

**FAMILY IN TRANSITION:
EMIGRATION AND CHANGING HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE
IN A TURKISH VILLAGE**

Altan ESERPEK(*)

Introduction: Change in general can be defined as a difference in time and identity. (Nisbet, 1972; Smith, 1980) The main source of the controversy in analyzing the process of change however, seems to be differences in the definition of time. There are too many discrete time-orders; i.e. the span of time can be as large as a century or it can be as narrow or short as a second. (Moore, 1963) One has to be clear and precise or define the limits of time as the starting point in a specific study of change.

An analysis of social change in the long run at macro level requires historical approach and the evolutionary schemes seem to have an important explanatory value. (Lenski, 1976; Eisenstadt, 1969) However, evolutionary schemes ignore, or rather have to ignore the transitional mechanisms which may take hundreds of thousands of years. It is only by omitting these transitional periods, evolutionary schemes can explain the human history in an orderly way. (McIver and Page, 1964; Hirst, 1976) If we want to grasp the universal movement of humanity in an orderly way then, evolutionary schemes are fundamental. But they can hardly enable us to understand how the transitional mechanisms function.

If, on the other hand, we need to understand day to day small scale changes or transitions in the short run, at micro level evolutionary schemes become inadequate and another approach is required. It is more problematic to analyze the transitional periods or day to day changes specifically if we are the part of the changing social reality since, we can hardly conceive the changes as we also change to adapt ourselves to the day to day small changes.

(*) Prof.Dr., Ege Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Sosyoloji Bölümü, Öğretim Üyesi.

It is only after being absent for a period of time that we can grasp the differences taken place however small they are although the identity of the system has not been cahanged on the whole.

These small scale alterations may not seem to be important in terms of structural changes and some social scientists do not regard adjustmentlike movements as change at all, (Nisbet, A.G.E.) However, sequential chain of day to day small differences, movements, modifications or adjustment like changes which escape one's notice because they seem trivial come to an exploiting point that the system changes altogether. (Moore, A.G.E.) Unnoticable day to day changes are articulated and interweven in such a way that a much more noticable structural change seems the inevitable outcome of them. (Bottomore, 1976)

The main advantage in studying small scale changes is to enable us to grasp the operation of the transitional mechanisms which are totaly ignored by evolutionary schemes. It is only through the study of small scale, adjustmentlike movements that we can grasp changing reality; i.e. at least understand what is happening between the major phases of evolutionary change which is only an abstraction from the concrete social reality which hardly corresponds with any of the theoretical set-ups. Social life is an endless transitional process. Nothing is the same as before. Everything related to social life changes continously day by day in such a way that in the short run, nothing seems to be neither totaly new, nor totaly old. New syntheses have old traits. Some is lost but not all. Some lives in the new. And this process goes on almost for ever. (Rustow and Ward, 1967; Ogburn, 1972)

In the contex of this argument, this paper mainly aims to attemp to illustrate the operation of the transitional mechanism in the process of change of the family structure specifically in terms changing relations between the household head and his son or sons (Huston,* 1987) whose relationship is most fundamental for the

(*) Hutson discusses the changing relationship between the parents and children in a different context; i.e. in family business under contemporary relation of production:

survival of the traditional joint structure in Turkish villages. These changing relations are closely associated with emigration which has been accelerated by the process of rapid industrialization and growing communication facilities in the area. (Galeski, 1975)

In order to investigate the process of social change at micro level, panel study seems to be the most appropriate and reliable approach. For this purpose it was planned to visit the field of research chosen at regular intervals. The preliminary field research took place during summer 1967 and lasted for three months. A short visit was paid in summer 1977 and finally the area was revisited in summer 1982 for two weeks.

Interviewing and participant observation were two research techniques employed to collect data; a questionnaire had also been desogmed before the arrival in the village to obtain general information about the socio-economic structure of the household. The schedule used, however, was by no means inflexible. The interviewees were allowed to give the researcher as much information as they wanted and some interviews turned into informal conversation.

The Village Delihasanlar; physical and socio-economic set-up:

Kocaeli, of which the research village is one of the smallest administrative units, is a province in the Marmara Region, which lies in the north west of Turkey. The most significant development in the province, of which Izmit is the capital, has been the rapid industrial growth since 1960. Delihasanlar is located on a high plateau on the spithern slope of a group of hills. At the time of the preliminary research there was no constructed road to link the village either to the county town, or the capital of the province. The villagers used to walk to another neighbouring village which was a 45-60 minutes walk away, whence they took the daily truck to Izmit. (Eserpek, 1970)

One of the most striking changes in terms of the appearance, which can easily be observed with the naked eye. has been the reconstruction of a rough road in 1970, which links the

village to Izmit. One of the villagers owns a coach which transports the villagers to and from Izmit three times a week and thus enables them to maintain more intense relations with their kin there.

The other significant innovation is electricity which was brought in 1981. Owing to this development, which led to the watching of T.V. programs, the news in particular, villagers have become more interested in what is going on outside the village, which refers to the increasing degree of integration with the overall society. (Black, 1972)

Delihanlar has been mainly a grain growing village. The villagers used to claim that the absence of irrigation and the poor quality of the soil made impossible to grow anything else. However, their concentration on grain was mainly because it guaranteed survival, since they consumed most of what they grew. In addition to growing grain, they also grew some vegetables only for household consumption and each household had one or two cattle for breeding and milking, and poultry.

Farming techniques were simple. The plough, which was pulled by either a pair of oxen or a pair of water-buffaloes, was the only tool used. Seed was sown by hand and reaping was done by sickle. The crops were threshed by driving a special sledge, the underside of which was studded with flints, round and round over the grain. (Eserpek, A.G.E.)

Little cash was used in economic exchange in the village. People mostly bartered and the services were paid for not in cash but in kind. The money required for some consumer expenses was obtained through seasonal labour. In short, the village used to be a more or less economically self-sufficient social unit. (Eserpek, 1970)

Through the years, the primitive farming techniques have been replaced by more developed ones. Nine of the 46 households own tractors and rent them the others when they are not in use. Crops were no longer threshed by driving a special sledge but by a threshing machine which belongs to another village in the neighbourhood and is rented when is needed. As the villagers put it; 'the machine enters in the village from one side and exits from the

other side' (makina koyun alt basından giriyor, üst basından çıkıyor). Due to mechanization, the farming period has been shortened. Less labour is required to farm.

The villagers stopped growing flax which was the only cash crop and even then they used to turn some of their flax into cloth for their own use. That was a long and very tiring procedure. Instead through the years a new crop for purely commercial purposes has been introduced. In 1967 only a few household heads who had land large enough to afford to spare a plot to experiment had started to grow nuts since the trees took five years to mature and as yet, there had been no yield. The rest of the villagers were rather suspicious of this innovation since it required so much care. In the absence of full knowledge experimenting became a matter of haphazard trial and error, the error sometimes being quite costly. (Ogburn, 1972) The fear of failure, therefore, discouraged the villagers to accept new ways. As the villagers put it: 'growing grain we won't die of hunger; but we cannot survive on nuts'. However, after witnessing the profitable results they also started to grow nuts. Yet, the villagers still prefer to grow grain primarily for their own consumption and only sell the surplus. Producing for the market has gradually been given priority. In consequence of market economy, economic exchange has replaced bartering even for the intra-village transactions. Villagers complain that the usage of money within the village has upset the intra-village relations. For example those who own tractors, rent them when needed and ask to be paid not in kind but in cash.

Changing Composition of Population and Household:

There were 338 persons living in 45 households in the village in 1967. Lack of birth control contributed to the increase of percentage in the child population. (21.3%) However, there was a fairly even distribution between the age groups. (Eserpek, 1970)

According to the findings of research done in 1982 there are 279 persons living in 46 households. Apart from the increase of percentage in the 16-25 age group (12.7% in 1967 and 24.7% in 1982), which is the largest group of the total population, and the slight increase in the over 51 age group (17.8% in 1967 and 22.9% in 1982), there is an overall decrease in other age groups.

The most striking decrease, in the 0-7 age group, can either be explained -less likely- by birth control or-more likely-by the sharp decrease in the 26-35 age group, the group of people who are to be the parents under the age of 7. (21.3% in 1967 and 10.0% in 1982) The findings do not support the former assumption since there is no remarkable difference between 1967 and 1982 in terms of the number of children for each married couple, and the mode is over 5 children for both 1967 and 1982.

On the other hand, there has been a sharp decrease in the 26-35 age group in 15 years (13.9% in 1967 and 6.1% in 1982) which also explains the decrease in the percentage of the children under the age 7 who are mostly to be the offsprings of the married couples in this age group. 26-35 age group is the most significant segment of the population with regard to the longer fertility period and the manpower required for hard work in the village. Those who are in this age group however, also have a better opportunity to leave the village permanently so seek better living conditions and material comforts of the city, because of being just in the right age to start a new life, and the possibility of enough work experience of the husbands in particular, as seasonal labourers for years. Furthermore, having been married for some years, a man in this age group establishes himself more firmly as the head of his own nuclear unit, which puts him in a more advantageous position to dispute the matter with the joint household head, i.e. his father. (Eserpek, 1970)

As mentioned above, the only remarkable increase has been found for the 16-25 age group which, is the largest group of the village population. None of the young people in this particular age group has gone out of the village permanently, except for seasonal work. The 16-25 age group consists mostly of unmarried young people which, explains the lack of emigration because, in Delihanlar marriage has always been a matter of household concern and the decisions in such arrangements seems to continue to be made by the household head. No young man can still ask a girl's parents for her hand. If he has no father, a close kinsman performs the duties of the father, carrying on the negotiations with the male elders of the other party. This puts a father in a powerful position. Therefore, a young man becomes dependent on his father to get married and cannot leave the village permanently

against his father's will before his marriage. Even if he is encouraged by his father which, is mostly the case, to work as seasonal laborer, he is expected to give all his earnings to his father to support the household and to contribute to the common welfare of the household.

On the other hand, the rule of patrilocality still seems to necessitate a young couple to start their married life in the young man's household, which means that even just after marriage, they have to stay in the joint unit for a certain period of time, until they firmly maintain themselves as a nuclear unit; i.e. have their own offspring. All these traditional rules of marriage and locality discourage the young men of the village from emigrating before and/or just after marriage. (Stirling, LSE Monographs, No. 50)

Household: A domestic group of people who shares the same roof is called 'household' in this study. The usage of 'family' on the other hand, is restricted to an occasional reference to the married couple and their children living in a large household, and to distinguish this unit from the rest of the household. The household is, then, a socio-economic group whose members are linked to each other either by genetic ties, by marriage or by affinal bonds, sharing a common residence and interact with each other on the grounds of mutual obligations and rights. (Stirling, 1965)

In the research village, Delihanlar joint household usually consists of a married couple and their unmarried children and the married son or sons and their unmarried children. In rare instances where a couple have no son, a married daughter may reside with them. In such a case however, son-in-law is either an adopted child or the son of the household head's brother. A joint Household may also include one or more unmarried or widowed close kin, who usually is a female relative of the householdhead.

The commonest form for a joint household in the village is two couples and three generations, though, of course, almost half of the joint household heads used to have more than one son residing in the same dwelling. The father-son relationship has been the basic of the joint household. It seems nothing much has changed. Father still owns the means of production and seems to continue to exercise considerable power. (Dobrowolski, 1971; Thomas and Znaniecki, 1971) He has the responsibility of

increasing the household wealth in order to provide his sons. In turn, he expects them to work for him, in other words for the economic betterment of the household. Sons have always been regarded as the security for the survival of the household; they provide free labour themselves, and later introduce more manpower through marriage and betting children. As long as they live in the village, they become dependent completely on their fathers who alone can provide them with the basic resources. (Dobrowolski, 1971)

In 1967, 23 of the 45 households (51.1%) in the village were joint units. All except 3 consisted of three generations. The majority of the existing nuclear household, on the other hand, were the remnants of joint units and has one parent of the household head alive. They also were to become joint in the near future if a son eligible for marriage was included.

In 1982, 17 of the 46 households (36.9%) are joint units. The decrease in the numbers of joint households seems to be primarily the result of emigration of young couples rather than a change of the norm in terms of the formation of household unit. As the findings indicate, the percentage of nuclear households under the age of 40* decreases (28.9% in 1967 and 8.7% in 1982) whilst the percentage over the age of 41 increases (13.3% in 1967 and 19.6 in 1982) and over the age of 51 the increase is much sharper. (4.4% in 1967 and 34.8% in 1982) In 1982 the nuclear households in this latter group have their married younger male members living outside the village as an inevitable consequence of emigration. Therefore, the decrease in the number of joint units is misleading in terms of normative changes in household formation in the village. Normatively speaking, joint household is still regarded as an ideal type. As has mentioned earlier, a newly-married couple are still expected to start life in the young man's household, and there is no nuclear unit of which the head has a married son or aged parents residing separately in the village.

* The age group of the household has been determined by the age of the household head as there is not much differences between the ages of husband and wife, sometimes the wife being older than her husband.

As the figures given indicate, emigration seems to be primarily responsible for the decrease in the numbers of joint households in the village. Of course, emigration is not a new process for Delihasanlar. In a subsistence farming economy cash needed to buy goods which are not produced by the farmers themselves can only be obtained through the earnings of the seasonal migrant labourers. (Eserpek, 1970) Therefore, seasonal migration in slack seasons in particular, used to be encouraged by the joint household head as a means of supplying cash for emergencies and to strengthen his social status in the community. He however, did not usually foresee the consequences in terms of changing power relations within the household since, in the long run seasonal migration usually led to permanent migration which meant lessening his control over his sons and their nuclear units. Yet, the transitional period from seasonal to permanent migration used to be a long process. As the 1967 research findings indicate, even after the migrant labourer obtained a permanent job in town he was not fully entitled to break down his ties with the joint household in the village for a considerable period of time. He used to live in town on his own and the last step, taking his family with him always raised a conflict between his father and himself. For example, a migrant labourer in his forties had been working in Izmit for quite a long time, sending most of his earnings to his father in the village. As long as the father enjoyed the cash regularly sent by his son, he did not reject his son to live in town. In the meantime the migrant labourer built a house in Izmit and required his family to join him.

This was seen as a threat to the welfare of the joint household since it meant less manpower and also the loss of control over a large household unit for the household head. In addition to and/or consequence of those losses, his prestige could be lessened since, the larger the unit a man controls, the higher he is ranked in the village. Therefore, the father objected strongly for two years and did not send his son's family to Izmit. At the end they agreed that the son should send his wife back to the village in busy season as was the case in a few other joint households. (Eserpek, 1970) In most other cases permanent migration could not even occur before the death of the household head, especially if the migrant labourer was the only son left. In consequence, the rate of

nuclear households in the village consisting of older couples was very small. (4.4% in 1967)

During 15 years transitional period from seasonal labour to permanent city dwelling seems to be much shortened and in consequence those who leave the village for good are much younger. Those ex-villagers who had emigrated earlier play an important role not only finding a permanent job for the new comer (Silverman, 1967) but also providing him accommodation temporarily. (Lughod, 1967) Migration seems to beget further migration and recent migrants in town experience less difficulty than the earlier migrants in finding job or an accommodation (Lopreato, 1967; Ginsburg, 1977) which encourages them to start a new life more readily.

Mechanization* in farming seems also to enable young members of the joint household to work as seasonal labourer for longer period. Previously during the busy season almost all the members of the household were present in the village. In 1982, even during the busy season most of the young members were absent doing seasonal work. A household head does no longer object strongly the longer absence of his son as long as he sends his earnings back to the village and he does not suffer as much of labour shortage as before because of mechanization in farming. This tolerance on behalf of the father encourages the young member to look for a permanent job in town more readily.

Finally, owing to the reconstruction of the rough road, the villagers do visit their relatives in town and are visited by them more frequently than before. Previously those visits were restricted to important occasions such as births, deaths, weddings and religious festivities, once or at most twice a year. Having more frequent contacts with town new values and orientations in life

* One has to be cautious about the cause and effect relation between mechanization in farming and the increasing rate and speed in seasonal migration which has almost always led to permanent migration. Mechanization in farming might have been the precondition of increasing emigration or the result of it; i.e. increasing emigration and the shortage of labour force within the household might also have enforced the villagers to accept new farming techniques. (Galeski. 1975)

and new alternative arrangements have been introduced in the village. Rising expectations and increasing awareness of higher living levels that characterize the towns increase the attractiveness of towns of younger villagers in particular. (Sola Pool, 1977; Kerri, 1976) A young villager knows that joint household is no longer the only arrangement for the formation of a family. And he also is aware that in a nuclear unit he will be relatively independent in his decisions and in his expenses. This new alternative is more to his interest. (Ogburn, 1972) As long as he lives in a larger unit, i.e. in a joint household until his father dies, he well knows that he will never enjoy this independency. Therefore, he is more impatient to declare his independence. Which seems to be possible only if he leaves the village for good.

Changing father-son relationship pattern: Family in transition:

There still are those young peasants who sincerely are willing to continue farming in the village. These young peasants however, are more open to new ideas and want to try new ways and techniques. They are prone to innovations which are rejected by their fathers. Some of these young peasants have to give in at the end because of their fathers strong opposition and then even for them emigration seems to be the only solution. (Smith, 1967) For example, a household head, whose two of the four sons have already settled in Izmit and the unmarried one was out of the village to do seasonal work, has only one recently married son left in the village. This son of his had worked in Izmit temporarily and then he had come back to the village to marry. He was the most suitable, mighty and hard working farmer of the four sons. The father wished him to farm with him. The son, although had done seasonal work prior to marriage in town for a while, was not completely against the idea of staying in the village. But of course, he had ideas of his own and wanted to put them in practice. Every evening his father and he had endless arguments. He accused his father for being irrational and old fashioned. In order to increase yield, he had suggestions. But his father, in turn, told him that as long as he lived he had no intention to let his son interfere his business. The son used to complain that if he was to stay, his father and he had to be partners, sharing everything; i.e. control and responsibility

equally. (Hutson, 1987) Otherwise, he said, he could not just to work for his father doing whatever he was asked. He was looking forward his younger brother's return to the village to marry so that he could transfer his responsibilities in farming to him. Leaving the village seemed to be the only solution to avoid the further arguments with his father. (Shanin, 1971) He said that being the head of his nuclear unit, he would at least be free to take decisions about his life. Yet, he was well aware that he could not declare his independency over night. He had to obtain his father's consent and for this he had to wait for the right time.

What is the right time for a young villager to emigrate? If he has a younger brother, he usually waits for him to marry and settle in the household to leave the village permanently. Having an another married son the household head, although reluctantly tends to be more tolerant to come to an agreement. He well knows that if he does not, his son will leave any way.

The household head does no longer control the new working alternatives outside the village and he is well aware that the young people of today have better chances than before and therefore, they are more independent. Because of mechanization in farming, on the other hand, the villagers need less manpower in the household, which means more to feed and their rejection would have seemed to have less legitimate grounds. Although he resents it, he knows that it would be better for him to come to an agreement somehow or other in order to be able to bargain the conditions of his son such as asking him to send his family back to the village during the busy season to help him and guareente the future support of his son incase of need.

The son also sees it to his interest to handle the subject smoothly. He sees to his benefit not to make decision despite to his father's will. He does not want to be known as a rebel.. He well knows that with the lack of skill in any job other than farming which is no use in urban areas, he cannot afford to lose his father's full support, (Frankenberg, 1966) As a consequence father and his son both play the game according to the local rules. Both have benefit to secure the interdependency in the course of time being.

Even after emigrating, the son's dependence on his father continues for the same reasons. A young villager is usually unable

to support his family with only his earnings in town where the standart of living is much higher than in the village. In order to be able to have the right to have a share of the crops, he not only sends his family to the village during the busy season to help his father, but also himself spends his vacation there working for his father. Job insecurity usually increases the migrant labourer's attachment to the land which is regarded as his future insurance. In the case of an economic crisis in town, the only alternative to survive for him seems to return to the village. Therefore, his actions tend to be largely directed by the reactions and expectations of the villagers even if he lives in town. According to traditional norms in the village, the mutual support and loyalty between close kin, father and son in particular is emphasised and is highly valued. (Stirling, No. 50)

If a peasant jeopardizes his obligations to his close kin, he is ostricised. The fear of ostricism (Smith, 1967) prevents the migrant from breaking down his reciprocal relations with the household in the village, since the villagers on he whole do not tolerate any open deviation from the existing rules; in this specific context the rule regulating the relations between the members of an household, between the household head and his son in particular gains importance. The sons are expected to obey their fathers. For this reason a migrant labourer is usually overcareful to conform the village rules in order not to be accused by being unfaithfull. This, in turn, lessens his independence although he can be regarded as a household head by the look of it. The father in the village, on the other hand, providing the necessary economic support if he has the means enough, retains at least some power and somehow firmly established position in such a wide spatial unit and is entitled to interfere in and direct his son's life whenever he thinks is necessary. This can be seen as a transitional arrangement restricted to the emergent exigencies arising as a result of rapid changes going on. Nuclear units both in the village and in town are neither nuclear in a strict sense nor joint; i.e., neither of them corresponds to the ideal types. They can ba named 'extended kinship units' which are primarily based on reciprocal pattern of exchange and obligations between close kin, i.e., the father and his son or sons in particular. This new arrangement related to the household structure has both traditional traits and modern characteristics during the transitional period.

This, of course, may and do not go on for ever. Higher job security which requires occupational qualifications and skills may seem more affective to weaken the power structure of the joint household. In the case of capital shortage, formal education or occupational training seems to be the only way to gain entry to higher prestige and better paid occupations which guarantee one's future. In 1967 except one young villager, who was doing secretarial work in Izmit, there was no other young man who had any formal education beyond primary school. In 1982 there have already been 7 secondary school-some of them training collages-attenders, 2 secondary school graduates, and two university and one higher education graduates-all males. Since there is no employment facility within the village, these graduates are to be employed in Government departments or commercial firms which means that they must be ready to accept to be posted to branches and offices throughout the country in the interest of their jobs and therefore, obligations to their kin will be more difficult to fulfil. (Marris, 1966; Potter, 1967) With a job security and better pay, they will no longer need their fathers' support and will most probably be reluctant to come up their expectations. (Jamieson, 1987) The joint household head will lose his control and authority and wont be able to interfere his son's life any longer. Even in the case of the household head's need for help, he will be taken care of not in his but in his son's household, i.e. he will take the refuge within the family of his son. (Erdoğan, 1990) Unequal dependency relations will make the father subject to his son's power which conflicts with the traditional values. In short, formal higher education, in the long run, seems to be more threat for the household head's power. Without foreseeing this threat however, some household heads still encourage and support their sons to attend the schools higher than primary level both to gain prestige for themselves in the village and to provide better future for their sons. (Hutson, 1987)

It is however, not difficult to anticipate that this process will take longer time to change the joint household structure and to weaken the traditional power of the household head on the whole in the village. The young members of the village do not have equal

chances, such as financial support of the household and accomodation facilities with a close kin in town, during the school attendance. Only few of them will have the chance to be trained sufficiently in order to maintain job security which will enable him to be completely independent of his father's power.

Concluding Remarks:

It is a well known fact that there is a close relation between changing family structure and industrialization which is closely associated with urbanization. It is argued that urbanization has usually been associated with weakening of traditional structure; i.e. family evolves from traditional joint unit to nuclear or conjugal unit. Thus, theoritically formulated dimensional scheme consists of contrasting patterns of family exclusively such as traditional joint family at one exteme and modern nuclear at another. Traditional joint family and modern nuclear family as polar types are accepted stages of evolution from evolutionary point of wiew, and have the benefit to grip and put the complex historical facts in order.

However, this transformation does not happen over night. Neither all the traditional traist are suddenly lost; nor the new from of family emerges out of the blue. In this paper we have tried to show how the transitional mechanisms work in the process of family change in a specific Turkish village a limited span of time.

In brief, at his transitional stage partly due to the ruralization of cities which, means rural traditions are carried and survive on the periphery of urban areas* and partly due to the resistance of traditional norms because of the slow process of institutionalization of emergent exigengies in society which means

* As a result o ftendenc to concentrate in the same neighbourhood in the city as a response to the need for membership of a familiar and much smaller community where social support is likely to be provided whenever it is needed traditional rural values and norms seem to persist because of the strong informal social control.

the absence of institutional solutions to the needs arising as a result of rapid change a new kind of kinship arrangement, i.e. extended kinship network based on reciprocal services and support and interdependency, seems to be regarded as the only solution by both the household head in the village and his emigrated son in town. This new arrangement is a new synthesis having both traditional traits and modern characteristics during the transitional period from joint structure of the household to the nuclear type of family.

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