corps volunteers to the country, Shriver told Kennedy that with the Peace Corps they could turn Guinea from the communist bloc to neutrality and maybe even to the Western bloc. In another example, he informed Kennedy that “the leading Commie in Colombia” had just returned to Colombia with 280 students he had escorted to Moscow for a study trip and that the Peace Corps should send 500 students to the country to “make a real dent in the Colombian situation.”³⁰

During Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency, Peace Corps was clearly used for his foreign policy considerations. He stopped the Peace Corps volunteers from going to India after the Indian government decided to spend a large amount of its budget on its war against Pakistan, which Johnson did not want them to do. Moreover, he tried to send volunteers to Vietnam to use them to win hearts and minds in the country for the US during the war.³¹ However, we should recognize that although the US government and policymakers had their purposes for the Peace Corps, the volunteers were not a homogenous group who belonged to a single political faction.

The volunteers were not necessarily supportive of American foreign policies and were especially against American involvement in Vietnam. For example, during the Dominican Revolution in 1965, the volunteers refused to leave their posts and sided with the Dominican people while the American Marines were fighting the Dominican rebels. The rebels called the volunteers *hijos de Kennedy* and did everything they could to protect them.³² Thus, even though the American government had plans to use the volunteers as instruments in cold war foreign politics, the volunteers were

³⁰ Schwarz, *What You Can Do for Your Country*, 21.

³¹ Schwarz, 52–53.

³² Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 244–45.

essentially independent of the government's dictation and acted on their own beliefs and ideals. Moreover, limiting the discussions on the Peace Corps just to the cold war context and framing the volunteers as the agents of American imperialism (voluntarily or involuntarily), as many scholars and journalists in Turkey did in the 60s and even today, creates a restricted and inadequate point of view. Although the cold war ended more than three decades ago, and the threat of communism is dead, the Peace Corps continues, as do the links of friendship and understanding the program created between many volunteers and the local people.

1.2 A Brief Overview of the Peace Corps Turkey

Turkish scholars who studied Peace Corps Turkey generally have a negative opinion about the program. They relate the program to many problems in Turkey, from violent Kurdish and Alevi incidents to the 1971 military memorandum. They accuse volunteers as American spies working to infiltrate Turkish society, gather information, and create discord for America's benefit.³³ Most of the Turkish studies about the Peace Corps Turkey focuses on this context. For example, two different articles from Turkey's Presidency of Religious Affairs journal *Diyanet* accused the Peace Corps of being a modern version of the crusades, aimed to convert Muslims to Christianity.³⁴ On the leftist side of the discussion, Müslim Özbalkan, on his authoritative book *Gizli Belgelerle Barış Gönüllüleri*, claimed that Peace Corps volunteers in Turkey taught English to serve cultural and language imperialism of the

³³ Oktay Akbaş, "Amerikan Gönüllü Kuruluşları: Barış Gönüllülerinin Dünyada ve Türkiye'deki Çalışmaları," *Türk Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi* 4, no. 1 (2006): 85–99; Fatih Erboz and Macit Soydan, *Barış Gönüllüleri: 10 Karanlık Yıl*, 1st ed. (Maltepe, Ankara: Empati Basım Yayın Dağıtım, 2005); Ali Erken, "Türkiye'de Barış Gönüllüleri Programına Bir Bakış: 1961-1970," n.d.; Eşel, *Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri*; Özbalkan, *Gizli Belgelerle Barış Gönüllüleri*.

³⁴ Akbaş, "Amerikan Gönüllü Kuruluşları: Barış Gönüllülerinin Dünyada ve Türkiye'deki Çalışmaları," 95.

United States.³⁵ However, this subchapter will not concentrate on these discussions because, they are already thoroughly examined in other studies, and it provides only a limited point of view about the subject. Instead, this subchapter will explain how the program came to Turkey, how it worked, why it left, and its results to understand the program and the volunteers' experience.

After the Second World War, Turkey and the United States built a close and vibrant relationship. Thanks to the Truman and Marshall Plans, and Turkey joining NATO, many US military and foreign aid technicians began going to Turkey. Turkish – American relations were positive until the mid-60s, and the Turkish people loved President John F. Kennedy. So, by September 6, 1962, when Turkey 1 group of Peace Corps Volunteers disembarked at Ankara, the volunteers were coming to a friendly country.³⁶ On paper, the Peace Corps was only supposed to go to the countries which requested the program. However, this was not the case for Turkey. The bilateral talks between the Turkish and American governments from July 1961 to May 1962 to send the Peace Corps to Turkey, reveals that the program came to Turkey on the US insistence.³⁷ Turkey was the only NATO country to receive the Peace Corps, and the Turkey program was one of the largest. The reason for the American insistence on a Turkey program is unclear, but it is most likely related to the Cold War circumstances. Before going to Turkey, the volunteers were educated against attempts to convert to Communism.³⁸ Their training program included "Instruction in the philosophy, strategy, tactics, and menace of communism."³⁹ One of the few

³⁵ Özbalkan, *Gizli Belgelerle Barış Gönüllüleri*, 200–201.

³⁶ Jeff Thompson, ed., *Arkadaşlar Membership Directory 2016*, 2016, 32.

³⁷ Eşel, *Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri*, 75–76.

³⁸ Julie Woods Smith Olson, author, *To Make a Difference: A Peace Corps Memoir : Turkey 1964-66*, First printing, 2015 (Middletown, DE: CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2015), 33.

³⁹ *The Peace Corps Turkey METU-RCD Training Program* (Portland, Oregon: Portland State College, 1965), 8.

things Americans “knew” about Turkey was that the country was in danger of converting to Communism, which was obviously not true.⁴⁰ However, considering the other countries to receive the Peace Corps at the time, such as Ghana, Tanzania, Chile, and the Dominican Republic, and the aforementioned cold war context of the program discussed in the previous subchapter, it is logical to explain that the US wanted to send the Peace Corps to Turkey to battle a perceived threat of Communism.

From 1962 to 1971, 1460 volunteers came to Turkey in seventeen groups. The number of volunteers increased until 1967, after which it dramatically decreased due to political developments in the country and the rise of anti-Americanism in the people of Turkey.⁴¹ Although Turkey was more Western and friendly to the US compared to many other countries on the Peace Corps program (a secular NATO member country and part European), Turkey proved to be one of the most challenging assignments for the volunteers due to political and sociological reasons such as the media’s negative view of the Peace Corps, the rise of anti-American sentiment in the country, and segregation of gender in social life which was especially hard on female volunteers.⁴²

While other Peace Corps programs were struggling to meet massive numbers of requests for volunteers from host countries, Turkey Program was trying to convince the Turkish Government to send additional volunteers for different fields. The Turkish Government had requested mostly TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) teachers as volunteers since Turkey needed more English teachers and

⁴⁰ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 121.

⁴¹ Murat Soysal, “Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye’deki Faaliyetleri,” *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi* 14, no. 56 (2015): 121, https://doi.org/10.1501/Tite_0000000424.

⁴² Thompson, *Arkadaşlar Membership Directory 2016*, 32.

wanted to integrate more into the American-led global capitalist world. The Ankara Office of the Peace Corps, on the other hand, wanted to expand the field of volunteers to Community Development, Agricultural Development, and Rural Development programs which eventually happened. However, TEFL always stayed the majority assignment of the program.⁴³ Turkey was sensitive about opening its villages and regions with a significant minority presence to foreigners. At the beginning of the program, it was forbidden for the Peace Corps to operate in certain rural regions.⁴⁴ So, the Peace Corps had to work hard to penetrate the rural parts of the country where the poorest and most uneducated resided, which was the main group the program wanted to reach due to its founding principles of fighting poverty and ignorance.

There was also a lot of infighting and mismanagement inside the Turkey program, which added to its difficulties during the program's tenure. There was barely any communication and guidance from the Ankara office to the volunteers. So, the volunteers felt alone and without a clear job description and purpose. Moreover, struggles between the volunteers and the Ankara Office and the Washington and Ankara offices created more problems. For example, Heath Lowry, who was volunteering in a mountain village in Balıkesir, was sabotaged by an Ankara office member of the Peace Corps due to personal issues. (Lowry) Ankara office was also turbulent, with frequently changing directors and acting directors.⁴⁵ Thus, Peace Corps Turkey was chaotic and unstable for every party involved.

A particularly curious development during the Peace Corps' Turkey tenure was the "Turkish Peace Corps." Kemal Kurdaş, the founding and the first President of the

⁴³ Thompson, 33–34.

⁴⁴ Özbalkan, *Gizli Belgelerle Barış Gönüllüleri*, 130–34.

⁴⁵ Thompson, *Arkadaşlar Membership Directory 2016*, 33.

Middle East Technical University (METU), invited Ross Pritchard, the first Director of the Peace Corps Turkey, for a speech for the METU students. In that speech, without consulting anyone, they proposed a Turkish Peace Corps program where Turkish university students (from METU and Ankara University) should join the Peace Corps volunteers in the villages and work together in the summer for rural development.⁴⁶ In the summer of 1965, eighty students gathered in abandoned Yalncak village on METU's campus, where American volunteers would also gather for a brief training program before going to their assigned posts. After receiving a similar education to the Americans with emphasis on the threat of Communism, the cold war, and some technical training, Turkish students went to their assigned villages. In two months, only fifteen of them would remain in their posts.⁴⁷ The program was a total disaster.

First, most volunteers had left the villages due to their one-month summer leave. So, most of the Turkish students could not work with American volunteers. Second, in villages, summer was the working season, and most people would spend their days in fields. Thus, the students could not interact with the villagers to come up and work for a development program. Lastly, most students were ill-prepared for living conditions in a village without electricity or running water, bugs, rats, and many other unpleasant life forms.⁴⁸ Two of the volunteer students died in traffic accidents caused by poor road conditions in the countryside, and one student had a psychotic episode, running around the village with a knife and threatening people, and wanting to have sex with the resident American volunteer's wife.⁴⁹ Moreover, after finishing

⁴⁶ Heath W. Lowry, *An Ongoing Affair, Turkey & I. Book I: The Bereketli Years, 1964-1966* (Istanbul, [Turkey] : Eden, S.Dakota: Citlumbik Publications ; Nettleberry Publications, 2008), 129.

⁴⁷ Soysal, "Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri," 124.

⁴⁸ Lowry, *An Ongoing Affair, Turkey & I. Book I*, 133.

⁴⁹ Lowry, 134.

their assignment with an American volunteer couple, two METU students published a newspaper article in *Cumhuriyet*, claiming the Peace Corps volunteers were spies and the program only served American imperialism, which started the anti-Peace Corps campaign in the Turkish mass media.

Peace Corps Turkey was terminated with a mutual agreement by the Turkish Government and the Peace Corps in 1970, and it officially ended when the last volunteer finished his tour in June 1970. The ending of the program was a result of both global and domestic politics. There was an increasing anti-Americanism in the world due to the Vietnam War. Turkey was among other countries such as Tanzania, Somalia, and Bolivia to terminate their Peace Corps programs to appease the growing anti-American sentiment in people.⁵⁰ In addition, after Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency, Turkish-American relations took a dramatically negative turn due to the Cyprus Crisis in 1964 and Johnson's infamous letter to Turkish prime minister İsmet İnönü.⁵¹ Moreover, the Peace Corps itself was harshly criticized by the Turkish media and politicians. Left-wing media accused the volunteers of being spies working for American ambitions, and the conservative media claimed the volunteers were here to convert people to Christianity.⁵² Heated discussions at the Turkish Grand National Assembly about the Peace Corps were commonplace, and some politicians wanted to limit or altogether end the program.⁵³ Many volunteers were directly affected by the rising anti-Americanist sentiment and were subject to harassment and violence. So, the Washington office was also getting anxious about the Turkey program due to safety concerns.⁵⁴ In the end, the program was terminated

⁵⁰ Schwarz, *What You Can Do for Your Country*, 158–59.

⁵¹ Erken, “Türkiye’de Barış Gönüllüleri Programına Bir Bakış: 1961-1970,” 53.

⁵² Akbaş, “Amerikan Gönüllü Kuruluşları: Barış Gönüllülerinin Dünyada ve Türkiye’deki Çalışmaları,” 95.

⁵³ Eşel, *Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye’deki Faaliyetleri*, 79–91.

⁵⁴ Thompson, *Arkadaşlar Membership Directory 2016*, 33.

more due to developments in foreign politics and the deteriorating US-Turkish relations rather than anything to do with the Peace Corps or the volunteers. Peace Corps Turkey was the victim, not the cause.

There were accomplishments and failures during the eight years of Peace Corps Turkey. In terms of helping Turkey's development, it is really difficult to quantify the program's result, but there are some visible gains. David N. Weinman, acting director of the Peace Corps Turkey from July 1962 to October 1963 and January 1966 to October 1967, comments that Turkey was a tough assignment and the volunteers in the later years of the program had to serve when "Turkey was wrestling for its soul," due to rising radical and fanatical political views.⁵⁵ However, even in these circumstances, he maintains that the program helped Turkey's development in small ways.⁵⁶

A good number of children and adults learned English; hospitals glimpsed what upgraded nursing skills could mean; orphanages began to consider that babysitting small children might not be the best alternative, and rural villagers learned new techniques to lessen the poverty surrounding them.

Warren Master, a Peace Corps Volunteer in Turkey and a journalist, assesses the program's success on its three founding purposes discussed before: helping Americans learn more about the host country, helping the host country learn more about Americans, and helping the host country's development. He argues that the program was a moderate success on all three points. He said the volunteers learned much about Turkey: its people and culture. Also, the volunteers created a level of intimacy that allowed them to impart a realistic understanding of Americans to the Turkish people. However, he admits that the volunteers gained much more from this

⁵⁵ Thompson, 34.

⁵⁶ Thompson, 34.

experience than the people of the host country: learning a new language, understanding a new way of life, widening their view of the world, and gaining many technical and life skills in the process.⁵⁷

Master is not alone in stating that the volunteers benefited more from their experience than those they were to help. Almost all volunteers in the written memoirs acknowledge similar things, and this is one of the main criticisms held against the program by Turkish scholars. Müslim Özbalkan states that the volunteers mainly joined the Peace Corps to benefit from this experience for their future job prospects rather than help the Turkish people.⁵⁸ Ali Erken argues that although the volunteers did not achieve considerable success in helping Turkey's development, their experiences and gains helped them succeed in their work life in education, art, literature, and diplomacy.⁵⁹ Oktay Akbaş asserts similar arguments and proposes Turkish Government have its own Peace Corps program to benefit the country and its youth.⁶⁰

These criticisms disregard the long-term positive effects of the program thanks to the volunteers' experience and success. As a result of the Peace Corps Turkey, the study of Turkish history, culture, language, art, and literature increased dramatically in the US.⁶¹ It produced many important scholars and influential works. According to Heath Lowry, at least thirty-five Turkologists in America were Peace Corps volunteers, such as Robert Dankoff, who studies Turkish literature; Michael Gunter, whose

⁵⁷ Warren Master, "Becoming a Citizen of the World: Peace Corps Retrospective," *Public Manager* 40, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 49.

⁵⁸ Özbalkan, *Gizli Belgelerle Barış Gönüllüleri*, 78–84.

⁵⁹ Erken, "Türkiye'de Barış Gönüllüleri Programına Bir Bakış: 1961-1970," 57–58.

⁶⁰ Akbaş, "Amerikan Gönüllü Kuruluşları: Barış Gönüllülerinin Dünyada ve Türkiye'deki Çalışmaları," 98.

⁶¹ Gökhan Eşel and Genç Osman Geçer, "Amerikalılara Amerika'da Türkçe Öğretmek: Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri Örneği," *Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim (TEKE) Dergisi* 6, no. 3 (2017): 1664.

published works in Kurdish history were pioneering in its fields; and Justin McCarthy, who studies Ottoman history.⁶² There are also other examples. Charlotte Jirousek was a Peace Corps volunteer who published influential studies on Ottoman dresses, textiles, and rugs.⁶³ She also found a cooperative to standardize the quality of Turkish handmade rugs and carpets and help its marketing in foreign countries.⁶⁴ Anthropologist Paul J. Magnarella studied Turkish society and culture thanks to his experiences volunteering in the country. Tom Brosnahan, who worked in a tourism project in Turkey as a Peace Corps volunteer, published travel books *Turkey on \$5 a Day* and *Lonely Planet Turkey*, which sold millions and became the most popular books for tourists coming to Turkey.⁶⁵ Heath Lowry himself is a very accomplished and influential Ottoman historian, and he suffered heavy criticism along with Dankoff and Gunter for defending the Turkish case in the Armenian Genocide question.

The Peace Corps Turkey volunteers call themselves “the Turkish lobby in America” and support Turkey in many ways.⁶⁶ They founded an organization called “Arkadaşlar” in the US, gathering and publishing directories and newsletters about their shared experiences in Turkey. They have dinner meetings to celebrate Republic Day (29 Ekim Cumhuriyet Bayramı), showing their love for the country.⁶⁷ They also provide scholarships to Turkish university students⁶⁸ and donate funds to non-governmental organizations, namely Anatolian Artisans, Nature Türkiye, and

⁶² “Heath Lowry ile hayatı ve eserleri üzerine konuştuk,” Dünya Bizim, accessed March 15, 2023, <https://www.dunyabizim.com/soylesi/heath-lowry-ile-hayati-ve-eserleri-uzerine-konustuk-h23367.html>.

⁶³ “About,” *Charlotte Jirousek Estate* (blog), August 21, 2015, <https://charlottejirousek.com/about/>.

⁶⁴ Zafer Parlak, “Kendi Anılarında Türkiye’de Bulunan Amerikan Barış Gönüllülerinin Yaşadıkları Değişim Süreci,” *Kebikeç*, no. 39 (June 1, 2015): 306.

⁶⁵ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*.

⁶⁶ Parlak, “Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Talat Sait Halman,” 57.

⁶⁷ “Cumhuriyet Bayramı Dinners - 2014,” *Buralarda*, 2014.

⁶⁸ Mustafa Soykan, “Arkadaşlar Projects Make a Difference: Üniversite Öğrencilerine Yardım Derneği Scholarship,” *Buralarda*, 2014.

American-Turkish Association and more.⁶⁹ In addition to all these positive outcomes of the Peace Corps Turkey, there are also personal relations, friendships, and experiences that are unquantifiable but still important and treasured in the memoirs of the volunteers.

To conclude, Peace Corps Turkey was a complicated and turbulent program. It did not single-handedly advance Turkey into a “first world” country through its projects, and it had to end abruptly due to global and domestic political developments, which created an anti-American sentiment in Turkey. However, the program had many positive results for Turkey and the volunteers. It produced a cadre of scholars who study Turkey in an international field, organized a lobby of friends of Turkey in America, and created life-long friendships and connections between the people of Turkey and the United States.

1.3 Modernization Theory and the Volunteers’ Views of Turkey

In their memoirs, the Peace Corps Volunteers share observations about Turkey on various topics, from school discipline to village wedding rituals. A common theme of their observations is that, knowingly or unconsciously, the volunteers look at Turkey and Turkish people with the outlook of modernization theory. They saw a country and its people trying to progress to a modern state while struggling with its traditions and backward technology. For most volunteers, the United States was the best example of a modern state, and Turkey was an example of a developing country that they came to help its development. So, they noticed what Turkey lacked or differed from America: lack of advanced technology and facilities, problems of

⁶⁹ “Projects: Arkadaşlar Continues to Land a Hand,” *Buralarda*, 2015.

transportation, archaic methods of education, healthcare, hygiene, gender separation in society, etc. These were the problems Turkey had to face to be modern. However, they also observed the country, especially the government, working on these problems. Thus, this “traditional” country was progressing towards “modernization.”

Although modernization theory is not dominantly in use in academic and sociological discussions of development anymore, policy-making and implementing institutions and organizations still use it prominently.⁷⁰ Countries are labeled as underdeveloped, developing, or developed (modern). These distinctions are made not just for economic development but technological, social, and political criteria based on the Western model of modernization.

Modernization theories were prevalent first in the 1960s in academic circles⁷¹ when the volunteers were getting their university education and participating in political activities. Understandably, they were affected by these theories while observing a country they were sent to help its development. It is necessary to briefly examine the modernization theory and its studies about Turkey to understand the volunteer's remarks properly.

There are several versions of the modernization theory. However, the classical approach emerged in the 1950s and became prominent in the 1960s has four central tenets: (1) societies develop through a series of evolutionary stages from “traditional” towards “modern”; (2) these stages have social political, and economic aspects which are linked and co-dependent; (3) contemporary traditional or underdeveloped

⁷⁰ Zaheer Baber, “Modernization Theory and the Cold War,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 31, no. 1 (January 2001): 72–73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/004723301800000051>.

⁷¹ Giuliano Garavini and Richard R. Nybakken, *After Empires: European Integration, Decolonization, and the Challenge from the Global South 1957-1986*, Oxford Studies in Modern European History (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 24.

societies are at a pre-modern stage of evolution, and they are on a linear path which will result on economic growth, and they will shape their social, political, and economic features on western European and North American societies which represent the highest stage of modernization; (4) the progress of traditional societies can be effectively stimulated with the influence and technology of modern ones and traditional and cultural features which pose difficulties to this modernization process has to be overcome.⁷²

The Anglo-Saxon economists at the time viewed development as a linear and straightforward process, and the modernization theory conformed with this idea. They argued that the only thing the "underdeveloped nations" had to do was imitate the developed countries and reach their level of progress, regardless of geographical, cultural, economic, and demographic differences. Thus, if a country was underdeveloped, this was its own fault.⁷³ However, due to the danger of revolutions in underdeveloped societies which opened the door ajar for communism, the US had to take an active role in the development process of these "pre-modern" nations. The modernization theory provided an answer for this active participation. It is also relevant to observe that the Peace Corps projects in the host countries were very compatible with the foreign assistance methods suggested in modernization theory, emphasizing developing better roads, electrification, modern agricultural techniques, and using education and technical assistance.⁷⁴

⁷² Michael E. Latham, "Ideology, Social Science, and Destiny: Modernization and the Kennedy-Era Alliance for Progress," *Diplomatic History* 22, no. 2 (1998): 200.

⁷³ Garavini and Nybakken, *After Empires*, 20–21.

⁷⁴ Daniel Immerwahr, "Modernization and Development in U.S. Foreign Relations," *Passport: The Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Review*, 2012, 22–25.

In the United States, the modernization theory in the 1950s emerged as a product of a deliberate effort for growing American concerns in the cold war.⁷⁵ A group of economists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), known as the "Charles River group," funded by the CIA, conceived and popularized the theory in academic and political circles.⁷⁶ Max Millikan and Walt Rostow, the group's most influential members, were previously members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), an army intelligence service during the Second World War and the predecessor to the CIA. Millikan also worked as a director for different sections of the CIA. Rostow later became the National Security Advisor for President Johnson, with an unwavering stance for American military operations in Vietnam.⁷⁷ Rostow also produced one of the most influential works on modernization theory. His book *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*⁷⁸ (first published in 1960) established the central tenets of the modernization theory and directly affected American foreign policy during the cold war. During the 1960s, the use of modernization theory to battle communism was visible with President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress project. With the Alliance for Progress, the United States committed to investing \$20 billion in Latin America to stimulate economic and social development. According to Giuliano Garavini, the US announced this project partly because of the failure of the Bay of Pig invasion and America's fear that the communist revolution could spread across South America.⁷⁹ Fidel Castro also made

⁷⁵ Waleed Hazbun, "The Uses of Modernization Theory: American Foreign Policy and Mythmaking in the Arab World," in *American Studies Encounters the Middle East*, ed. Alex Lubin and Marwan M. Kraidy (University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 178, <https://doi.org/10.5149/northcarolina/9781469628844.003.0008>.

⁷⁶ Garavini and Nybakken, *After Empires*, 27.

⁷⁷ Garavini and Nybakken, 27–28.

⁷⁸ W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, 3rd edition (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁷⁹ Garavini and Nybakken, *After Empires*, 29.

this connection and claimed that both the Alliance for Progress and the Peace Corps were part of a "very astute strategy for putting the brakes on revolution."⁸⁰

The academic studies of modernization and methods to develop traditional societies were linked with Turkey. There was a surge of studies in sociology and history in the 1950s and 60s, focusing on the development of Turkey towards a liberal democracy from a stagnant and backward Ottoman Empire. These works saw Turkey as an exemplary country that other developing nations, especially in the Middle East, should take as a model to modernize.⁸¹ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is given special attention in these studies, and his modernizing reforms and secularization efforts are shown as a template for progress from traditional to modern societies in the Middle East.⁸² Even during the Iraq invasion, President George W. Bush's administration and its defenders in the academy took Turkey as a model. They insisted the Iraq War would lead to a modern Iraq, reconstructed and imposed from above, like Atatürk's Turkey.⁸³ The Peace Corps Volunteers serving in Turkey were also well-informed about Atatürk. Lord Kinross's biography of Atatürk was read during the training in volunteer camps, and the volunteers showed great respect and admiration for the founder of Turkey.⁸⁴

In addition to Atatürk, there are other topics modernization scholars, and Peace Corps volunteers share in their comments about Turkey. For example, Daniel Lerner's influential book discussing Turkey's modernization, *The Passing of Traditional Societies: Modernizing the Middle East* (1958), asserts mass media and

⁸⁰ Garavini and Nybakken, 29.

⁸¹ Bilal Ali Kotil, "Modernization and Rural Change in Turkey: A Perspective from Visual History," *Kapadokya Akademik Bakış* 4, no. 1 (June 30, 2020): 31.

⁸² Hazbun, "The Uses of Modernization Theory: American Foreign Policy and Mythmaking in the Arab World," 179.

⁸³ Hazbun, 196.

⁸⁴ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 32.

communication's important role in modernizing societies.⁸⁵ Memoirs of the Volunteers also point out the wide spread of newspapers and especially radio in even the remotest villages. Many volunteers comment that this way, people in Turkey, including the countryside, are informed about domestic affairs and global politics. Also, according to Lerner, there are three stages of modernization: traditional, transitional, and modern. However, they are not mutually exclusive and can co-exist in the same country.⁸⁶ This again fits with the volunteers' observations. According to them, different cities, villages, regions, and classes of people have ranging proximity to the modern Western culture, lifestyle, and understanding.

Historian Peter Sugar's article on *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey* (published in 1964) emphasizes the Turkish government's involvement in modernization efforts compared to Western modernization, which progressed naturally with the people's demands and actions.⁸⁷ The volunteers' experience paints a similar picture. Several volunteers comment that the Turkish government was the driving force for the modernization efforts. They also noticed that the government faced resistance against its modernization efforts in Turkish society. There were groups in Turkey who opposed the government's development projects and ideals. This view fits with Sugar's argument that the government, not the masses, demands modernization in Turkey.

Another common discussion point between the modernization scholars and the volunteers is the situation of the Turkish villagers. The volunteers who served in the villages noticed that the villagers had many economic, technical, and educational

⁸⁵ Hazbun, "The Uses of Modernization Theory: American Foreign Policy and Mythmaking in the Arab World," 179.

⁸⁶ Kotil, "Modernization and Rural Change in Turkey," 42.

⁸⁷ Kotil, 39–40.

problems in Turkey. Many villages lacked electricity, running water, proper roads, access to healthcare, and decent education. However, they also comment that the villagers started to become more involved in politics and benefited from development projects to improve their living conditions. Bernard Lewis, in *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (first published in 1961), discusses this development.⁸⁸

With means, comforts, and amenities undreamt of in an earlier age, he [the villager] has become more confident and more independent. In recent years, he has begun to show an awareness of his political power and of his human dignity that is probably without precedent in the past history of the country, and that has few parallels among her neighbours. The problems of the Turkish peasant are far from solved—social and religious, economic and technological questions of profound importance remain to be faced and overcome. But the Turkish peasantry, numbering over 70 per cent of the population of the country, have emerged from their ancient submission to participate in public affairs of their country, to speak their word on the formation and exercise of government.

Joseph S. Szyliowicz published a field-study book in 1966, *The Political Change in Rural Turkey, Erdemli: A Case Study*, discussing the effects of modernization in rural life and the relationship between the government and villagers. In the book, Szyliowicz argues that Turkey's villagers and government officers have a contentious relationship. The villagers fear and dislike the government officers like the gendarmerie and the police because of frequent displays of injustice and violence.⁸⁹ The volunteers share a similar understanding of this relation. The memoirs show that many government officers saw the villagers as inferiors and did not care for them. According to the volunteers, since the villagers see the government officers almost exclusively in times of trouble, taxation, and elections, they distrust and fear the representatives of the governmental power. This relationship between the government and conservative people was also a result of the role of government in

⁸⁸ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 3rd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 479.

⁸⁹ Kotil, "Modernization and Rural Change in Turkey," 47.

modernization. People whose lifestyles and traditions were affected by modernization became resistant to government reforms and involvement in their lives.

Paul J. Magnarella, a Peace Corps Volunteer in Turkey between 1963 and 1965, returned to the country in 1969 and did field research for his article *Conjugal Role-Relationships in a Modernizing Turkish Town*. Living with a Turkish family in Susurluk for a year, he makes interesting observations about Turkish family life and the roles of men and women in society. Magnarella explains that in a traditional family, women and men have separate roles, duties, and spaces in society and family life. Women are subservient, and men are dominant. However, the actual organization of the household is female-centered. Magnarella argues that "It is the women, who being largely confined to the home, manage and direct its internal affairs while men spend most of their time away."⁹⁰ This argument matches the comments of the volunteers. According to the memoirs, Turkish society was male-dominant, and women were separate from men in public life. In addition, women are also responsible for running the house, with one volunteer stating that "in the home, the woman is the big boss."⁹¹ Moreover, Magnarella claims that this traditional lifestyle was changing in Turkish society due to "the change in the community's economic and occupational structure, increased integration with a modernizing nation, and a greater exposure to the Western world."⁹² Magnarella explains that women started to become more involved and active in society and public life thanks to the modernization process in the country. The volunteers share similar arguments.

⁹⁰ Paul J. Magnarella, "Conjugal Role-Relationships in a Modernizing Turkish Town," *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 2, no. 2 (1972): 181.

⁹¹ Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 121.

⁹² Magnarella, "Conjugal Role-Relationships in a Modernizing Turkish Town," 191.

According to them, women from higher-class families or married to higher-class men are much more modernized because of access to better education and exposure to the Western style of life.

In the memoirs, Turkish people's mindset and general attitude to the Peace Corps were seen as a product of a traditional society. The volunteers commented that people in Turkey did not understand why the volunteers joined the Peace Corps and what they were doing in Turkey. Turkish people saw the United States as a highly developed country, while Turkey was one of many underdeveloped ones. People did not understand why the American volunteers came to Turkey because, in their opinion, “given the choice between the two, any sane person would opt to live in the highly developed country.”⁹³ Julie Smith Olson’s comment on her memoir perfectly captures Turkish people’s attitude and the volunteers’ understanding of this situation.⁹⁴

We had met and talked with several of the METU students while at a conference in Ankara. They had told us they could not understand why young Americans would want to “waste” two valuable years of their youth in a Turkish village. They certainly wouldn't want to, they said. Instead, they wanted to go to America or Europe and learn Western ideas and ways of living. I suppose this attitude is only natural for those living in a developing nation.

At the time (maybe even now), many Turkish people did not understand the idealism of the volunteers. They could not believe that American people could leave the comfort of their home and country to live and work in drastically worse conditions while millions of people around the world and in Turkey would want to live in the United States. That is one of the reasons why they were so eager to believe that the volunteers were actually American spies. The volunteers, on the other hand, due to

⁹³ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 52.

⁹⁴ Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 87.

constant complaints about Turkey from its people and their own experiences of underdevelopment in the country compared to the US, thought that this mindset was a result of the pre-modern society of Turkey.

In conclusion, modernization theory, particularly popular during the Peace Corps Turkey program (the 1960s), shaped the volunteer's observations in Turkey. The theory was used as a tool in the cold war against communism, similar to how the Peace Corps acted at the time. So, the intertwining of the two is not surprising. The volunteers saw Turkey as a transitional state on a path from traditional to modern. According to them, Turkey was experiencing the benefits of this transition in terms of advancement in technology and communication while suffering from the issues it created in society and politics. This outlook fits with the modernization scholars' approach to Turkey at the time. In addition, the volunteers viewed the mindset of Turkish people as a product of a pre-modern country. Not fully modernized yet, they could not understand the idealism of the Peace Corps because they were still primarily concerned with the problems of being a developing nation.

1.4 Literature Review

In the United States, Peace Corps has been studied thoroughly. For example, Karen Schwarz's book *What You Can Do for Your Country: An Oral History of the Peace Corps*, published in 1991 or Gerard T. Rice's, *The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps*, published in 1985, gives detailed analyses and knowledge about the Peace Corps. Schwarz's book serves as a myth buster and argues that many fundamental beliefs about the Peace Corps are not true. On the other hand, Rice's book serves as a classic history of the Peace Corps, focusing on the things that made it successful and

inspiring. Moreover, there are books that give inside information about the establishment and functioning of the Peace Corps, such as Harris Wofford's *Of Kennedys and Kings: Making Sense of the Sixties* and Stanley Meisler's *When The World Calls: The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and Its First Fifty Years*. However, these studies barely mention the Peace Corps Turkey program.

Although the Peace Corps Turkey program is not a comprehensively studied subject in the academy, there are still some thought-provoking Turkish studies. Müslim Özbalkan's book *Gizli Belgelerle Barış Gönüllüleri*, published in 1970 when the Peace Corps Turkey was still active, is an authoritative study on the subject. All other studies on Peace Corps Turkey use Özbalkan's book and the information he provides. His book has very useful statistics, documents, and other data about the Peace Corps and its Turkey program. In the book, Özbalkan states that Peace Corps is a cunning tool for American imperialism. The volunteers are, knowingly or unknowingly, spies to infiltrate Turkish society and gather information for the United States. He argues that the program should be terminated immediately, which happened not long after the book was published. Özbalkan's book also shows how the leftist groups in Turkey viewed the Peace Corps. The book was a product of its time.

Gökhan Eşel's book *Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri*, published in 2016, is another detailed and engaging study on Peace Corps Turkey. Eşel's book is one of the more objective studies on the subject. Eşel shows that it is hard to ignore how Peace Corps served American interests. He displays that the United States thrust the Peace Corps upon Turkey rather than Turkey requesting it. However, he does not ignore the organization's accomplishments or denounce the volunteers as spies.

There are also several articles about the Peace Corps Turkey. Oktay Akbaş's article in 2006, "Amerikan Gönüllü Kuruluşları: Barış Gönüllülerinin Dünyada ve Türkiye'deki Çalışmaları," Murat Soysal's article in 2015, "Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri," and Ali Erken's article in the same year "Türkiye'de Barış Gönüllüleri Programına Bir Bakış: 1961-1970," are similar in their approach to the subject. They are informative essays analyzing the Peace Corps and Peace Corps Turkey. They discuss the reasoning behind the program's establishment, arguing it was a product of the cold war, serving American interests. They also examine Peace Corps Turkey's accomplishments, failures, and termination. They claim that the program did not have many achievements in Turkey. In addition, they conclude that the dramatic rise of anti-Americanism in Turkey and the consequent reaction to the Peace Corps in Turkish society resulted in the program's termination.

Mehmet Gündüz's 2018 article "Türk Milli Eğitim Sisteminde Barış Gönüllüleri ve Faaliyetleri" focuses on Peace Corps Turkey's activities in the Turkish education system. The majority of Peace Corps volunteers in Turkey served as English teachers. Gündüz examines the problems, failures, and accomplishments of them. He concludes that the volunteers faced bureaucratic and communication problems in their assignments. Also, most of them were not educated to be teachers. They were university students from different departments. Moreover, the volunteers did not know Turkish well enough to communicate with their students and administrators. However, Gündüz argues that there were also very successful volunteer teachers.

Zafer Parlak's 2015 article "Kendi Anılarında Türkiye'de Bulunan Amerikan Barış Gönüllülerinin Yaşadıkları Değişim Süreci" focuses on volunteers' experience in Turkey. He argues that narrowing the discussion about Peace Corps Turkey within a cold war context, which is the majority of Turkish studies on the subject, is limiting.

He argues that another important aspect of the subject is the effect of the Peace Corps Turkey assignment on the volunteers. He shows that despite all the hardships they faced, from not ideal living conditions to anti-American sentiment in Turkey affecting their everyday lives, most volunteers cherish their experience and love Turkey and the Turkish people. Moreover, after their volunteer experience, many volunteers studied Turkish history, sociology, and culture and supported Turkey as "volunteer ambassadors" in America.

Zafer Parlak has another article about the Peace Corps Turkey. "Talat Sait Halman ve Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri," which is a chapter in a book dedicated to poet, author, and academician Talat Sait Halman (1931-2014). In the article, Parlak analyzes Halman's opinion about the Peace Corps, which was very positive, unlike most scholars of his time. Parlak displays constructive arguments about Peace Corps Turkey, similar to his other article. However, this time he also has the support of an authoritative figure backing him up. This thesis is closer to Parlak's approach to the Peace Corps than the others mentioned in this chapter. Both Parlak and I focus on volunteers' experiences and observations about Turkey. The political history and skeptical approach to the volunteers and the program are not the main discussion points in this thesis. Instead, this thesis paints a picture of 1960s Turkey from the volunteers' experiences and observations. It argues that the volunteers viewed Turkey as a traditional and developing country needing modernization.

For this thesis, most of the primary sources are volunteer memoirs. Heath W. Lowry's memoir, published in 2008, *An Ongoing Affair: Turkey & I*, examines his experience as a volunteer in a Turkish mountain village. The book displays a Turkish village's lifestyle, living conditions, culture, and politics. Julie Woods Smith Olson's *To Make a Difference: A Peace Corps Memoir: Turkey 1964-66*, published in 2015, discusses

similar topics but also shows the difference in female volunteers' experience in Turkey. Kevin McCarthy's memoir, published in 2021, *A Peace Corps Volunteer in Turkey*, shows life in a Turkish town in the 1960s and his experience as an English teacher in Turkey. Malcolm Pfunder's memoir, published in 2007, *Village in the Meadows*, describes life in the rural Eastern Black Sea region in the 1960s. The book provides very detailed information on village life as if it was written as an ethnographic study. Tom Brosnahan's book, published in 2005, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, provides detailed information about life in Turkish cities and towns in the 1960s because he traveled most of the country to write a travel guide as a Peace Corps project.

There are also published collections of short stories of volunteers' memories in Turkey. Published in 2011, *A Small Key Opens Big Doors: 50 Years of Amazing Peace Corps Stories*, edited by Jay Chen and Jane Albritton, contains over a dozen stories of Peace Corps Turkey volunteers. Moreover, the Peace Corps Turkey volunteers' organization in the United States called Arkadaşlar (Friends) has dozens of stories they published in the organization's several directories. All these short stories were analyzed and used in the thesis.

CHAPTER II:

GENDER ROLES, AND SEPARATION AND INTERACTION BETWEEN GENDERS

The Peace Corps Volunteers in Turkey were particularly observant of the separation of genders in social life and men and women's different duties and roles in Turkish society. They viewed this as a norm of pre-modern or traditional Turkish society. Regarding this topic, the volunteers talk about the separation of men's and women's space in public life, their different responsibilities, family life, the difference between modern and traditional women, and the problems the male and female volunteers had to cope with due to the traditional gender dynamics in Turkish society. Turkish women get the attention of the volunteers more than Turkish men. The volunteers disproportionately talk more about women's problems and challenges in society. The women's issues were more prevalent in a traditional society. It also affected the volunteer's work more since it was part of the modernization process they came to help. The Peace Corps Turkey developed projects focused on women's issues, such as maternal healthcare, home economics, family planning, and childcare.

2.1 Separation of Gender in Turkish Society

In Peace Corps training, the volunteers were taught that, in Turkey, single people of the opposite gender were never left alone together. Any citizen was expected to

intervene if no parent or relative was around.⁹⁵ In their memoirs, the volunteers observed that the separation of genders was not limited to singles. Public space was divided for the opposite genders. Women mostly gathered at homes or hamams to socialize, while men met in coffeehouses and restaurants. David N. Weinman, who served as an acting director of the Peace Corps Turkey, states that Turkey was one of the most difficult programs regarding Volunteer mental health due to the pressures growing out of a gender-segregated society.⁹⁶ The volunteer's memoirs display their hardships due to the culture shock this segregation created. Many female volunteers, especially the ones who served in the countryside or more conservative regions, felt constrained. They could not socialize as much as their male counterparts or with them. Also, there was the danger of verbal and sexual harassment, which was not uncommon. The male volunteers feared getting close to the opposite gender too. The traditional values about romantic relationships in Turkish society could hurt them in multiple ways.

Volunteering in a village in Burdur with his husband, Julie Woods Olson explains that one of her most significant issues in adjusting to her new life was the separation of men and women in public spaces. She states that “according to Turkish custom, women are to hang out only with other women,” which means that she could not even see her husband enough during the day since he was with other men in the village coffeehouse most of the time.⁹⁷ Even in house visits, the separation was apparent for Olson.⁹⁸

There are some Turkish customs that are quite strange to us and difficult to accept. Perhaps the most distressing for us is the great separation of sexes: women with women, men with men. When we are invited to dinner, Gary sits

⁹⁵ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 256.

⁹⁶ Thompson, *Arkadaşlar Membership Directory 2016*, 32.

⁹⁷ Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 25.

⁹⁸ Olson, 35.

with the men eating in one room while I am with the women eating in the kitchen. And after dinner, the women go calling on other women, and the men go to the coffeehouse.

Olson complained that she had few opportunities to meet with the men in the village, which made it very difficult to understand half the population's problems. As a volunteer working in rural development, she needed to interact with everyone to come up with a solution to their problems together. However, the separation of genders prevented such meaningful interaction. This was a common problem for the female volunteers.⁹⁹

Another female volunteer, Bonnie Pura, who was with Heath W. Lowry in a mountain village called Dereköy in Balıkesir, had a similar experience to Olson. When they arrived in the village, the villagers welcomed them with a large feast. However, Pura and Lowry were not together because men's and women's feasts were in separate places.¹⁰⁰ This separation continued throughout their time in the village because Pura could primarily only interact with the women and Lowry with the men. Pura's job was more challenging as a volunteer because women's language in the village was more localized since, unlike the men, most women did not get formal education. This made communicating with them more difficult because the Turkish spoken by the women in the village differed significantly from the Turkish Pura learned in the Peace Corps training.¹⁰¹

Martin B. Tracy and his wife were teaching English as volunteers in the town of Ürgüp in Nevşehir. He described their interactions with the local people.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Olson, 117.

¹⁰⁰ Lowry, *An Ongoing Affair, Turkey & I. Book I*, 30.

¹⁰¹ Bonnie Pura, Bonnie Pura (Peace Corps Turkey volunteer) in discussion with the author, October 23, 2021.

¹⁰² Jay Chen and Jane Albritton, eds., *A Small Key Opens Big Doors, 50 Years of Amazing Peace Corps Stories*, v. 3, *The heart of Eurasia* (Palo Alto: Travelers' Tales, 2011), 162.

My wife would put on a coat and scarf, regardless of the weather, and hold hands with her women friends as they walked through the town engaging in conversation about children and other family-related topics. I would also walk with my male friends, several steps in front of our wives. We would link arms and speak of local economic issues, local and national politics, and how the weather was impacting the crops. After classes in the high school, we would often go our separate ways. My wife would spend quality time with married women in their homes discussing topics ranging from homemaking, raising children, and coping with husbands to methods of family planning. Many of my late afternoons and early evenings were spent in a coffeehouse with the men, playing backgammon and bezique, sipping hot tea. In sharing a meal in a local restaurant, despite the Islamic taboo against the consumption of alcohol, I might have a beer or drink a fine dry wine. But not so for my wife, as custom frowned on women drinking.

Volunteering in Ceyhan, Adana, as an English teacher, Kevin M. McCarthy shares a similar point. Like most male volunteers, instead of cooking for himself, McCarthy mostly ate in local restaurants. He also met with his friends in the town at restaurants and coffeehouses. He states that almost all the clientele in these places were men.

Women were noticeably not present in the public space.¹⁰³ Malcolm Pfunder, James Akre, and Heath Lowry describe the same experience in their memoirs. Pfunder was volunteering in a village in Trabzon called Çayırıcı. He describes his life in the village as mostly spent in the coffeehouse. When men did not work or go to the city, they drank tea, played cards, and talked politics in the coffeehouses. Women stayed at home or visited each other but never went to the coffeehouses, the only public places to socialize in villages.¹⁰⁴ Akre volunteered in Gündüzler village in Eskişehir. He explains that there were four coffeehouses in the village. The men went to one of the coffeehouses according to their age group and political inclination. However, women were not present in any of them.¹⁰⁵ Lowry's observations are complementary

¹⁰³ Kevin McCarthy, *A Peace Corps Volunteer In Turkey* (Independently published, 2021), 37–38.

¹⁰⁴ Malcolm Pfunder, *Village in the Meadows* (Tünel, İstanbul: Çitlembik, 2007), 41–43.

¹⁰⁵ Thompson, *Arkadaşlar Membership Directory 2016*, 17.

to Pfunder's and Akre's. In Dereköy too, the coffeehouses were where the village's men gathered, and women did not participate in this daily activity.¹⁰⁶

The separation of men and women in public spaces was practiced in more than just the villages or towns. While volunteering with her husband at Erzurum Atatürk University, Susan Fleming Holm describes an identical situation with Tracy. She states that in Erzurum when walking in the streets, people linked arms based on gender, men with men, and women with women. She also mentions that women hang out with other women gathering in their homes or hamams (Turkish bath houses) while men meet outside.¹⁰⁷

The separation of genders affected the volunteers in different ways, in addition to just living in different environments than their opposite-gender counterparts. The female volunteers had to face the danger of bullying, mistreatment, and harassment when participating in a male-dominant society. On the other hand, male volunteers had to be very careful about getting intimate with Turkish women. Otherwise, they could risk dire consequences.

Close relations with the opposite gender could be very problematic for the volunteers. Brosnahan describes the troubles of Lily and Carol, two female volunteers in Izmir, for having male friends at home. According to Brosnahan, the volunteers in Izmir frequently gathered in one another's apartments to socialize. The landlady of Lily and Carol was disturbed about the male volunteers coming to their home in these meetings, even though they were just friends. So, she bullied Lily and

¹⁰⁶ Lowry, *An Ongoing Affair, Turkey & I. Book I*, 37–39.

¹⁰⁷ Susan Fleming Holm, "Conversion in Erzurum," in *Tales from the Expat Harem: Foreign Women in Modern Turkey*, ed. Anastasia M. Ashman and Jennifer Eaton Gökmen (Emeryville, CA: Seal Press : Distributed by Publishers Group West, 2006), 46–50.

Carol, mistreating them and turning the water off their house. Eventually, they could not bear the culture shock and the poor treatment, and they both left Turkey.¹⁰⁸

Peace Corps was also sensitive to the potential danger for the female volunteers because of the dominant position of males in Turkish society. During the Peace Corps training, there was a deselection process, and the Peace Corps sent away some female volunteers because their physique would be more desirable to Turkish men.¹⁰⁹ Although only a minority of people did it, the verbal assaults against the female volunteers were not out of the ordinary.¹¹⁰ Unfortunately, there were also incidents of sexual assaults against female volunteers. Olson was sexually assaulted in the street by a Turkish man on her first day in Turkey. After the incident, she realized she was the only woman walking in the street.¹¹¹ Moreover, the Adult Education Director in Burdur sexually assaulted Olson in the car when he was driving her to her assigned village. Due to his position making him responsible for coordinating the communication between the volunteers and the local government, he would visit the village frequently, which made Olson very uncomfortable.¹¹² Sarah O'Connell Seybold was another victim of sexual assault. She was in Gaziantep for a volunteer conference when a drunk Turkish man entered her hotel room, attempting to rape her while she was asleep; Seybold managed to kick him out of the room. When she told her Turkish friend what happened, he reacted nonchalantly, stating that the Turks have a Hollywood view of American women.¹¹³ Other volunteers in the memoirs make similar comments, showing that Hollywood movies imprinted a false image of

¹⁰⁸ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 71–72.

¹⁰⁹ Pura, Bonnie Pura (Peace Corps Turkey volunteer) in discussion with the author.

¹¹⁰ Parlak, “Kendi Anılarında Türkiye’de Bulunan Amerikan Barış Gönüllülerinin Yaşadıkları Değişim Süreci,” 303.

¹¹¹ Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 17.

¹¹² Olson, 23.

¹¹³ Thompson, *Arkadaşlar Membership Directory 2016*, 38–39.

seductress American women in Turkey which resulted in false expectations and inappropriate behavior by Turkish men.¹¹⁴

The male volunteers were also warned of the dangers of interacting with the opposite gender, especially in the more traditional regions of the countryside. They were cautioned never to show any interest to young girls or women because "so much as a smile could lead to expulsion" or "finding oneself leveraged into an unwanted marriage."¹¹⁵ A pregnancy outside the marriage was a capital offense for some families, and both boy and girl could lose their lives to cleanse this offense.¹¹⁶ Male volunteers like Lowry, Brosnahan, and Kevin McCarthy feared getting intimate with Turkish women for this reason.

Brosnahan explains that he had an opportunity to have consensual sex with a Turkish girl. Although he wanted it, he left the place because he was afraid of the consequences due to the teachings of the Peace Corps.¹¹⁷ While volunteering in Adana, Kevin McCarthy had a secret relationship with a Turkish girl. It was secret because the girlfriend said her family would slit McCarthy's throat if they learned about it. Eventually, they broke up.¹¹⁸ Heath Lowry was already engaged, but the villagers did not know it. So, a young woman in the village started secretly flirting with Lowry. He was so scared that he purposefully tried to avoid being in the same place as her. Eventually, he found out that the villagers were actually aware of the flirtation and had no problem with it, which shows that the relationship rules in Turkey were not as rigid as the Peace Corps taught, at least not everywhere.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 116–17; McCarthy, *A Peace Corps Volunteer In Turkey*, 44.

¹¹⁵ Lowry, *An Ongoing Affair, Turkey & I. Book I*, 43.

¹¹⁶ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 256.

¹¹⁷ Brosnahan, 255–56.

¹¹⁸ McCarthy, *A Peace Corps Volunteer In Turkey*, 55–56.

¹¹⁹ Lowry, *An Ongoing Affair, Turkey & I. Book I*, 43–49.

In other places, it could be life-threatening. An African American volunteer named Bill volunteered in a village in Izmir. A woman in the village decided to make some curtains for Bill's house as a gift. After she delivered the curtains, Bill gave a spontaneous kiss on the cheek to thank the woman. Initially, Bill did not realize anything out of the ordinary. However, two days later, the village's muhtar (elected head) came to his house, informing him that he had been protecting Bill's house from the villagers for two days and was unsure if he could protect him any longer. So, Bill left the village and later the country. Newspapers in Izmir covered the story emphasizing that Bill was a "negro."¹²⁰ It is regrettable how similar this story is to the lynching epidemic African Americans suffered in the United States.

In short, the separation of genders was one of the most challenging aspects of Turkish society for the volunteers. They viewed this phenomenon as a part of traditional Turkish or Islamic customs. Especially in more conservative regions, the volunteers could not interact with the opposite gender meaningfully, limiting their experience and cooperation with the local people. Furthermore, the volunteers faced problems in their interactions with the opposite gender. The female volunteers could be bullied and harassed as a consequence of living in a male-dominant society in which people viewed American women with a Hollywood perception. On the other hand, male volunteers feared expulsion, forced marriage, or even death if they were to get too close to Turkish women.

2.2 Gender Roles and Modern Turkish Women

¹²⁰ Pfunder, *Village in the Meadows*, 88.

The volunteers viewed the roles and duties assigned to different genders in Turkish society as very traditional. In general, the man was the provider of the house. He earned money and took care of the family. The woman was the housewife. She did the chores and raised the children. However, she had more say in family affairs than initially observed from the outside. The volunteers also noticed a change in the traditional family framework. Women in the countryside were eager to develop themselves through government projects to learn new skills and earn money. Moreover, there was a class of "modern" women in Turkey, mainly in the large cities. The volunteers could easily distinguish them from the traditional women thanks to their Westernized look and high education.

According to the volunteers, in Turkey, house chores were women's duty, and men were not expected to help them. Julie Woods Olson explained her situation in the village compared to his husband's.¹²¹

My job is double. I have to carry buckets of water from the community well, cook, clean, and wash out clothes in addition to my Peace Corps duties. ... He [her husband Gary] would help me carry the water but he would be ridiculed by the men in the village if he did so. Carrying water is women's work.

Bonnie Pura had to cope with a similar situation too. After Pura and Lowry arrived at the village, the villagers gathered to solve a potential problem. Lowry was a single male, so people in the village believed he could not care for himself. As a solution, the villagers agreed that a different family would invite Lowry as a guest for dinner every night, and they would also bring breakfast to his house every morning. No similar consideration was given to Pura since she was a woman, naturally capable of looking after herself. After this arrangement ended, the council of elders in the

¹²¹ Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 34.

village decided that Pura should cook for Lowry, which she did without Lowry's help.¹²²

Both Brosnahan, who was in Istanbul at the time, and Malcolm Pfunder, who was in a mountain village in Trabzon, describe the shock of the local people when they did their laundry. Brosnahan states that men in Turkey never do their own laundry. So, his neighbors were shocked to see him washing his clothes.¹²³ Pfunder also depicted the amazement of the locals when they saw that he was doing the laundry with the female volunteer in the village.¹²⁴ The fields were where men's and women's duties converged in the villages. Men and women worked together in field jobs like harvesting and planting. However, women had the additional duty of cooking for the workers.¹²⁵

In the volunteers' experience, men's and women's roles in a traditional Turkish family looked reasonably simple from the outside. Men were the provider in the house, going to the job, purchasing the household's needs, and the family patriarch.

However, women also had a very active role in families, which, according to Olson, cannot be easily observed if one did not live with a Turkish family. Olson and her husband lived in the same house with their landlords, which gave them an insight into a Turkish family's life. Olson states that even though the wife seems subservient to her husband in the home, she is the real decision-maker.¹²⁶ Sandra Lee Anderson, a volunteer in Gaziantep, shares a story that supports Olson's point. Anderson and her three female volunteer friends went to visit ancient ruins in Karkamış, near the Syrian border. They arrived late in the evening, and there were no hotels open. A

¹²² Pura, Bonnie Pura (Peace Corps Turkey volunteer) in discussion with the author.

¹²³ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 110.

¹²⁴ Pfunder, *Village in the Meadows*, 79.

¹²⁵ Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 93–94; Pfunder, *Village in the Meadows*, 72–73.

¹²⁶ Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 121–22.

woman they met on the bus to the town invited them to stay at her house, and they accepted it. Anderson describes her power in the household.¹²⁷

In the course of the evening, we discovered that the woman was a real character! She had two sons and their wives in the town, and she had a daughter of our age she would not let marry. That way, her daughter could always take care of her. She was the matriarch. She even took her grandson away from his father and brought the boy to live here because the father wouldn't send the boy to school. She was the one who had chosen the wives for her sons.

Although the Turkish women who lived in the countryside had a traditional style of life, they were also ready and eager to learn the necessary skills and have a job in addition to their household duties. Malcolm Pfunder mentions two government projects that women in the region were very interested in joining. Turkish government started a project in the villages around Trabzon to create a cottage industry making Isparta-type rugs. Over a hundred women from the region went to Istanbul for several months to learn how to weave carpets in the government's courses. The villagers also paid large amounts of money to buy the looms and yarns necessary to make the carpets.¹²⁸ Pfunder also talks about the home economics and sewing instructor the villagers requested from the Adult Education Directorate. The villagers wanted a course in the village to learn new skills and knowledge to improve their economic situation.¹²⁹ These rural development courses mainly focused on developing women's conditions in the countryside. There were similar courses in many villages, and they were popular with the local people. Peace Corps also carried out many rural development projects in Turkey, working with CARE (Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere). The volunteers worked on projects about home economics, childcare, birth control, and maternal and child health.¹³⁰ One of the main

¹²⁷ Chen and Albritton, *A Small Key Opens Big Doors*, 82–83.

¹²⁸ Pfunder, *Village in the Meadows*, 58–59.

¹²⁹ Pfunder, 143.

¹³⁰ Eşel, *Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri*, 122–36.

reasons the volunteers discuss Turkish women disproportionately more than Turkish men is that these projects and the inferior position of women in Turkish society caused them to focus more on women and their problems.

The volunteers viewed the modernized Turkish women very differently from traditional Turkish women. According to the volunteers, modernized women contrasted with the traditional regarding their clothing, speech, education, and participation in social life. The “modern” women the volunteers met were mainly the children of wealthy and ambitious parents who wanted their girls to get the best education, or they were married to high-level officials or influential people. Meeting with these modern women during a visit outside her village, Olson said that after being in a village for so long, she felt relieved by speaking and interacting with them because they could speak English thanks to their education. Another thing Olson immediately noticed was the way the modern Turkish women looked.¹³¹

We had an interesting visit with the wives of several city officials, who were completely modern. They wore lipstick, mascara, and eyebrow pencil and had hair that had been curled. They wore high heels and western dress. This was quite a contrast to villager attire: shalvars (baggy pants) head scarves and bare feet.

When differentiating between modern and traditional Turkish women, Pfunder and Susan Holm also discuss education and appearance. Describing the course teacher government sent to his village in Trabzon, Pfunder says she looks Westernized and highly educated. He also calls the teacher “clearly a city Turk,”¹³² which shows that, in terms of dress code and education, modernization (or Westernization) had not penetrated deeply into Turkish villages yet. Holm volunteered in Erzurum, a conservative city, and simultaneously witnessed modernized and traditional women.

¹³¹ Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 25.

¹³² Pfunder, *Village in the Meadows*, 143.

She explains that in Erzurum, traditional women wore *çarşaf* or *ehram*, which covered everything but their faces. However, the newly opened Erzurum Atatürk University, where Holm taught English, introduced change into the daily life of Erzurum. Modernized women working in the university, who came from more Westernized regions in Turkey, or foreign teachers from Europe, wore modern clothes like mini-skirts in the city streets.¹³³ In her descriptions too, it is clear that education and clothing were seen hand in hand with the modernization process.

Brosnahan had the most opportunity to interact with modern women since he lived in Izmir and Istanbul as a volunteer working in a college and a government-backed tourism project. Both cities, along with Ankara, were seen as modern cities by the volunteers. His descriptions of modern Turkish women match the others: classy dress, education, and having jobs. An interesting anecdote in his memoir displays that this view was not confined to the volunteers. The “modernized” Turkish people agreed with it as well. Traveling the country for his *Lonely Planet Turkey* guide, Brosnahan visited Harran. There he took a picture of three female children in traditional dresses, which eventually became the book's cover. The Turkish Ambassador in Washington Şükrü Elekdağ, who worked hard to educate the Americans that Turkey was a modern country, did not feel good about the photo. Discussing the cover photo with Brosnahan, he said, "These village girls do not project an accurate picture of our country."¹³⁴ Brosnahan states that Elekdağ was not alone in his view.¹³⁵

Bookshop owners in Istanbul were refusing to stock or sell the book because of what they called “those gypsies” on the cover. My Turkish friends were all, 100% upset at the choice. Turkey had struggled so mightily over more than a century to modernize, secularize, and democratize. It was on its way to

¹³³ Fleming Holm, “Conversion in Erzurum,” 46–47.

¹³⁴ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 202–3.

¹³⁵ Brosnahan, 203.

becoming the economic powerhouse of the Eastern Mediterranean, and now the best-selling guide book to the country comes out bearing a photo of country bumpkins. The picture, they thought, sent exactly the wrong message: Turkey is poor and backward.

In short, the volunteers observed a traditional approach to gender roles in Turkish society. Men earned money, and women did the chores. However, women had a powerful voice in family decisions. Furthermore, many women in the countryside actively worked to improve their situations through development projects. The volunteers also recognized a class of modern Turkish women who were very different from their traditional counterparts in terms of how they dressed, their education level, and their presence in the workplace.

2.3 Conclusion

To conclude, the volunteers portray a very traditional society in Turkey in the 1960s. Men and women were separated in public spaces. They had different roles and duties based on tradition. Traditional women were less educated and less active in public life while having more responsibilities in the house and family. The modern Turkish women, on the other hand, were educated and Westernized. The separation of genders was one of the most significant challenges for female volunteers in Turkey because they could not socialize and participate in public life as much as their male counterparts. The traditional approach to gender relations in Turkey created problems for both male and female volunteers. Many male volunteers had to cope with the fear of intimacy with Turkish women, and some female volunteers suffered harassment and assaults. Due to women's subservient place in traditional societies, they had more immediate problems compared to men in Turkish society.

CHAPTER III:

LIVING CONDITIONS IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY

Peace Corps Turkey volunteers discuss the living conditions of their life in Turkey a great deal in their memoirs and interviews. According to them, Turkey in the 1960s had many fields of underdevelopment that needed to improve for a modern standard of living. Most volunteers who discussed these issues were assigned to small towns or villages. However, this situation actually provides a more accurate look into 1960s Turkey because, at the time, nearly 70 percent of the population in Turkey lived in villages. (Nüfus) The volunteers in the countryside observed a significant problem of underdevelopment of infrastructure. Most villages did not have access to running water in houses, electricity, or telephone. House chores were extra difficult due to the lack of electricity and running water, and simple pleasures in the United States were luxuries in Turkey. Moreover, country roads in Turkey were in terrible conditions. Since only a few vehicles were available in villages and public transportation was unreliable, traveling from villages to towns and cities was inconvenient.

Another area for improvement in the living conditions in Turkey was insufficient healthcare and hygiene. Peace Corps took specific precautions to protect the volunteers in Turkey from this problem. Volunteers were vaccinated for several viral diseases Peace Corps believed to be widespread in Turkey. There were also Peace Corps doctors in Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir to provide health assistance to the

volunteers. Peace Corps was not satisfied with the sufficiency of Turkish hospitals. Many volunteers were assigned as instructors in Turkish medical schools and hospitals to help their development. There were also other Peace Corps projects which aimed to improve health conditions in both urban and rural Turkey. The volunteers frequently got ill in Turkey due to the problem with food safety and sanitation. Moreover, volunteers in the countryside observed that hospitals and doctors were not accessible to villagers. Villagers were more prone to use traditional methods of treatment rather than modern medicine, which created its own problems.

3.1 Development and Underdevelopment

Peace Corps Turkey volunteers had significant hardships adapting to their new living conditions. Their lives in the United States were very different from their lives in Turkey. One of the main differences was the underdevelopment of infrastructure in Turkey. Turkish villages did not have access to running water, electricity, proper roads, and reliable transportation. Volunteers viewed the living conditions in Turkey's countryside as similar to how their ancestors lived. Simple pleasures in volunteers' lives in America, such as television, telephone, hot water, and washing machines, were luxuries in Turkey. Nevertheless, Turkey was a developing country, so there were developed cities, but only a few. Volunteers assessed the development of a place based on its infrastructure, people's education level, and the spread of Western influence.

According to the volunteers, the villages in Turkey lacked basic needs for modern living standards: proper roads, running water in houses, telephone, and electricity.

The underdevelopment of infrastructure was one of the most common themes in the volunteer's memoirs.

Describing her village in Burdur named Dereköy, Julie Smith Olson first mentions that the village had no electricity, running water, or telephone. Consequently, Olson's living conditions in the village were not ideal. Because there was no running water in the house, she had to carry buckets of water from one of the community fountains in the village for drinking, cooking, and washing.¹³⁶ Because there were no telephones or easy transportation outside the village, Olson felt very isolated from the outside world. So, she relied on letters from her family and relatives in the United States to feel connected to her past life. Although Olson lived with her husband Gary in the village, because of the gender separation in public life, she would not see him most of the day, and their marriage struggled. From time to time, they needed to leave the village and visit their volunteer friends living in the cities to relieve the pressures of living in a backward village.¹³⁷

In addition, throughout her memoir, she talks about the terrible conditions of the roads and transportation. During the Peace Corps training, the volunteers were educated on transportation in Turkey. They were told that transportation was dangerous in Turkey due to poor road conditions, which caused frequent traffic accidents. The buses were overloaded with people and animals, and the volunteers were advised to find seats on the aisle side in the middle of the bus for a safer trip.¹³⁸ In Olson's experience, all these warnings during the training proved true. The roads were terrible, the buses were overcrowded, and the drivers were reckless. Buses or cars were stuck in the mud frequently in the winter months, and it would take hours

¹³⁶ Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 15–21.

¹³⁷ Olson, 60–62.

¹³⁸ Olson, 8.

to get going again.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the transportation from the village to the town (Yeşilova) was difficult because there was only one bus, and it did not operate regularly, especially in the winter. Olson and her husband needed to go to the town regularly to collect their mail and withdraw their salaries. They, and the villagers, also went to Yeşilova for shopping since the village did not have shopping places except for a grocer (bakkal). Thus, the unreliable nature of transportation was very inconvenient. For instance, one time, Olson went to Yeşilova to pick up a package sent to her. The bus returned to the village without picking her up, although they had promised they would. Since there was no other way to return to the village, the kaymakam (district governor) had his driver take Olson to the village. To make matters worse, their car got stuck on the road.¹⁴⁰

The village Heath W. Lowry volunteered, Bereketli in Balıkesir, was very similar to Dereköy. It had no electricity, running water, telephone, or proper roads. The results were also similar. No running water meant carrying water from the community fountains. Washing dishes and clothes was difficult due to no running water or electricity. Since Lowry did not cook for himself or wash the dishes, that part was not a significant problem for him. One of the things he missed most during his volunteering days was daily hot showers. Since there was no running water in his house, if he wanted to shower, he needed to carry water from the public fountain and heat it on the stove, which was a chore. The governor of Balıkesir at the time was distrustful of the Peace Corps. So, he ordered Lowry to visit him in Balıkesir every Saturday to give a weekly report of his activities. Lowry used this time to visit the public bathhouses in the city to take a bath. He also made a deal with a hotel in the

¹³⁹ Olson, 33–49.

¹⁴⁰ Olson, 48.

city to wash his clothes every week. The rest of the village had to continue with how they dealt with those chores.¹⁴¹

Although Lowry managed to work around the problems of not having running water, he could not escape the awful roads and lack of reliable transportation. Only two very old buses operated in the village, and they did not operate on weekends.

Moreover, the dirt roads would become mud traps for vehicles in the rainy seasons, and the heavy snowfall could close the roads altogether.¹⁴² One of Lowry's major accomplishments as a volunteer in Bereketli was convincing the governor to build a bridge over the stream that cut across the road near the village. When the stream turned to a raging torrent in the rainy seasons, vehicles could not safely pass through it. So, the villagers had to cross the stream on foot.¹⁴³

Another volunteer who struggled a lot with the roads was Malcolm Pfunder, who volunteered in the village of Çayırçı in Trabzon.¹⁴⁴

Availability of transportation to and from our village was very much dependent upon the season. Transportation usually meant a flat-bed truck that (no matter it was carrying) usually had room for people in the back. Occasionally, it meant a minibus or a jeep that would take on paying passengers. . . . When the road was open, you could hire a truck or a jeep or minibus in Tonya [a nearby town five miles away], but a private ride to the village was expensive (because the road was so bad), and few villagers could afford it. During the winter, the road was sometimes closed because of snow. There would often be a week or more when we never heard the sound of a motorized vehicle. . . . On market days, Allen and I often rode to or from Tonya in the back of Ahmet Uluköylü's 1952 Austin truck, the only vehicle owned by anyone in our village, but we walked the five miles (an hour and a half going down and two hours coming back up) at least as often as we were able to find a ride. . . . On any of these vehicles, it was impossible to predict who or what would share the adjoining seat (or truck bed). Chickens were common. Women and children who threw up before they could get the window open quite far enough. Allen [the

¹⁴¹ Lowry, *An Ongoing Affair, Turkey & I. Book I*, 67–71.

¹⁴² Lowry, 62–68.

¹⁴³ Lowry, 117.

¹⁴⁴ Pfunder, *Village in the Meadows*, 119–21.

other volunteer in the village] and I once rode from Maçka to Trabzon in a small truck that we discovered (quite early in our trip) was returning from having just brought a 1.5-ton load of hamsi [anchovy] up to Maçka. That was a ride that we couldn't forget until we had a bath and washed all our clothes.

According to Pfunder, even in a vehicle, a trip to Tonya lasted over an hour due to the terrible quality of the unpaved road. Moreover, since it was impossible to find a vehicle regularly, they often had to walk to Tonya for shopping and return to the village on foot while carrying heavy loads, as most villagers did.¹⁴⁵

Walking in villages could also be problematic in rainy seasons. Most villages in Turkey did not have paved roads and sidewalks inside the village. The houses were connected via walking paths which became mud when it rained.¹⁴⁶ Walking in the mud could ruin regular shoes, so villagers wore leather galoshes (karalastik or lastik mest) that were worn as shoes. Heavy snowfall could trap people inside the house since it could cover more than two meters above the ground in some regions. Villages did not get support from the local municipality or government to clean the snow in the village, so they had to clean it themselves to be able to go outside of their houses.¹⁴⁷

According to the volunteers, doing the laundry was one of the most important parts of the village life that needed improvement. It was a difficult chore since the houses had no electricity or running water. In his memoir, observing the women in her village wash their clothes, Olson stated that they worked as her ancestors did before the invention of washing machines.¹⁴⁸ Pfunder mentions that he and his volunteer partner in the village did not do the laundry often because it was time-consuming and

¹⁴⁵ Pfunder, 31–32.

¹⁴⁶ Lowry, *An Ongoing Affair, Turkey & I. Book I*, 90.

¹⁴⁷ Pfunder, *Village in the Meadows*, 168–71.

¹⁴⁸ Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 32.

exhausting. Pfunder explained the process: "We had to heat the water, suds the clothes in a large plastic wash basin, heat the rinse water, somehow rinse out all the soap, wring everything out, and then find a place to hang things. We had clotheslines running from each corner of the living room ceiling to each of the other corners."¹⁴⁹ Improving methods for house chores was part of the Peace Corps rural development projects. Volunteers who taught Home Economics in Turkey would travel to villages and teach "Innovative Clothes Washing Methods."¹⁵⁰ However, without access to electricity, these innovative methods were not exactly groundbreaking. So, the house chores did not get any significant improvement in the Turkish countryside during the volunteer's time in Turkey.

Being a developing country, the level of underdevelopment of infrastructure varied in different places in Turkey, and the volunteers observed some improvements during their stay. Tom Brosnahan traveled most of Turkey due to his Peace Corps project to write a travel guide. According to his observations, a typical Turkish home in a regular town had electricity and running water but not hot water. However, it did not have television or telephones, similar to the villages. Instead of using telephones, most people sent telegrams because it took years to get one's name on the waiting list for having a telephone line or one needed to purchase someone else's place on the list for a significant amount of money. Washing clothes and dishes or showering was similar to the villages. People needed to heat water in the stoves, but they did not have to carry water from community fountains this time. Another difference was the hamams. Most neighborhoods in towns had hamams for people to take a bath, a convenience lacking in the villages. However, the presence of animal life was similar

¹⁴⁹ Pfunder, *Village in the Meadows*, 75.

¹⁵⁰ Chen and Albritton, *A Small Key Opens Big Doors*, 97.

in both villages and towns. Horse carts, donkeys, roosters, and chickens were present in both towns and villages.¹⁵¹

Kevin M. McCarthy volunteered in the town of Ceyhan in Adana. His experience was similar to Brosnahan's observations. According to McCarthy, in Ceyhan, houses had electricity and running water but no television or hot water. Houses were heated with a stove, and there was no hot water, so one needed to go to hamams to bathe. Moreover, most of the streets in the town were not paved. Donkeys and horse carts were common on the roads, as well as animal droppings.¹⁵²

Although living in a provincial capital, Susan Fleming Holm's descriptions of Erzurum were not too dissimilar to McCarthy's or Brosnahan's observations about Turkish towns. Her house had electricity and running water but not hot water, and people went to hamams to take a bath. In addition, she mentioned that faytons, horse-drawn phaeton carriages, functioned as taxis of the city, and "little birds would follow [the carriages], settling on the newly dropped piles of horse dung, still steaming from the heat of the animal's body, to pick out the undigested grain."¹⁵³

In the memoirs, the difference between modern or developed settlements and underdeveloped ones does not simply display a difference between cities and villages or small towns. For the volunteers, developed cities in Turkey were only a handful. The volunteers mentioned Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Bursa, and Antalya as modern cities in Turkey.

In addition to infrastructure development, the volunteers' criteria for modern cities included the number of modern and educated people and the presence of American

¹⁵¹ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 24–25.

¹⁵² McCarthy, *A Peace Corps Volunteer In Turkey*, 25–35.

¹⁵³ Fleming Holm, "Conversion in Erzurum," 51.

influence. This influence could manifest itself in various ways. For example, in Izmir, it was NATO's Southeast European headquarters. Thanks to the Armed Forces Radio broadcasting in the base, anyone with a radio could receive American news, music, and sports programs. American soldiers at the base provided lucrative trade for local businesses, so English was a commonly used language at the city center. Moreover, the city also had a Levantine population, mainly wealthy tradespeople. Since they were of mixed racial descent and highly educated, they could speak several foreign languages, including English, adding to the number of people the volunteers could interact with in their mother tongue. Thus, it was no surprise that Izmir was one of the volunteers' most desired places to serve.¹⁵⁴

Ankara and Istanbul had similar reasons for the modern view they got from the volunteers. Both cities had a strong presence of American and European influence due to diplomatic and military personnel, economic development, and educational facilities.¹⁵⁵ In addition, Istanbul, Antalya, and Bursa's modernization were connected to the touristic facilities in these cities. These cities had state-of-the-art hotels and services, attracting modern and wealthy people, making them very different from the volunteer's rural Anatolian experience.

Other Turkish cities, even if they were provincial capitals, were not described as modern by the volunteers. Many volunteers served in provincial capitals in Turkey, such as Elazığ, Trabzon, Gaziantep, Nevşehir, Erzurum, Giresun, and Samsun. They describe these cities as traditional or conservative. It seems that many Turkish people at the time also had similar views. Susan Fleming Holm states that she and her husband were delighted to learn they were assigned to Erzurum Atatürk University as

¹⁵⁴ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 20–21.

¹⁵⁵ Lowry, *An Ongoing Affair, Turkey & I. Book I*, 125–28; Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 80–109; Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 97–98.

English teachers. A university in a provincial capital was preferable to a village or a small town. However, they quickly learned that many Turks from Ankara and the western part of the country considered Erzurum as an underdeveloped city and a challenging assignment.¹⁵⁶

The difference in development could be observed within the same province. For example, Mary Cates volunteered in the town of Kepsut in Balıkesir between 1968-1969. She did not have access to electricity or running water in her house. Cates' living standards were not much different from Lowry's, who lived in a mountain village in the same province.¹⁵⁷ Having volunteered in Dereköy in Burdur for over a year, Olson and her husband left the village. Their new appointment was also in Balıkesir, in a village called Armutalan. Olson's description of Armutalan was very different from Dereköy's. Armutalan had paved roads, running water, several shops, and a hotel. Ninety percent of the people were literate and had a very industrious attitude. The village had Turkey's second most expensive CARE project, a modern flour mill. After living in Dereköy for a long time, Olson said they were much happier in Armutalan because it was much more developed.¹⁵⁸

To sum up, according to the volunteers, Turkey in the 1960s was underdeveloped in many fields. Infrastructure in the countryside required significant investment. Villagers did not have access to electricity, telephone, and running water in their houses. As a result, living conditions in the Turkish countryside were archaic compared to modern nations. Simple things in their home country, such as taking a shower, were a chore in Turkey, while actual chores were much harder due to the lack of electricity or household appliances. Transportation was another crucial

¹⁵⁶ Fleming Holm, "Conversion in Erzurum," 51.

¹⁵⁷ Parlak, "Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Talat Sait Halman," 59–60.

¹⁵⁸ Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 123–26.

problem in the countryside. The roads were in terrible condition. Hardly any people owned vehicles. Moreover, transportation from villages to towns and cities was not convenient due to the low number of vehicles and the local climate affecting the road conditions. The volunteers also observed that the level of development was not equal in Turkey. Major cities like Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir were modernized, while the countryside and most other provincial capitals were underdeveloped or developing. The volunteers evaluated the development of a city regarding its infrastructure, education level, and American and European influence.

3.2 Healthcare and Hygiene

Peace Corps' analysis of Turkey's healthcare system and hygiene did not display a bright image. Medical development was insufficient, access to healthcare was limited to cities, viral diseases were a serious threat, and food safety and sanitation were questionable. Peace Corps Turkey developed projects in the healthcare field to fight against these problems. Volunteers were warned to avoid Turkish hospitals and directed to Peace Corps doctors and hospitals in American military bases. Volunteers observed several issues in the Turkish healthcare system during their assignments. They were frequently getting ill due to problems in food safety and sanitation. Moreover, the volunteers in the villages witnessed that the villagers did not have easy access to the hospitals. Traditional remedies were more prevalent than modern medicine.

According to the Peace Corps, the healthcare system in Turkey was seriously underdeveloped. Peace Corps Turkey worked on several projects to develop healthcare in the country. Many volunteers worked at hospitals, medical schools, and

universities as instructors. There were also projects about maternal and child health, birth control, and tuberculosis control.¹⁵⁹ The tuberculosis control project was active in several cities, including Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Adana, due to the poor health and sanitation conditions in the poorer neighborhoods of the large cities. The project in a shanty town neighborhood called Gülviren in Ankara was especially successful and gained the gratitude of the local people.¹⁶⁰

Peace Corps viewed the conditions of Turkish hospitals as insufficient. Sally O'Connell, a volunteer who worked on a project to educate Turkish nurses, even argued that people in Turkey did not know exactly what a nurse was, making their job extremely difficult.¹⁶¹ Peace Corps also assigned its own doctors to Ankara, Izmir, and Istanbul. The volunteers were told to avoid Turkish hospitals and go to the Peace Corps doctors or the hospitals at American military bases in Turkey.¹⁶²

Peace Corps viewed Turkey as a dangerous place for the volunteers' health. Viral diseases were a primary concern for the organization, and they treated Turkey similarly to a tropical third-world country assignment. Thus, the volunteers' struggle for their health started before arriving in the country. They got vaccinated for several diseases before coming to Turkey, including yellow fever, typhoid, hepatitis, typhus, and flu. According to the volunteers, these shots had varying side effects. Aches, fever, and dizziness were not uncommon. In addition, some of those shots were so painful that people could not sit for hours.¹⁶³ The other problem with this process was that the protection these shots provided would not last for the two-year

¹⁵⁹ Eşel, *Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri*, 140.

¹⁶⁰ Eşel, 145–47.

¹⁶¹ Eşel, 141.

¹⁶² Eşel, 143–44.

¹⁶³ Pfunder, *Village in the Meadows*, 15–16; McCarthy, *A Peace Corps Volunteer In Turkey*, 6; Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 8.

assignment of the volunteers. They did not get vaccinated in Turkey again, either. So, the volunteers did not get full protection for the viral diseases that worried the Peace Corps so much. Heath Lowry's anecdote in his memoir was a good summary of this process.¹⁶⁴ (Lowry, 17-18):

The trip [from New York to Ankara] had not been a pleasant one as the departure from Kennedy Airport had been preceded by a last visit from our Greek-American Peace Corps doctor who had suddenly remembered that, along with all the inoculations and vaccinations he had already inflicted upon us, he had forgotten the mandatory shot for hepatitis: gamma globulin. This meant that one by one, sixty-nine Peace Corps volunteers were ushered into a small side room, ordered to bare their backsides, and, in accordance with their body weights, received the mandatory shot (or shots as was the case with me,) . . . We were all assured that hepatitis was a major problem in Turkey and that this was a necessary preventative. What we were not told was that the half-life of gamma globulin was six weeks, that meant that we were only going to be protected for the first month and a half of what was scheduled to be a twenty-one-month stint in a Turkish village.

Peace Corps volunteers observed problems of access to healthcare and an undeveloped medical system in Turkey. According to the volunteers, Turkish villages did not have much experience with hospitals and doctors. Although, in Turkey, approximately sixty five percent of the population lived in villages during the 1960s, most of them did not have hospitals or health clinics.¹⁶⁵ Thus, villagers needed to go to the cities to access health services. Trips to hospitals were reserved for the most urgent situations because the villagers could not find transportation to cities whenever needed. Moreover, villagers' inexperience with cities and government agencies made them shy away from unnecessary interactions.¹⁶⁶

Since the villagers did not go to hospitals often, traditional healthcare methods were common in the villages instead of modern medicine. For example, Pfunder mentions

¹⁶⁴ Lowry, *An Ongoing Affair, Turkey & I. Book I*, 17–18.

¹⁶⁵ Ahmet Mithat Kızıroğlu, “Türkiye’nin Nüfus Değişimine Göre İl Bazında Kentleşmesine Bir Bakış (1965-2014),” *Karadeniz Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 9, no. 16 (October 13, 2017): 158.

¹⁶⁶ Chen and Albritton, *A Small Key Opens Big Doors*, 141.

that he was horrified to realize that villagers in the region (Trabzon) used leeches to treat jaundice instead of going to a hospital.¹⁶⁷

Heath Lowry experienced the fatal problems that lack of access to healthcare and modern medicine could cause for the villagers. In Lowry's village, a young woman who recently gave birth got poisoned. Lowry convinced the villagers to take her to a hospital immediately; otherwise, she could die. The nearest hospital was 25 kilometers away in Balıkesir. There was a snowstorm that night, and the road was in terrible condition. The only vehicle in the village which could operate in these conditions was a tractor. So, they went to the hospital on the open trailer of a tractor. The trip lasted more than an hour. Unfortunately, the woman died in the hospital. According to the doctor, they were too late to bring her. She was poisoned due to self-medication, which was common in the villages. Her baby was sick and did not nurse. So, she used the only medicine she could find in the house and took two tablespoons of it. The "medicine" was purchased over a decade ago by a long-deceased relative, which turned out to be thyme oil. According to the doctor, a drop or two of thyme oil was a powerful heart stimulant. However, two tablespoons of it were fatal.¹⁶⁸

Lowry was there with the family at the hospital because there was a common misconception in villages about volunteers. The volunteers had basic training in first aid during the Peace Corps training. They also carried a small medical kit because Peace Corps believed that the villages in Turkey did not have access to healthcare. (A small key, 141) A small amount of training and basic first-aid materials were enough for the villagers to view the volunteers as health experts. So, it was common for the

¹⁶⁷ Pfunder, *Village in the Meadows*, 131.

¹⁶⁸ Lowry, *An Ongoing Affair, Turkey & I. Book I*, 59–65.

villagers to ask for the volunteers' help with their health issues. Lowry was summoned to the poisoned woman's house with his medicine kit for this reason. Bonnie Pura also mentions a similar situation. When a camel attacked a man in the village, the villagers asked for help with her medicine kit. She could not stop the bleeding for two hours. Since there was no available vehicle at the time, he waited for hours for the village bus to go to the hospital in the city.¹⁶⁹ Julie Smith Olson was another volunteer who acted as the village nurse. Since she taught at a village kindergarten that was built as a Peace Corps project, villagers sent their children to her whenever they got ill.¹⁷⁰

Another concern for the volunteers in Turkey was the food safety in the country. Peace Corps warned the volunteers in Turkey not to eat local products in the villages and boil the water before using or drinking. They were also told not to eat vegetable or fruit products in restaurants. Instead, they should have preferred well-done meat dishes.¹⁷¹ Realistically, these directions by the Peace Corps were not possible to follow, especially for the volunteers in the villages or small towns. They ate what the local people did. However, the volunteers observed unhygienic conditions for food in Turkey and suffered consequent problems. For example, while volunteering in Ceyhan, Kevin McCarthy mostly ate in local restaurants. Although he argues that the food was cheap and delicious, it was also responsible for his stomach problems for much of the time he lived in Turkey.¹⁷² Maranee Sanders taught at the Girls Institute in Gaziantep as a Peace Corps volunteer. She also had weekly visits to nearby villages teaching Home Economics. They got food poisoning on one of her visits to a

¹⁶⁹ Chen and Albritton, *A Small Key Opens Big Doors*, 141.

¹⁷⁰ Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 103–5.

¹⁷¹ Eşel, *Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri*, 143–44.

¹⁷² McCarthy, *A Peace Corps Volunteer In Turkey*, 37.

nearby village alongside a volunteer colleague Judy Johnson. They had to be immediately taken to a hospital for diarrhea, nausea, and faintness. They stayed at the American Missionary Hospital in the city. Sanders stated that they were so dehydrated that they could not give urine samples at the hospital.¹⁷³

Among the volunteers, the most dramatic example of food poisoning happened to Tarry Hart Davis. Tarry was one of the Peace Corps volunteers assigned to work with the Turkish Ministry of Tourism. Ministry put together a cruise for foreign travel writers, and Tarry and a few other volunteers were there to assist the ministry. At one of the cruise stops, people got food poisoning in a restaurant due to the Russian Salad. In addition to the food poisoning, Tarry's story also showcases Peace Corps' opinion about the Turkish medical system.¹⁷⁴

Everyone enjoyed the lunch and particularly the Rus Salatasi [Russian Salad]. Too much mayo for me, so I just ate a bite. We boarded the buses and resumed our trip to Alanya. About half an hour before Alanya, people began asking if we could stop the bus. They leapt from the doorways and ran for bushes or large rocks, and you immediately heard the sound that only comes from people in distress. Some were worse than others. The Turks were starting to feel the evil Rus Salatasi tainted by the sun and heat too. So those of us still ambulatory got people back on the bus and told the driver to drive like the devil to the boat. In the meantime, the Turks, who had radio communication, put the word out. . . . Many were so dehydrated from vomiting and defecating that they were no longer conscious. The ship itself was not prepared to handle such an emergency either. Calls went out to the closest U.S. base with a hospital, İncirlik, near Adana, and they radioed they were sending helicopters to evacuate the worst cases.

Tarry and the other volunteers on the ship were sent to a Turkish hospital in Alanya:

The doctor was very professional but overwhelmed. He and his staff went immediately to hydrating everyone. Water. In glasses. Most of us began to perk up, although food would definitely not be on our minds for a while. Pam and Fred [the other volunteers] were not in good shape, and the doc told me so. They needed more than glasses of water. They needed IVs and drip bags. And the doc said I had to give permission since they were Americans and I was an American. Now the Peace Corps trainers had programmed us to avoid

¹⁷³ Chen and Albritton, *A Small Key Opens Big Doors*, 97.

¹⁷⁴ Thompson, *Arkadaşlar Membership Directory 2016*, 42–43.

injections in Turkey at all costs since needles were sometimes reused, and I personally had seen vaccinations in my life where 30 students got vaccinated with one super large syringe. So, of course, I refused. The doc and I argued loudly, and I remained adamant. But Pam and Fred were not getting better. Finally, I said to myself this is stupid stubbornness. I told the doc to start the drip bags. A few minutes later, a delivery guy arrived from the local pharmacy with a box of saline solution drip bags. The doc pulled one out and showed me—a complete hermetically sealed unit, including a needle, all in one little plastic bag with a big "Made in the USA" label. I paid the pharmacy guy, and the doc connected the bags. I felt like the fool that I had been. The doc forgave me after one last tongue-lashing. Pam and Fred were on the mend by the next morning, and we arranged a private dolmuş [minibus] back to Antalya.

One of the main reasons for food poisoning in Turkey was the lack of refrigeration.

At the time, refrigeration was rare, even in the cities. In villages, it was absent altogether because most villages did not have access to electricity. People needed to be very careful consuming meat and dairy products because they could spoil quickly without refrigeration.¹⁷⁵

In short, Turkey was a tough assignment for the volunteers regarding health conditions. Even before arriving in the country, they had to be prepared with several vaccinations. They also needed to be careful about what they ate and where.

Moreover, volunteers in the countryside witnessed the lack of access to healthcare in Turkish villages, along with the problems it could create. The villagers viewed volunteers as health experts because of their first-aid training and medical kits. Peace Corps regarded Turkey's healthcare conditions as underdeveloped. Peace Corps Turkey worked to support the healthcare system with several projects in both cities and the countryside. They also warned the volunteers about Turkish hospitals and tried to provide American doctors for them.

¹⁷⁵ Pfunder, *Village in the Meadows*, 45–57.

3.3 Conclusion

Peace Corps Turkey was a tough assignment for the volunteers. Although they were trained to cope with the hardships of living in a developing country, the underdevelopment of certain aspects of life in Turkey was too different from their previous lives to ignore. Living conditions in Turkey were especially hard for the volunteers in villages. There was no electricity, telephone, or running water. Furthermore, unpaved roads and unreliable transportation to towns and cities from villages did not help their situation either. According to the volunteers, development was unequal and limited in Turkey. Only a few major cities were described as modern. Cities like Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir were modern because they had developed infrastructures and Western influence. People in modern cities were more educated, which manifested in their ability to speak English. Europeans or Americans were more present in these cities, making them more desirable volunteer assignments. Cities with advanced tourism facilities were also modern because they provided modern luxuries like hot water, television, and state-of-the-art hotels. Moreover, they were gathering places of modern and wealthy people. Thus, modernization was more apparent in these cities. Other cities in Turkey, including provincial capitals, were mainly described as traditional or conservative. In terms of infrastructure, they were better than villages but not entirely different. Small towns or poor neighborhoods in cities could also have limited access to running water or electricity. Beasts of burden or other animal life were also present in many cities and towns because people still used them.

Hygiene and healthcare conditions in Turkey were also problematic for the Peace Corps. Peace Corps' assessment of the healthcare conditions in Turkey led them to take specific precautions for the volunteers. The volunteers were vaccinated before

coming to Turkey for several viral diseases, such as yellow fever, typhus, and typhoid. Also, they received warnings about food safety and sanitation in Turkey and were asked to choose what they eat and where they eat it carefully. The volunteers suffered frequent illnesses due to these problems. In addition, Peace Corps cautioned the volunteers from going to Turkish hospitals. They tried to provide the volunteers with American doctors in Peace Corps bureaus or hospitals in NATO bases in Turkey.

Peace Corps Turkey had several projects to help develop the healthcare system in Turkey. Many volunteers worked as instructors in medical schools and hospitals.

Moreover, they were assigned to rural and urban development projects such as tuberculosis control in cities, maternal and child health courses, and providing birth control pills. Turkish villagers saw the volunteers as health experts because they had basic first-aid training and medical kits to be used in emergencies. Access to healthcare was very limited in villages because hospitals or clinics were in cities. Going to a hospital was not easy for villagers because most did not have cars or other vehicles, and public transportation from villages to cities was unreliable. So, they went to hospitals only when there was no other choice. Most of the time, they resorted to traditional healthcare methods instead of modern medicine.

Overall, the underdevelopment of the infrastructure and healthcare system in Turkey was prevalent in the volunteers' experience. Underdevelopment affected the towns and villages in Turkey more than the large cities. However, in the 1960s, most Turkish people lived in villages. So, Turkey needed to spread its modernization process to the countryside if it wanted to develop the living conditions of its people.

CHAPTER IV:

GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE

Peace Corps Turkey volunteers interacted with the Turkish government as a necessity of their work in the country. They came to Turkey with the permission of the Turkish government. They worked closely with government organizations, such as schools, hospitals, orphanages, and ministries. When they first arrived in Turkey, the Turkish prime minister and one of the founders of Turkey, İsmet İnönü, welcomed them at his office. The volunteers speak highly of him as a charismatic and charming leader. In short, the volunteers acquired considerable knowledge and experience with the Turkish government in the 1960s, and they discussed the Turkish government in their memoirs.

The volunteers served in almost every province in Turkey. They served in large cities, small towns, remote villages, and everywhere in between. Thus, they were able to observe the relationship between the government and people in rural and urban settings. The volunteers viewed the government as the force behind modernization in Turkey. Turkish government created projects for both urban and rural development. However, there was some resistance by the Turkish people against the government's modernization efforts.

For the Turkish government, modernization meant integration into the Western world and having a modern capitalist economy. The government worked for rural and urban development to accomplish this goal. Rural development projects were problematic because there was a divide between the "modernized" government officials responsible for rural development and Turkish villagers. Many government officials acted condescendingly towards the villagers and did not take their jobs seriously. Also, many projects failed because they were impractical, and the government needed to give more consideration to local economic and social conditions.

For urban development, the government focused on developing education and tourism, which represented opening Turkey to foreigners and the Western world to Turkish people. Peace Corps volunteers worked hand in hand with the Turkish government to develop these fields. Most Peace Corps Turkey volunteers served as English teachers. The government believed learning English as a second language was necessary in the modern world. So, the volunteers were an excellent solution for the government, which required more English teachers in schools and universities. The volunteers also worked on tourism projects. According to the government, most Turkish people and businesses needed to learn how to treat foreigners properly as tourists. So, the domestic projects for developing tourism were mostly focused on educating Turkish people.

The volunteers also observed that the Turkish government faced resistance in its modernization efforts. In the countryside, the divide between the government officials and the villagers created problems. Many government officials did not care for the villagers they were supposed to serve. Moreover, the villagers needed convincing to practicality and application of the development projects before supporting them. The government was not always successful in this regard. In cities

and towns, the resistance to the government's efforts mostly came from leftist groups in Turkey. They considered that development projects served American interests rather than Turkish people. They opposed the government and the Peace Corps with protests, boycotts, and with leftist media.

4.1 Turkish Government and Modernization

The volunteers saw the Turkish government as the modernizing force in Turkey. The government was developing projects to this end in both urban and rural areas. In Turkish villages, community development projects were common. The government opened vocational courses such as carpentry, masonry, and sewing in many villages. The government's development efforts in cities and towns focused on infrastructure and education. Moreover, there were projects to stimulate tourism in suitable places. However, the success of the government's development projects and the government's competency in this regard were questioned.

Malcolm Pfunder, assigned to Çayırıcı village in Trabzon, is the volunteer who analyzed the Turkish government's rural development projects the most in detail. First, he discussed a cattle breeding project he described as "remarkably successful."¹⁷⁶ He explained that nearly every house in the region had dairy cattle in varying numbers according to their income level. The villagers used the cattle to produce dairy products for household consumption. The cattle in villages were from a native breed which was very small, "not much bigger than a large dog."¹⁷⁷ Also,

¹⁷⁶ Pfunder, 45.

¹⁷⁷ Pfunder, 44.

they did not produce large amounts of milk. Turkish government developed a project to convert the local breeds to Jersey breed cattle. Jersey cattle were much larger than the native breed and had higher milk yields. Pfunder described how the project was conducted.¹⁷⁸

Along the Black Sea coast and major roads, this [conversion] was done through artificial insemination. A vet from a nearby city would come along in his jeep and dispense vials of bull semen, sometimes administered by the roadside right then and there. Where the roads were not good, they used a different system. The muhtar in our village had been persuaded to accept three gigantic Jersey bulls from the Devlet (the central government). A barn to house them had been constructed earlier that year, and an ongoing supply of feed was also part of the deal. In return, the muhtar agreed to make the bulls "available" for cross-breeding. People came with their animals, not only from our village but from several villages, to take advantage of the program.

However, Pfunder argued that the government needed to bring electricity to villages to benefit from this project fully. The surplus production created thanks to this project could not be preserved because there was no refrigeration. Thus, rather than selling the excess butter and cheese, the villagers had to consume most of it before it spoiled.¹⁷⁹ Nonetheless, as Pfunder described, the government created a successful program. The program's application was varied regarding transportation accessibility, and additional requirements such as housing and feed were also considered. However, the other projects Pfunder discussed lacked the same level of consideration, which resulted in failure.

Pfunder described another animal husbandry project, this time for chickens. The Turkish government decided that the local breeds of chickens were scrawny, so they did not have much meat. Also, the traditional method of poultry farming, which meant the chickens were freely wandering outside and eating whatever they found, did not produce many eggs. So, the government supplied the Rhode Island Red breed

¹⁷⁸ Pfunder, 44–45.

¹⁷⁹ Pfunder, 139–40.

of chickens to villagers, along with some monetary assistance, several months' supply of factory-manufactured chicken feed, and building materials for chicken coops. Rhode Island Reds were meatier than the local breeds, and chicken coops were a more productive egg production method. However, the project ended in failure. Although the new chickens were meatier, which was supposed to increase chicken sales, the Turkish villages were mostly non-cash subsistence agricultural economies at the time. So, the villagers did not have spare money to purchase chickens to eat.

Another problem was the chicken feed. Although the new breed produced more eggs, which brought additional income to villagers, once the government sent feed was finished, the villagers could not afford to buy new feed. The villagers had two choices. First, they would free the chickens from the coops to feed from the ground as before, resulting in lower egg yield. Second, they could feed the chickens in the coops with something else, which the muhtar in Pfunder's village did. He fed the chickens with corn, the most commonly produced grain in the Eastern Black Sea region. However, corn proved to be too nutritious for the chickens. They gained an excessive amount of weight and could not produce eggs anymore.¹⁸⁰ The government's failure to analyze the economic aspect of village life was the main reason the project was not successful.

The poultry project was one of many times Pfunder observed a government program was oblivious to the local economics. The government started a carpet weaving project in Trabzon to diversify the local economy in the countryside. Female villagers from the region were brought to Istanbul to learn carpet weaving in

¹⁸⁰ Pfunder, 57–58.

government courses. The project aimed to start a regional cottage industry and increase women's economic involvement. The government provided the villagers with looms, dyed yarn, and a single yarn pattern with government credit. So, the villagers went into debt, believing this project could create an additional income. However, there were several problems. Firstly, there was not any place they could purchase new yarn after they used all the government gave them. Second, there was no market for the villagers' rugs and carpets. The carpets looked all the same because there was only a single pattern, which was not a high-quality product. Third, since the villagers could not sell the products, they could not pay the credit debt to the government. Pfunder explained that the government-affiliated textile producer Sümerbank eventually purchased half of the products. However, the villagers did not weave more carpets after the project failed. The only thing they gained from it was a credit debt.¹⁸¹

Pfunder witnessed other agricultural development projects in his village, such as modern beekeeping and the production of alfalfa and vetch, that were not successful for similar reasons.¹⁸² These projects were not developed properly, with sufficient consideration for local economic conditions. However, the number of projects and the government's continuous efforts show that rural development was significant for the Turkish government.

In addition to rural development projects, the government used education as another tool for modernization. In villages, primarily, vocational courses served this purpose. The vocational courses for carpentry, sewing, and weaving were common in Turkish

¹⁸¹ Pfunder, 58–59.

¹⁸² Pfunder, 116–18.

villages. They aimed to teach new skills, create new jobs, and diversify the local economy.

In towns and cities, modernization through education was more directly applicable through schools. The purpose of education was to raise modern and qualified individuals for a modern Turkey. Peace Corps Turkey served an essential purpose for this end. Seventy percent of all the Peace Corps Turkey volunteers worked in the field of education, and almost all of them served as English teachers.¹⁸³ Although Peace Corps wanted to send volunteers to Turkey in several fields, from pediatric nephrology to agricultural development, the Turkish government's main request was English teachers.¹⁸⁴ Integration into the Western capitalist system required qualified individuals with quality education and language skills. Since English was the lingua franca of the Western world, learning English was very important.

The volunteers served in all provinces of Turkey except Hakkari and Bingöl as English teachers at middle schools, high schools, universities, and Adult Education Directorates.¹⁸⁵ It is not easy to assess the success of this endeavor since it was not a process that would produce results in the short term, and the Peace Corps Turkey program ended prematurely. Many volunteers who served as teachers initially believed they did not accomplish much in Turkey. However, many volunteers' opinions changed over time. As Tom Brosnahan, who taught English in İzmir Maarif Koleji put it, "We would see many of our students go on to make valuable contributions to Turkey's development, in part because of the language training we provided."¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Özbalkan, *Gizli Belgelerle Barış Gönüllüleri*, 163.

¹⁸⁴ Eşel, *Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri*, 101–42.

¹⁸⁵ Eşel, 102.

¹⁸⁶ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 144.

Barbara Bryan, who taught English in a high school in Eskişehir, told a reunion story with her former students, which provides a perfect example for Brosnahan's comments. Bryan and Donna (the other Peace Corps volunteer in the school) were tracked down and invited to a school reunion party by their former students. Bryan described their former students' accomplishments.¹⁸⁷

Among them are architects, doctors, scientists, professors, military officers, business people. There's a dentist, a jazz guitarist, and, yes, several English teachers! Although a few have not used their English and are reluctant to speak it, most can make themselves understood, and many are totally fluent. Some tell us that knowing English changed their lives. Touchingly, others say that the kindness and interest that their Peace Corps teachers showed them opened up new possibilities to them.

Kevin M. McCarthy, who taught English to middle school and high school students in Ceyhan, claims that, in addition to students, some adults in the town were also very enthusiastic about learning English. According to McCarthy, many adults joined the after-school English classes given by Peace Corps volunteers because learning English could provide better jobs in Turkey. In his memoir, McCarthy mentions that one of his students, a local banker, was promoted to a better position in Ankara because he learned English.¹⁸⁸

There was also an English course by the Peace Corps volunteers in Izmir specifically for the taxi drivers in the city. Many foreigners visited İzmir for tourism, NATO base, and business purposes. Thus, Peace Corps Turkey developed a project with the local government to teach taxi drivers English and help drivers and foreigners communicate better.¹⁸⁹

Another area of development for the Turkish government was tourism. The volunteers did not fail to observe Turkey's great tourism potential. The country had a

¹⁸⁷ Chen and Albritton, *A Small Key Opens Big Doors*, 27–29.

¹⁸⁸ McCarthy, *A Peace Corps Volunteer In Turkey*, 39.

¹⁸⁹ Eşel, *Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri*, 153.

rich culture, many historical sites, and abundant natural beauties to experience.

Although the volunteers learned about Turkey's tourism potential through their experience in the country, most of the world needed to be made aware of it. So, in the 1960s, the Turkish government developed projects to utilize this potential. The Peace Corps volunteers witnessed the domestic application of these projects. According to the government, for tourists to have a good experience in Turkey, first, Turkish people needed to improve some necessary skills. The aforementioned "English for taxi drivers" project was an example of this.

There were other projects where the government and Peace Corps worked together. İzmir Province Tourism Directorate and Peace Corps conducted a project called "Türkleri Tanıyalım," Get to Know the Turks. Foreigners coming to İzmir were hosted in Turkish families' homes who could speak foreign languages. The project aimed to show Turkish culture and hospitality to tourists who could experience it in a warm and intimate environment.¹⁹⁰

In 1968, Turkey's Ministry of Tourism wanted to make an educational movie showing people what tourism was and how Turks should behave toward tourists. The movie would be shown in village coffeehouses and cinemas in cities. The movie consisted of imaginary scenarios a married couple of tourists encountered in Turkey. Tom Brosnahan played the husband. In his memoir, Brosnahan described some of the scenarios they played. One scenario was the "Tourists Receiving a Bad Service." In the movie, the tourist couple would come to a restaurant and see that the glasses were not clean. Later, when the waitress carried the soup the tourist couple ordered, he dipped his thumb into the bowl. In the second part of the scenario, the proper way to

¹⁹⁰ Eşel, 153.

treat the tourists was shown with clean glasses and hygienic food. There were other scenarios teaching how the workers in the Tourist Offices should behave or how the villagers should act if tourists get stranded in the village.¹⁹¹

Martin B. Tracy and his wife, teaching English in Ürgüp in Nevşehir, participated in another tourism project with the help of the local officials and people. Thanks to its natural beauty and history, Cappadocia started attracting foreign tourists' attention. However, Martin and his wife believed that some improvements in local restaurants could be beneficial for the tourists and the local business.¹⁹² (A small key, 162):

While there were several restaurants in town, their simple décor and rustic ambiance were not all that appealing to tourists, and the restaurants got little business from them. One obvious problem was that the restaurants did not have menus, and a foreigner who did not speak Turkish had great difficulty in knowing what or how to order. . . . Over a period of several months, my wife and I had many occasions at the coffeehouses or in restaurants to engage the owners, the mayor, the high school principal, and local businessmen in conversations about tourism. These informal discussions served the role of brainstorming sessions that led to a number of ideas about improving ways of securing more of the tourists' money for the local businesses, especially the restaurants. The first proposal was to have menus written in both Turkish and English which my wife and I were glad to provide. This was followed by the suggestion that restaurants could improve their appeal by offering tourists a pre-packaged box lunch that could be taken with them on their treks around the area since, at that time, the nearby villages provided virtually no access to food and drink. Both of these seemingly small initiatives made a significant difference in the volume of business.

To sum up, Peace Corps Turkey volunteers viewed the Turkish government as the modernizing force in the country. Government-supported community development projects in cities and villages were a common economic and educational development method. The rural development projects were not always successful because the government (local or national) did not assess the economic and geographic conditions properly. Peace Corps was a strong government partner in

¹⁹¹ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 110–20.

¹⁹² Chen and Albritton, *A Small Key Opens Big Doors*, 162.

teaching Turkish people English. English was the necessary language to integrate into the Western Capitalist system fully. Peace Corps Turkey volunteers, who mostly served as English teachers, helped the government in this regard. Tourism was another field of cooperation between the Turkish government and the Peace Corps. The government believed that to utilize the country's great tourism potential, Turkish people should be educated and improve their behavior and treatment towards tourists. The volunteers and the government worked on several tourism projects to achieve this goal.

4.2 Resistance to Modernization

Westernization was part of Turkey's history from the beginning. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's reforms on the Turkish alphabet, clothes, law, and women's rights were part of the country's westernization or modernization process. As discussed in the previous subchapter, the volunteers explained that the government continued its efforts for modernization in the 1960s. However, they also observed resistance to the government's efforts in Turkey. According to volunteers, two different groups opposed the government's projects. First, the people in the countryside were not convinced by all government projects or perceived them as threatening their lifestyles. Volunteers also commented that the government generally did not respect the villagers and treated them poorly. The second group that contested the government's modernization efforts was Turkey's leftist groups. In their view, modernization efforts harmed the country because their actual purpose was to serve American imperialism. They were also against the Peace Corps for the same reason.

Peace Corps Turkey volunteers who served in villages noticed that villages had their own customs and traditions they held for centuries. However, they also observed that the villages were not closed societies. Thanks to radios and newspapers, Turkish villagers were knowledgeable about domestic and global politics and open to improvement. So, resistance to modernization efforts in the countryside was not simply caused by stubbornness against change. According to the volunteers, the main cause was distrust and fear of the government. On the other hand, the government, or its officials, believed the villagers to be inferior and did not care to understand them.

A common observation by the volunteers who served in villages was that life in Turkish villages stayed the same for a long time. Visiting a village called Akçakent in Gaziantep, Maranee Sanders commented that she had the sense that life in the village continued without much significant change since the Roman times.¹⁹³ Observing a village in Kırşehir, Martin B. Tracy stated that “A visitor in the thirteenth century would have observed life in the village that looks much like it did in the mid-1960s.”¹⁹⁴ Heath Lowry, Malcolm Pfunder, and Julie Smith Olson made similar comments about their villages in their memoirs. However, they were also aware that change had already started in rural Turkey, and they were a part of it.

Communication was one of the most critical parts of modernization. Turkish villagers were connected to the rest of the country via the most popular communication device at the time, the radio. People listened to the radio even in the remotest villages. Many volunteers observed that Turkish villagers were knowledgeable about domestic and international politics thanks to the daily information they gathered from radio programs. Villagers frequently discussed with

¹⁹³ Chen and Albritton, 97.

¹⁹⁴ Chen and Albritton, 161.

the volunteers about President Lyndon B. Johnson's politics, the Kennedy assassination, Vietnam War, American-Turkish relations, and racism in the United States. The radio was not common enough to be in every villager's house yet, but every coffeehouse had a radio, and every village had coffeehouses where the village men spent most of their days.

Volunteers were in the villages to change things. The villagers' agricultural methods, birth control methods, the way the villagers built their houses, the way they raised children, and the way they did house chores were all on the list of changes by the volunteers. The volunteers commented that the villagers were enthusiastic about projects in these areas if they were convinced of the advantages. For example, Lowry and Adult Education Directorate teachers in the village developed a new model village house which was more economical and practical than the traditional village houses in Bereketli. They built the house, which became a lodging for the village school teachers. Impressed by the house, the villagers started building new houses similar to the model house.¹⁹⁵

According to volunteers, Turkish villagers' attitude was not always this positive with government projects. The government and the villagers did not have great relations. The villagers believed that the government officials did not care about the villagers and saw them as inferiors.

Many volunteers discussed the government and villagers' relationship. For instance, Julie Smith Olson, assigned to Dereköy village in Burdur, stated that the government officials did not visit the village and they believed the villagers were "a bunch of lazy, no-good gypsies."¹⁹⁶ She saw this as one of the main reasons the development

¹⁹⁵ Lowry, *An Ongoing Affair, Turkey & I. Book I*, 155–57.

¹⁹⁶ Olson, *To Make a Difference*, 117.

projects were unsuccessful in the village. Malcolm Pfunder had similar comments about government officials in Trabzon. He explained that the director of the Adult Education Department rarely visited villages and "made every effort to emphasize the wide gulf between himself and the lowly villagers."¹⁹⁷ Pfunder argued that many other government officials, such as people from the Ministry of Health and Agricultural Extension office, had a similar attitude. He said that only once a representative of the Governor's office visited the village, and it was to "chide the villagers for their unsophisticated request to form a village development cooperative."¹⁹⁸

Heath Lowry experienced a Governor's visit to his village. His description of the event displays the condescending attitude a government official could have in the 1960s Turkey.¹⁹⁹

Shortly after, the long-anticipated car drove into the village square, and when the driver saw the condition of the mud surrounding the coffeehouse, he stopped some thirty meters away from the door. He jumped out to open the car door for the Governor, who, in due course, emerged from the vehicle immaculately attired as always and slowly made his way through four inches of mud to the packed coffee house. Those assembled jumped to their feet and shouted out, "Hoş geldiniz Vali Bey!" (Welcome Vali Bey!) to which our guest, who was looking quickly around the room for me, mumbled a response. I, together with the men of the village, had removed my kasket as a sign of respect to our visitor, and when he spotted me standing next to the Muhtar, he marched over, grabbed it from my hand and waving it around said "What is this you're wearing?" I replied "That is my hat," and reached my hand forward to retrieve it. Instead of handing it to me, he dropped it on the floor and, in so doing, spotted my shining lastik and the mest [village-type shoes] that they covered. He turned livid, and for a moment, I thought that he was about to have a stroke. Instead, he motioned for a chair and sat down, gesturing for me to take a seat across from him. After he regained his composure, he said, "What are those things on your feet?" Before I had a chance to answer, he began a tirade that, while seemingly directed at me, was clearly intended for all in attendance. The gist of his remarks, that went on for close to fifteen minutes, was that I had been brought at great expense (as if he had paid for my travel) from across the ocean ostensibly to teach these people

¹⁹⁷ Pfunder, *Village in the Meadows*, 150.

¹⁹⁸ Pfunder, 151.

¹⁹⁹ Lowry, *An Ongoing Affair, Turkey & I. Book I*, 88–89.

to live like human beings rather than animals. Rather than setting the proper example for them, I had become one of them.

As Lowry's Governor's visit experience displayed, the government viewed itself as the force behind modernization in Turkey. The villagers needed to wear proper dress shoes and western style modern clothes "to live like human beings." However, these changes were not practical for the villagers. Western-style shoes and clothing were too expensive for the villagers. Moreover, they were not fit to village life where the streets were dirt and mud, and the main occupation was farming. So, despite Governor's berating and condescending, the villagers kept their traditional clothing.²⁰⁰

Impracticality was not always the reason for the government to fail in a rural development project. Martin B. Tracy mentioned a story showing why the government failed to modernize a village due to a local belief and the government trying to ignore it. According to Tracy, the government wanted to build a pipeline in a village in Kırşehir to give the village access to running water. However, the villagers believed that carrying water from the spring, two kilometers away, represented religious devotion. So, they did not want the pipeline. Carrying the water was an arduous task that the village women did, and the religious meaning given to the task showed the government that the villagers were too backward to have a say in the topic. Thus, the government forced villagers to construct the pipeline at gunpoint with gendarmes. As expected, the villagers dismantled the pipeline when the military force left. Tracy explained the government's failure in the project.²⁰¹

Government agency's intentions to modernize rural communities "for their own good" ignored the wishes of the community within their religious, traditional, and historical contexts. Moreover, excluding the community in the decision-making process lost an opportunity to establish village recognition

²⁰⁰ Lowry, 90–92.

²⁰¹ Chen and Albritton, *A Small Key Opens Big Doors*, 160.

and ownership of the problem and acceptance of responsibility for dealing with it. Of course, developing a foundation built around community assessment and problem-solving is time consuming and takes resources and expertise that the government felt were less expedient than taking quick and decisive action to construct. However, such a short-term approach actually made the project much less likely to succeed because the community leaders and stakeholders had no ownership or self-recognition of either the problem or the solution.

In addition to the villagers, leftists in Turkey were another group who questioned the government's intentions for modernization. The 1960s were a high point of anti-Americanist or anti-capitalist politics in the Turkish left. Vietnam War and Cyprus Crisis were contributing factors. Turkish left viewed the government's efforts for modernization as directly related to capitalism and imperialism. Peace Corps was doubly guilty because it was an American program supposedly working for modernization, but the leftist groups believed that the volunteers were agents of American imperialism. So, both Peace Corps and the government projects were the targets of the Turkish left.

Most Peace Corps Turkey volunteers served as English teachers. The Turkish government believed that the volunteers covered the need for English teachers in schools and that learning English was necessary for integration into the modern world. However, the leftist groups did not share this opinion. So, they protested against the Peace Corps teachers in various ways.

Many volunteers who served as teachers faced protests by leftist students or teachers in schools and universities. For example, Türkiye Öğretmenler Sendikası (TÖS, Turkey Teachers Syndicate), headed by leftist Turkish intellectual Fakir Baykurt, organized a boycott in 1969 in which seventy-five thousand teachers boycotted schools for four days. One of the main reasons for the boycott was that TÖS argued that the Peace Corps volunteers were agents of American imperialism. They

demanded that the volunteers be expelled from all Turkish schools and that the Peace Corps program be terminated in Turkey.²⁰² There were also protests and boycotts in Turkish universities such as İstanbul, Gazi, Hacettepe, and METU. Leftist students and academicians organized anti-Peace Corps events to end volunteer presence in their universities. In an interview with the American press in 1970, Peace Corps Turkey director John Corey stated his concerns about the safety of the volunteers. He stated that dozens of volunteers had to leave their positions in Turkish universities. According to him, leftist revolutionary groups were sending threatening letters to the volunteers, and the organization needed to consider its presence in Turkey due to high-level anti-Americanism.²⁰³

The volunteers also observed that leftist groups were against government projects they believed served American imperialism. For instance, Tom Brosnahan explained Bosphorus Bridge project was viewed as a symbol of development and modern Turkey by the Turkish government. The bridge would significantly improve transportation between the two continents since the cars or trucks used ferries to cross the strait, which was slow and dependent on the weather. However, the leftist student groups were against it because they believed it was an American scheme disguised as a development project.²⁰⁴

With admirable idealism but woeful shortsightedness, they [Turkish leftists] protested just about everything that had anything to do with the USA or seemed to. For example, the project to build a bridge across the Bosphorus was roundly condemned as a US plot. They called it the "Morrison Bridge" after the director of the US Agency for International Development (AID) mission to Turkey, but in fact, AID had no connection to the financing, planning, or construction of the bridge. Apparently, they felt that the USA was somehow pushing this bridge on the Turkish government and its people. A

²⁰² Eşel, *Amerikan Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri*, 190–93.

²⁰³ Eşel, 194–97.

²⁰⁴ Brosnahan, *Turkey: Bright Sun, Strong Tea*, 145.

huge mural painted by the leftists showed the completed bridge spanning the Bosphorus with the Sixth Fleet anchored beneath to protect it.

Brosnahan was also present at an important symbolic event for the Turkish government to be a part of the modern world. However, the event was sabotaged by the leftist media. In 1969, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the largest business organization in the world, held its annual convention in İstanbul. Brosnahan worked as a translator at the convention. The convention was an ample opportunity for the Turkish government to show that Turkey was a part of the modern capitalist world. Very important business people worldwide attended the convention, such as the chairman of IBM and the director of Pan America Airways. They brought their wives to İstanbul too. As a part of their touring program with guides, the wives visited a historic Turkish bath. The radical leftist newspapers paid the guides to take nude pictures of the wives in the hamam. The next day, the pictures were published in all newspapers. Both the government and the ICC businessmen were shocked and furious. The convention ended in a disaster for both of them. Brosnahan described the situation.²⁰⁵

İstanbul's radical leftists were ecstatic. We showed 'em! Even the non-leftist newspapers couldn't resist. *Cumhuriyet*, the self-important leftist "newspaper of record," found itself torn between its leftist impulses and its sense of gravitas and decorum. The left won, not to mention the profit motive. It printed only the more tasteful and less revealing photos, but print them it did. Several ICC delegates who controlled international newspapers and newsmagazines threatened to run savage articles on "the press in the developing world," but this, they soon realized, would only guarantee that every single newspaper in the world picks up the photos. . . . In his closing remarks on the last day of the convention, the head of the Turkish committee did his best to put a good face on the disaster: Turkey was a democracy with a free press, he said, and although we might not always like what the press does – and in fact might hate it – the price must be paid in the name of democracy.

To sum up, Peace Corps Turkey volunteers saw the Turkish government as the modernizing force in the country. However, some people resisted the government's

²⁰⁵ Brosnahan, 190–91.

modernization efforts. First, the villagers were not always behind the government's development projects. It was common for the government officials to feel superior to the villagers and not put much effort into helping solve villagers' problems. Villagers distrusted the government and did not support government projects or instructions if they were not convinced or did not believe its practicality. Turkish leftists were another group who resisted the government's modernization efforts. They believed that some development projects served capitalism and American interests, so they opposed them. The leftists were also against Peace Corps teachers in Turkish schools and universities. Instead of seeing them as volunteers helping Turkey's development, they believed Peace Corps was a tool of American imperialism, and the volunteers were its agents.

4.3 Conclusion

Modernization was a challenging goal for Turkey. In the 1960s, Peace Corps Turkey volunteers witnessed the Turkish government's efforts to develop rural and urban Turkey. However, the government also made mistakes. The divide between modern and traditional Turkish people created obstacles to rural development. The local and national governments developed many projects for rural development. Community development and vocational courses were popular in the Turkish countryside.

Necessary institutions to conduct the projects were also present. However, it was common for the government officials to condescend the villagers. They believed in their superiority and the villagers' inferiority. Thus, many government officers responsible for rural development in Turkey did not care for the people they were assigned to help. Moreover, they disregarded local economic and social conditions in the villages, which resulted in inapplicable or impractical development projects.

Thus, the Turkish government faced resistance against their modernization efforts in Turkish villages.

In cities, the government's job was relatively more straightforward. Because the infrastructure and economic development were more advanced in cities, the government could focus on modernizing the population through high-level education. The government needed more English speakers to integrate into the modern Western capitalist system, and English speakers were in demand in government and business sectors. So, people were eager to learn English. The government needed more English teachers to accomplish this goal. Peace Corps Turkey was a great solution to fulfill this assignment. Developing tourism in Turkey was another important goal of the government. The government did not believe the Turkish people were ready for the country's tourism initiative. So, they developed projects to teach Turkish people how to treat tourists properly.

The resistance to the government's modernization efforts in cities and towns came mainly from Turkish leftist groups. They believed that development projects served American interests. According to them, Peace Corps was a tool for American imperialism, and the volunteers were potential spies infiltrating Turkish society.

CHAPTER V:

CONCLUSION

Peace Corps Turkey volunteer and anthropologist Richard Schwartz stated that his experience in Turkey inspired him to study his field. The juxtaposition of traditional and modern in Turkey taught him how to analyze societies and development.

Schwartz's description of Turkey, or the image of Turkey in his mind, inspired me to write this thesis analyzing the volunteers' observations with modernization theory.

Schwartz's description is vivid and serves as a summary of the volunteers' view of Turkey in the 1960s.²⁰⁶

Here I am, standing on the outskirts of this small Anatolian market town in north central Turkey, 1966. I'm in a field of dirt, mottled occasionally with patches of grass, a few boulders, and lots of rocks. The sun is just reaching high in the sky, and it's a very clear and cool day. Next to me, a group of schoolboys are laughing and playing soccer with a tin can. . . . Some of them are my students, and it would be a good way to build rapport. But when it comes to soccer, I have two left feet. To my back is the place I call "home." I live in the basement of a two-story, gray, cinderblock building. I have cold running water, an indoor toilet, "bomb site" of course, a bed, and a kerosene-burning room stove.

Along the path that runs beside where the kids are playing, I spot a donkey approaching from the distant village. It's nothing unusual. Donkeys, ducks, sheep, and horses have all trod by, leaving their respective droppings, the identification of which I've become somewhat expert. As the donkey gets closer, I notice its rider is an elderly man, a grandfather-type of guy, whose legs dangle almost to the ground. He's dressed in traditional peasant garb. His pants are loose fitting, his jacket an old two-buttoned sport coat, and on his head, he's wearing an old, black stocking cap. His shoes are black lace-ups,

²⁰⁶ Chen and Albritton, *A Small Key Opens Big Doors*, 45.

dirtied with mud, and the backs of the heels are forced down so they resemble slippers. His white beard is well-trimmed and neat.

While it's the dangling legs that initially draw my attention, it's the image of his face—eyes covered by sunglasses and ears covered by headphones attached to a portable transistor radio—which grabs my imagination. I don't know what he was listening to, but I've always assumed it was the news. The image is very powerful. Talk about connectivity! In 1966, that man was connected. His communications technology was modern. He knew what a radio was. He knew it came in "wireless" format. He knew it was powered by batteries. He obviously knew how to use it. He may have been the passive recipient we all are when we use the radio, but then again, the interactive world of the internet had not yet been born.

The image of that man and his donkey has unspooled itself on a regular basis over the past forty years. It sustained me through graduate school and perhaps motivated me, in the first place, toward my doctorate in anthropology. Old values, new values; technology old and new. The blending of cultures. The diffusion and assimilation of new thoughts and ideas. The rejection of others. The melding of the East and West.

The volunteers viewed Turkey as a developing country. It was traditional; infrastructure needed to be developed, and technological advances needed to catch up to the Western world. However, it was developing. The government was working hard to modernize Turkish towns, cities, villages, and people. The process had its ups and downs, successes and failures, but it had already started to affect the country.

One of the most challenging aspects of Turkish society for the volunteers was the separation of genders. The volunteers observed and were affected by it everywhere, from small villages to provincial capitals. It defined their relations with the opposite gender in Turkey. They related this phenomenon to the traditional construction of Turkish society. Gender roles and duties were directly affected by gender separation. The volunteers were more observant of Turkish women than the men. According to their observations, women were more profoundly affected by gender separation. However, the volunteers also observed a "modern" class of women that defied traditional roles and expectations. By modern, the volunteers meant more similar to them. The modern Turkish women wore similar clothes to the volunteers, had similar

education levels, and could speak English. They were also more active in social and work life.

According to the volunteers, a major area that Turkey needed to develop was its infrastructure. Although nearly seventy percent of the population lived in villages, people there could not access electricity, running water, or proper roads. Small towns and cities were similar too. The healthcare system and hygiene conditions in Turkey had related problems. Access to hospitals and modern medication was hard, and lack of electricity caused dangers to food safety. In order to modernize and give its citizens the living conditions of developed nations, Turkey needed to improve significantly its infrastructure and healthcare system.

The volunteers noticed that the Turkish government was at the center of the modernization process in Turkey. Since the Ottoman Empire, the ruling class has been the force behind modernization in these lands. This tradition was continued by the infant republic by Atatürk, which was also the observation of the modernization scholars who studied Turkey at the time. The volunteers commented that the government's attitude remained the same in the 1960s. The government worked hard to modernize its infrastructure, economy, and people. The Peace Corps worked closely with the government in this regard through development projects. The volunteers benefited the government's ambitions for teaching English as a second language to Turkish people.

However, volunteers also noticed that the government's modernization efforts faced resistance. Many government officials had an arrogant attitude toward the countryside and the villagers. They did not know or care about the culture and traditions of the people there. So, the development projects and ideals did not always

fit with lifestyles and living conditions in the countryside. This situation created resistance to the government's efforts for modernization by villagers. According to the volunteers, for the most part, the villagers were on the right side in their conflict with the government. The Turkish left was the other group that opposed the modernization efforts. They related the government's projects with American imperialism, which also extended to the Peace Corps. Unlike the villagers, the volunteers did not see them on the right side. According to the volunteers, the Turkish left was misguided by the widespread anti-Americanism of the 1960s.

The volunteers who visited Turkey later in their lives all commented that Turkey accomplished its goals for development. According to them Turkey is now a highly educated, urbanized, developed, and modernized country. Gender separation does not exist anymore. Society is much more Westernized. Infrastructure is highly developed. The countryside has proper roads, schools, hospitals, and access to the latest technology. The government officials are now proud of their humble backgrounds rather than condescending to the villagers. The volunteers had witnessed the beginning of this modernization process. They had commented that for the most part the people were eager for development, especially supportive of economic development projects. They were already very connected to Western world via radios and newspapers. Western politics and culture had already penetrated into the Turkish society. The government was working very hard to integrate Turkey into capitalist Western economic and political system. According to the volunteers, they succeeded. It was fascinating to observe the change in Turkey from the volunteer's eyes.

Peace Corps Turkey is a productive study subject. It can be studied in various ways in history and sociology. The topic is related to Turkish-American relations, the cold

war, modernization and globalization, cultural pluralism, the history of education, Turkish politics, and Turkish society. So, there needs to be more studies on the subject. There are still many things to learn from Peace Corps Turkey.



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