An Inner Aegean Peasant-Miner Community in Transformation: Uncovering Migrant Workers' Perspectives in the Soma Coal Basin

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Abstract

An Inner Aegean Peasant-Miner Community in Transformation: Uncovering Migrant Workers' Perspectives in the Soma Coal Basin

İsmail Şahin, Master's Candidate at the Atatürk Institute
for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, 2022

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With 301 causalities, the May 2014 Soma mine accident constituted the biggest mining accident in Turkish history and the biggest worldwide in the 21st century. Although the underground mining sector has the second-highest workplace accident rate, mining is a popular job in the Soma region even after the 2014 accident. Why do miners continue to work in the mines even though they lose their friends, sons and fathers working there? This thesis aims to answer this question by examining an inner Aegean peasant-miner community from a small village near Kütahya. It builds on field research with the community along with archival research. Based on interviews with three generations of men who worked in the Soma mine pits in three different historical periods (1960-1980, 1980-2002 and 2002-2020) and their families, the study traces changing patterns of migration and labor against Turkey's changing socio-economic context. The thesis argues that the miners' and their families' experience with the general socio-economic conditions of Turkey have shaped their perspective towards their occupation. These experiences have to do with; the labor market defined by the rise of unemployment rates, labor surplus, the high number of minimum wage workers and informality; inner migration; the transformation of agriculture; and the transformation of social policies. Given these dynamics, mineworker families consider underground mining as a better job in terms of income, social security and retirement age compared to other unskilled jobs in Turkey.

The study contributes to the literature on miner communities in Turkey firstly by focusing on a different geographic area (Aegean) rather

than Zonguldak, which has mostly been the study site. Secondly, it brings in mineworkers' families and household strategies into the analysis rather than just focusing on male workers. Thirdly, by covering a wider time span through its focus on the experience of three generations, it offers a broad perspective of the miner community from its first formation and reveals the dynamics that have changed over time.

46,425 words

Özet
Dönüşen Bir İç Ege Köylü-Madenci Topluluğu: Göçmen İşçilerin Gözünden Soma Kömür Havzası

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Doçent Berna Yazıcı Tepeyurt, Tez Danışmanı

301 ölüme sebep olan Mayıs 2014 Soma maden kazası Türkiye ve dünya tarihinin 21. Yüzyılda 'ki en büyük maden kazası olmuştur. Yeraltı madenciliği sektörü en yüksek ikinci iş kazası oranına sahip olmasına ve kazaya rağmen, Soma bölgesindeki madencilik hala popüler olmaya devam etmiştir. Madenciler çalışma arkadaşlarını, oğullarını ve babalarını kaybetmelerine rağmen neden madende çalışmaya devam ediyorlar? Bu tez, Kütahya yakınlarındaki küçük bir köyden gelen iç Ege köylü-madenci topluluğunun incelenmesiyle bu soruya cevap aramaktadır. Bu çalışma, yapılan saha araştırmasıyla birlikte arşiv araştırmasına dayanmaktadır. Bu araştırma, Soma maden ocaklarında üç farklı tarihsel dönemde (1960-1980, 1980-2002 ve 2002-2020) çalışan üç kuşak erkek ve aileleriyle yapılan mülakatlara dayanarak, Türkiye'nin değişen sosyo-ekonomik bağlamına karşı değişen göç ve emek kalıplarını incelemektedir. Bu araştırma, madencilerin ve ailelerinin Türkiye'nin zaman içinde değişen genel sosyo-ekonomik koşulları ile ilgili deneyimlerinin mesleklerine bakış açılarını şekillendirdiğini savunuyor. Bu deneyimler; işsizlik oranlarının yükselmesi, işgücü fazlası, asgari ücretli sayısının yüksek olması ve kayıt dışılık; iç göç, tarımın dönüşümü; Türkiye'de sosyal politika ve emeklilik kalıplarının dönüşümü ile ilgidir. Bu sosyo-ekonomik gerçekler ve bölgedeki coğrafi şartlar göz önüne alındığında, maden işçisi aileler, Türkiye'deki diğer vasıfsız işlere kıyasla madencilik sektöründe çalışmayı, gelir, sosyal güvenlik, emeklilik yaşı ve çalışma saatleri açısından nispeten daha iyi koşullara sahip olarak görmektedir.

Bu çalışma, literatüre üç bakımdan katkıda bulunur; bir, daha çok araştırma alanı olan Zonguldak/Karadeniz bölgesi yerine farklı bir coğrafi bölgeye (Ege) odaklanarak Türkiye'deki madenci toplulukları ile ilgili literatüre katkıda bulunmaktadır. İkinci olarak madenciliği, maden işçileri ve aileleri perspektiften analiz haline getirir, sadece erkek madenci işçilere odaklanmak yerine tüm aileye odaklanıp, madenciliği aile stratejisi olarak ele alır, üçüncüsü daha geniş bir zamanı kapsayarak inceler ve üç nesil madencilere odaklanarak geniş bir bakış açısı sunar ve zamanla değişen dinamikleri vurgulayarak literatüre katkıda bulunur.

46.425 kelime

To my father Ali Osman and to my son Ali Selim

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AKP Justice and Development Party
ARIP Agricultural Reform Implementation Project
EU European Union
ILO International Labor Organization
KPSS Public Personnel Selection Exam
MTA General Directorate of Mineral Research and Exploration
MA Master of Arts
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
SGK Social Security Institution
TEKEL Turkish Tobacco and Alcoholic Beverages Company
TKİ Turkish Coal Enterprise
TÜİK Turkish Statistical Institute

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Epigraph(s)

— "the death bodies of workers are worthier than theirs alive."

— Mineworker Mahmut (57)

1

INTRODUCTION

With 301 causalities, the May 2014 Soma mine accident constituted the biggest mining accident in Turkish history, and the biggest across the world in the 21st century. Despite the fact that the underground mining sector has the second-highest workplace-accident rate, miners around the Soma region are willing to work in the mine pits and miners' families consider mining an advantageous job even after the so-called Soma disaster.

Why do miners continue to work in the mines even though they lose their friends, sons and fathers working there? This thesis aims to answer this question through the examination of an inner Aegean peasant-miner community from a small village near Kütahya. This study builds on field research with the community along with archival research. Based on interviews with three generations of men who worked in the Soma mine pits in three different historical periods (1960-1980, 1980-2002 and 2002-2020) and their families, the study traces changing patterns of migration and labor against Turkey's changing socio-economic context.

The thesis argues that the miners' and their families' experience with the general socio-economic conditions of Turkey have shaped their perspective towards their occupation. These experiences have to do with; the country's labor market situation defined by the rise of unemployment rates, labor surplus, the high number of minimum wage workers and informality; inner migration; the transformation of agriculture; and the

transformation of social policies and retirement patterns in Turkey. Given these socio-economic realities, mineworker families consider working in the mining sector as having relatively better conditions in terms of income, social security, retirement age, and working hours in comparison to other unskilled jobs in Turkey.

The study contributes to the literature on miner communities in Turkey firstly by focusing on a different geographic area (Aegean) rather than the Zonguldak/Black Sea region, which has been chiefly the site of study. Secondly, the thesis brings in mineworkers' families' perspectives and household strategies into the analysis rather than just focusing on male mine workers. Thirdly, by covering a wider time span through its focus on the experience of three generations, the study offers a broad perspective of the miner community from its first formation and reveals the dynamics that have changed over time.

§ 1.1 The Soma Mine Disaster

On May 13, 2014, the biggest mining accident in Turkish history and the biggest worldwide in the 21st century led to the disastrous death of 301 miners in Soma. The accident occurred because of the electric transformer explosion, leading to an underground mine fire. The fire continued until May 15, leaving 301 miners dead. The incident was only one of the many mine and work accidents consistently happening in Turkey.

A National Day of Mourning was declared after the accident because of the high number of deaths. The mine was operated by the private company, Soma Coal Company Incorporated (Soma Kömür İşletmeleri A.Ş.) in the Eynez Region in the city of Manisa in western Turkey. The operation in the underground mine continued non-stop with three shifts, and the accident happened during the shift change. The lawsuit process continued until June 2021.[1] The mineworkers who survived the accident

1 Chairman of Board Director of Soma Coal Company Incorporated was jailed for 20 years and engineers Efkan Kurt and Adem Osmanoğlu were jailed for 12 years and 6 months.

continued working in the mine during this process despite the traumatic experience.

After the disaster, many issues were discussed by the media, the public, NGOs, academics, and politicians in Turkey and globally. The first issue discussed after the incident was whether the number of deaths was 301 or not. The relationship between the labor unions, business, and politics was interrogated. Privatization, *redevance* system,[2] and decrease in agricultural subsidies were also criticized. In the elections in the same year of the accident, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) [3] got the majority's votes in Soma. Political preferences and the support for the AKP in the region were also discussed after the elections. In addition to these topics, capitalism, unemployment, and poverty were debated. Lastly, the depiction of the accident in the media was discussed since it was shown as a natural disaster by some media organizations.

However, as Smith (2006) argues, there is "no such thing as a natural disaster." In Smith's view, "naturalness" is a camouflage for the socio-political and economic arrangements which contribute to the preparation of disasters in the first place.[4] With this conceptualization of disasters, the socio-political arrangements which have contributed to the Soma catastrophe can be linked to the way the mine was operated; by the private company, the labour regime in the mines, and the state's failure

---

Member of board directors Haluk Eviç was acquitted. It was commented as "the worst decision" by Hatice Aslan Atabay, one of the lawyers of the miners to VOA Turkish. Soner Kızılkaya and Oğulcan Bakiler. "Soma Maden Faciası Davasında Karar Çıktı." *Voice of America Turkish*. 16 June 2021. https://www.amerikaninsesi.com/a/soma-maden-faciasi-davasinda-karar-cikti/5930939.html

2 *Redevance System*: It is a contract, according to which the mining operation area is left to a private company for a certain period of time. And then the license holder state gives purchasing guarantee to private companies to buy their production.

3 Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi

4 Smith, Neil. "There's No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster." Social Science Research Council. 11 June 2006. https://items.ssrc.org/understanding-katrina/theres-no-such-thing-as-a-natural-disaster/

to inspect the mine and impose precautions to prevent such a deadly accident.

Another catastrophe also occurred in the underground mines in Ermenek after the Soma accident on October 28, 2014. After these two accidents, nearly all mineworkers returned to the coal basins to work immediately. Mineworkers are witnessing, experiencing deaths and accidents, and miners know the high possibility of death and accident risks, but they continue to work. Furthermore, numerous peasants continue to apply to work in underground mines in Soma,[5] Zonguldak, and various places around Turkey, which can be seen in the news.[6] After the Soma accident, miners protested and went to court to return to their job. In the court, to defend themselves, the lawyers of Soma Holding asked, "If conditions at the mine were so bad, why did workers file reemployment lawsuits after they were dismissed?"[7]

In my field research in the region, I have also experienced the strong insistence of some miners on working in the underground mine although they had lost their relatives in the mine. Below, I offer a story from the field in "Bilal's House" which most strikingly demonstrates the miners' and their families' strong preference for having a job in the mine, a suggestion they even extended to me, the researcher, by trying to persuade me to give up my graduate studies to take a job in the mine.

---

5 "115 Madenci Için Rekor Başvuru!" Mynet, accessed 28 November 2020. https://finans.mynet.com/haber/detay/ekonomi/115-madenci-icin-rekor-basvuru/93997/; "Maden İşçiliği Için Rekor Başvuru," Star, accessed 28 November 2020. https://www.star.com.tr/guncel/maden-isciligi-icin-rekor-basvuru-haber-884712/

6 "Bin Kişilik Madenci Kadrosuna 35 Bin 770 Kişi Başvurdu," Aydınlık, accessed 28 November 2020. https://www.aydinlik.com.tr/bin-kisilik-madenci-kadrosuna-35-bin-770-kisi-basvurdu-emek-subat-2019

7 Çelik, Coşku. "Soma'da işçileşme süreçleri." Evrensel. 13 May 2016. https://www.evrensel.net/haber/279977/somada-iscilesme-surecleri

1.1.1 Bilal's House[8]

When we went to Bilal's house, there was a small garden, a tractor, and a car in the yard. Bilal was praying in his house, and his son and daughter-in-law welcomed us.[9]

It was winter, and the weather was cold. We gathered around the heater in the living room and conducted an interview. In the room, there were Bilal (80), his son Mahmut (57), Feride (50, Mahmut's wife), Meltem (61, previous interviewee), Şefika (32), and me, İsmail (26).

I started the interview with Bilal and introduced myself as a researcher and son of Ali Osman. He said, "Ah, you are the son of Ali Osman, and I saw you fifteen years ago." Then, as he explained, the interview was interrupted by questions and comments in the room. At the end of the interview, Bilal asked questions about the details of my life in Istanbul, and the dialogue was as follows:

> İsmail: I am a Master of Arts (MA) student at Boğaziçi University, doing research and planning to be an academic.
> Bilal: How long does it take, and how much money will you earn after this long process?
> I tried to explain it to him, but it did not make sense.
> Bilal: You should work in underground mines in Soma. We can contact our network to take you to the mines. Being an academician is a long process. If you work in the underground mine, you can obtain your retirement right, start to take your retirement

8 The names of interviewees have been changed for the confidentiality of the research. All names used in the thesis are pseudonyms.

9 On the third day of the field research, after interviewing Şefika (32), the wife of a miner Mevlüt who worked in the mine that exploded in 2014 and survived, she took me to Meltem (61) whose husband had died in Değirmisaz in 1997. After the interview was conducted, since Meltem could not remember much, and she suggested I have an interview with Bilal (80). Bilal's grandson died in the May 2014 accident of 301. The research was designed for an individual semi-structured in-depth interview.

pension while you continue to work, and make more money until you become a professor.
Mahmut: İsmail has never worked in the mine and is 25 years old. The mines will probably not employ him. When someone's father died in the mine, they guaranteed the job for him. Therefore, İsmail has a chance to get a job in the mine, but it is still difficult. He cannot work there without references.
Bilal: Let us call our contact to ask if you could work in the mine.
They started to check their phones, both Bilal and Mahmut, to ask whether they could get a job for me in the mine.
İsmail: Please do not call. I do not want to work in the mine.
Meltem: İsmail says he is comfortable in İstanbul. He studies at a very prestigious university. But, if you want to work İsmail, you should consider this. Miners are like civil servants, and they earn a good amount of money. They have two days off. Their insurance is regularly covered. The working hours are short; therefore, you should consider this job opportunity. But it is up to you.
Feride (The wife of Mahmut): There are many people here from Kütahya. You will be close to our fellow townsmen. Our network is here. Instead of living in İstanbul, a metropolitan city, it is better to live here.
Bilal: You should work here. You can continue studying to complete your doctorate after your insurance premium is paid and you attain your pension. When you complete 11 years working in underground mines, you are free. You can work in another place after guaranteeing your future. In a 70-year life span, 11 years is a short period. You are twenty-five years old now, and you can continue your doctorate when you are 36 as you guarantee retirement from the mines.
Mahmut; How much are the salaries of academicians?
İsmail: It is about 6,000 Turkish Lira for a research assistant.
Mahmut: The miner's salary is about TL 5,000. But you live in İstanbul and pay a minimum of TL 1,500 for house rent. Here, rent is about TL 250–300. There is no transportation cost. There are

services, and you can go everywhere on foot. The living cost here is less expensive than in metropolitan cities. Therefore, earning TL 5,000 in a small place is more advantageous than the TL 6,000–7,000 in metropolitan cities. Therefore, miners' income is better than an academician.

Şefika (The wife of Mevlüt): My big brother, who repairs air conditioners in İzmir, works with minimum wage, and he allocates almost half of the money to his rent. His peers working in the mines started to obtain their retirement pensions, and they take at least three minimum wages with their retirement wage if they continue to work, but my brother must work at least ten years more with minimum wage to obtain his retirement.

Bilal: When you are 43, you can get your retirement bonus. You can buy a house with that money or open a grocery store. You are young at 43 years old. You can start a business. You can spend it with your family.

İsmail: Miners' condition is challenging. They have health problems, and they die earlier.

Mahmut: What is the average life expectancy age in Turkey? Let us say 75. If you are retired at 60- 65 years old, you can only take 10-15 years of retirement benefits. Miners are dying earlier. Let us say miners are dying at age 65, 10 years below average. You are retired at the age of 40s, take your retirement benefit for a minimum of 20 years, and are still young. You can start a business. You can continue working. You can buy a house. If you die, your family can take the money.[10] You need the money more in the age of 40s or 50s for your children. You can support your children in education, in marriage, in military duty at this age, but after reaching your 60s, they have already grown up and built their lives and no need for money from their parents.

10 This phrase is told often; "if I die, my family's life will be saved and they will live in a better condition" and another similar phrase was "the death body of workers is worthier than theirs alive."

İsmail: I am afraid to work in the mines. There are accidents in the mines; many people die in mine accidents.
Bilal: My grandson died in an accident. But my daughter died of cancer. I worked, Mahmut worked, my brother worked, and we are all alive. In our village, five to six people died from work accidents in the mines. But the same number of people died of cancer and traffic accidents. For example, Kader's son died in the army; he is a martyr. Meltem's husband worked in the mine but died in a traffic accident. Ali died at a construction site. Hasan died after falling from a tractor. Süleyman died while working in the forestry sector. Some of them did not even have insurance; they just died, and their families are in a miserable situation now. They could not take any benefit from the companies and the state. Is there a risk-free job?
Meltem: Every job has a risk. Death is everywhere. There isn't a risk-free job.
Mahmut: In our times, the ceilings of mines were wood which fell all the time. A lot of people died, but nobody heard about it. Even they couldn't take it to court. The working conditions of mines are getting better. The ceilings are not wooden anymore. Now, they are more mechanized. Companies have other safety problems, but they are better than in our times. In the first year working in the underground mine, you might be afraid but then get used to it like a regular thing. You will not want to work on the surface jobs for such long hours.
To complete education needs lots of time, and it is not guaranteed that you will have a job after graduation. You will start from scratch when you graduate.
Feride: University graduates are unemployed. For example, Sibel is a teacher, but she is not employed. Ali's situation is similar. He was assigned at 30 years of age, and at the same time, their peers who worked in the mine completed their insurance premium days and got paid. He was assigned to a small village where the conditions and facilities were not better than here, and he was earning

> the same amount of money as miners. Therefore, it is your decision but working in a mine is better than working as an academician.
>
> İsmail: Isn't it better to cultivate in the village than come and work here?
>
> Mahmut: In our villages, lands are not very fertile, and they are far away from the center. It is cold in winter. Do your research on winter here. Here in Soma, it is better to cultivate. Still, the lands are expensive, and it is better to secure your life and then continue agriculture because, in agriculture, you must cultivate every year. You will spend your whole life cultivating; one year, you can take more, and another year is less. You must pay your insurance, and if you do not, you cannot be retired. Also, marriage is difficult if you only do agriculture. Families do not want to give their girls to farmers. When you work in the mine, you can take credit, and everybody is indebted to you; but in agriculture, you cannot know what will happen.

The story of "Bilal's house" and the conversation in the house shows the perception of the community and popularity of mining in the region. As can be seen from the interviewees' statements, almost all insisted that I take up a job in the mine. They explained what they considered advantageous about working in the mines including early retirement right and miners' salaries. In addition, they tried to downplay the risks and the deadly accidents which characterized mining in the region.

The underground mining sector has the second-highest workplace-accident rate, following the agriculture and forestry sectors,[11] and

11 Ayşe Buğra, "Türkiye'nin Sosyal Politikaları ve Soma Felaketi," in Ge-Li-Yo-Rum Diyen Facia: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Soma Araştırma Grubu Raporu, ed. Ersoy Nuri, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2017), 141.

the highest occupational-diseases rate in Turkey. Miners know that working in underground mines is fateful.[12]

Generally, being a miner in the Soma basin and the other basins across Turkey descends from father to son, from generation to generation which means that mineworkers are already familiar with the working conditions of the mines not only from their first day at work but also from their parents and their relatives. Although miners know that working in underground mines is fateful, hard, and risky, how is it possible that miners are willing to work there, and how is it possible that the number of people seeking a job in the mines has increased over the years despite the May 13, 2014, disaster?

The story of "Bilal's house" shows the miners' community's perception of working in the mine. Why do Bilal and Mahmut insist on the research author to work in the mine even though they lost their child in the accident? How is it possible that Şefika persists that her brother works in the underground mine, although her husband experienced the 2014 accident? Why do families send their children to the mine although they know about the working conditions in the mine? Why are they willing to work in underground mine pits? What is their motivation to migrate and work in underground mines? Why do miners continue to work in the mine even though they lose their friends, their sons, and their fathers working there? What is the underlying reason for these actions?

These questions shaped this thesis. Hence, the primary research question of this study can be articulated as follows: "How is it possible that a peasant farmer community accepts such risky and heavy working

12 To give an example from the field, in the first interview, the interviewee, Oğuz (58), started his sentences by saying that "mining is too dangerous; if you are not careful, you might die immediately. In the first month, I was having nightmares because of working in the underground mine." Oğuz (58) began to work when he was 18 and retired from the mine, his nephew had an accident in the mine, and half of his body burned. However, in the same interview, he blames his brother because he escaped working from the mine because of hard-working conditions. Oğuz says to his brother; that he has a "peasant mind" by underestimating him because he did not work in the underground mine and instead continued in agriculture.

conditions and chooses to migrate to work in the mines?" To respond to this question, it is necessary to explore miners' perspectives and understand how and why they and their families consider working in the mine advantageous.

These questions are the starting point of this thesis. These questions will be answered by focusing on a mining community of a small village, Selimli.[13] The sample group for the thesis was selected from those mineworkers' communities who emigrated to Soma from Selimli. Selimli is a mountain village located 110 km far away from Kütahya city center. It is where the majority of the retired first-generation peasant-mine workers' community studied in this thesis is situated.

The main reason for choosing this group is to emphasize labor migration to the Soma mining region because most research on Soma mines focuses on local workers. Differing from these studies, this thesis will highlight the changing patterns of labor migration to the Soma mine pits by concentrating on the transformation of the village of Selimli and the perspectives of the migrant miners' community from this village. In doing so, the thesis also aims to bring in a different geographic area (Aegean) rather than the Zonguldak/Black Sea region, which predominantly has been the focus of studies on mining communities in Turkey.

Another reason for choosing this village is the history of my own family. Selimli was my late father's village. The 2014 Soma disaster led to questions about my life and my family's history. The reason for that was my father died in a mine accident in 2008, and my uncle died in 1998 in a mine accident in Soma. After these events, I have thought about my family through different lenses regarding the case of poverty, neoliberalism, unemployment, informality, agricultural transformation, working-class class consciousness, and migration. My own life experience and family history caused me to worry about the future of miners' children and families who lost their loved ones in the accident. Therefore, the accident of 301 miners in 2014 and my family history motivated me to write this MA

13 The real name of the village is not used. Selimli is a pseudonym.

thesis. I have not been living in a miner community or village for the last fifteen years; however, in the community's perception, I was an insider. The community's insistence that their children (including me) shall work in the Soma mine pits shaped the primary question which guides this thesis: Why is underground mining such a desirable job for the miner-peasant community of Selimli despite its risks?

In the thesis, I engage this question by considering the experience of different generations of migrant mineworkers from Selimli. Historically, like the history of inner migration in Turkey, there has been migration to Soma from nearby villages via family and fellow townsmen networks. Following different waves of migration to the mine pits, I divided the sample group of the study into three generations.

The first generation is the workers who migrated to and worked in the mines in Soma between 1960 and 1980. The second generation is the migrant workers from Selimli who worked in the Soma mines between 1980- and 2001. The third generation of mineworkers from Selimli worked in the mines between 2001 and 2020. Soma is the primary site of migration where the second and third generations are located. The other migrated area from the village of Selimli is Cenkyeri, a more urbanized small town, ten kilometers away from Soma, where miners and their families started to locate because of low house rents and lower living costs.

In the thesis, the research questions mentioned above will be discussed with the effects of the peripheral status of Selimli, migration, family-related factors and household strategies, and Turkey's changing socio-economic dynamics, particularly its labor market realities and social policies.

§ 1.2 Main Arguments of the Thesis

This thesis argues that the miners' and their families' experience of general conditions of the Turkish economy and social conditions over time have shaped their perspective towards their occupation. These experiences include the country's labor market situation defined by the rise

of unemployment rates, labor surplus, the high number of minimum wage workers and informality; inner migration; the transformation of agriculture; and the transformation of social policies and retirement patterns in Turkey. Given these socio-economic realities working in the mining sector has relatively better conditions than other unskilled labor sectors in Turkey in terms of income, social security, retirement age, and working hours.

LABOR MARKET REALITIES AND RETIREMENT PATTERNS

Turkey's labor market realities shape the miners' motivation toward their occupation. In the Turkish labor market, the unemployment rate, the informality rate, and the number of minimum wage workers are high.[14] The high unemployment rate is a crucial socio-economic problem for Turkey. The unemployment rate in Turkey has been higher than 10% during the AKP period, even though there was a high growth rate in the beginning years of the AKP government.[15] High unemployment rates led to poverty, and that caused migration to industrialized areas. Newcomers of industrialized areas worked as informal laborers.

According to SGK records, the percentage of informal labor in Turkey was 30.59% in all sectors in 2020.[16] The mining sector has a relatively lower and one of the least informal workers rate, which is 4.51% in 2020, because of its risks.[17] In Turkey, the number of minimum wage workers is approximately six million, and underground mine workers' income is higher than minimum wage workers. Additionally, the working hours in Turkey are long and above the OECD countries. The underground mine is a labor-intensive sector where workers work three shifts daily. Therefore, miners are not working more than eight hours. Given the

14 Buğra, "Türkiye'nin Sosyal Politikaları ve Soma Felaketi".

15 Ibid.

16 Sosyal Güvenlik Kurumu. "Kayıtdışı İstihdam Oranları," accessed 1 September 2020. http://www.sgk.gov.tr/wps/portal/sgk/tr/calisan/kayitdisi_istihdam/kayitdisi_istihdam_oranlari

17 Ibid.

larger realities in the Turkish labor market, the prevalence of relatively better incomes compared to minimum wage workers, the smaller number of informal workers, and fewer working hours in the mining sector shape the miners' choice and motivation to work in the underground mines.

According to my observation in Soma, miners usually come from the agriculture sector. Those who earn their livelihood from agriculture are mostly self-employed in Turkey and have to pay their premiums themselves to be covered under the social security system. Historically under the scheme of BAG-KUR, most of these peasant families have not been included in the social security system because they are unable to pay premiums given their low income. Hence one of the primary reasons why the peasant miners choose to work in the mining sector in Soma is because they get themselves and their families covered under the social security system. In addition, the mining community considers working in underground mines as advantageous because of the early retirement age granted to the underground mine workers.

Working conditions in the mines are difficult. Miners work in a stressful environment, coming home with black, coaled faces. Many workers have pains. These difficult working conditions and occupational illnesses of underground mining decreased the retirement age for mine workers. In other words, underground mines have special rules for social security and retirement age because of risky and hard-working conditions.[18] These special rules make mining and mine working attractive.

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18 İsa Karakaş, "Yer Altı Yer Üstü Ayrımında 15 Yıla Kadar Erken Emeklilik Avantajı," Türkiye, accessed 15 January 2021. https://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/yazarlar/isa-karakas/607533.aspx; Ahmet Kıvanç, "Yer Altı Maden Işçileri Nasıl Emekli Olur?" Habertürk, accessed 15 January 2021. https://www.haberturk.com/yer-alti-maden-iscileri-nasil-emekli-olur-2428258-ekonomi. "Mesleklere Göre Emeklilik Günü Fark Ediyor!" Sözcü, accessed 15 January 2021. https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2020/sigorta/mesleklere-gore-emeklilik-gunu-fark-ediyor-5681724/; Süleyman Demir, "Torba Yasa maden işçilerine neler getirdi?" Dünya, last modified 16 December 2014. https://www.dunya.com/gundem/torba-yasa-maden-emekcilerine-neler getirdi-haberi-265874; Vedat İlki, "Madende Emeklilik Koşulları." Ali Tezel. Last modified 11 November 2011.

The age of retirement is complex in Turkey. Turkey was known as the country of young pensioners because of populist policies before 2000. In 1999 and 2008 the general retirement age was increased with the effect of European Union (EU) Integration. The retirement age of underground mines became more complex because of the changes in the law after the 2014 accident. After the Soma tragedy, the retirement age has been decreased with legal regulations in 2014 for the underground miners.

Simply, miners were retired at the age of 38 if they started to work before 2008. If miners started working after 2008, the retirement age is 50 for them and they needed to complete 4.000 workdays insurance premium. However, miners can be retired at 43 if they work more than 4.800 workdays. Hence, working more days in underground mines decreases the retirement age of miners. This rule decreased mine workers' relations with their land and the agricultural activities when it combined with the labor surplus and with the increase in wages in the Soma basins.

For unskilled, uneducated villagers, the early retirement age granted to mine workers has become very attractive after the 1999 and 2008 reforms in the social security system which increased the retirement age for the general population. The reason is that unskilled men from Selimli believe that they will live in the poverty in their entire life if they retire very late by working in unskilled jobs but if they retire early by working in the mines, they can continue to work after retirement in another sector including agriculture, construction or in a foreign country. In this way, miners think that they can get themselves and their families out of poverty by retiring in their 40s. Miners are counting the advantages of early retirements; buying houses for the family, helping their children with education and marriage, continuing to cultivate and start a

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https://www.alitezel.com.tr/madende-emeklilik-kosullari-4842/; Özgür Tutoğlu, "Yeraltı Emeklilik Hesabı Nasıl Yapılır?" 25 March 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rexsBlaz-FA.

new business. Most of these miners plan for some kind of entrepreneurialism in their retired lives, which can be linked to the working-class entreneurialism among male manual workers analyzed by Cihan Tuğal's research in Sultanbeyli[19] and Alpkan Birelma's research in the district of İkitelli, İstanbul.[20] In the case of miners, entrepreneurialism is a desire in the age of retirement because of early retirement advantages from the mining sector. All in all, for these mine workers, retirement does not mean retiring from working life, but it gives them the possibility of guaranteeing basic needs for their families.

Retirement is vital for miners who survive the accidents in the mines and succeed to live until receiving their retirement rights. Nonetheless, early retirement does not give the miners a wealthy life. They can only escape poverty by working in another job after retirement. Also, the miners' statements about early retirement and social policies tell us more about the general social policies and retirement patterns of Turkey. The retirement salary of many unskilled jobs in Turkey is insufficient and under the poverty line. Also, the retirement age of these unskilled jobs such as construction workers, waiters and so on is higher than in the mining sector. Hence, I argue that given the mining sector's early retirement's advantages and relatively higher wages and pensions and the ability to be included in the social security system; peasant miners and their families consider a risky work such as mining as advantageous and gainful employment.

MINING AND AGRICULTURE

The underground mining sector's flexibility and the possibility of combining agriculture and mining has historically been a major reason for this villager-mining community to choose the mining sector. My field

19 Cihan Tuğal, "'Serbest Meslek Sahibi': Neoliberal Subjectivity among Istanbul's Popular Sectors," New Perspectives on Turkey 46, no. May (2012): 65–93, doi:10.1017/s0896634600001515.

20 Alpkan Birelma, "Working-Class Entrepreneurialism: Perceptions, Aspirations, and Experiences of Petty Entrepreneurship among Male Manual Workers in Turkey," New Perspectives on Turkey 61 (2019): 45–70, doi:10.1017/npt.2019.18.

research showed that older peasant farmers did not abandon agricultural activities while they worked in the Soma mines. Their households continued to cultivate in the village. This flexibility and the possibility of combining agriculture and mining at the same time was one main factor for the first and second-generation peasant-miners to choose to work as a mineworker.

Informal flexibility and connection with agriculture caused the high turnover rates and labor shortages in the factories in the industrialization history of Turkey.[21] As Donald Quataert explains, there was an alternate system (münaveli) for mining historically in Zonguldak. The Zonguldak mineworkers were peasant workers who had a connection with their lands.[22] In Soma and Kütahya, there were no alternate systems officially (münaveli), but the mineworkers created the same situation and flexibility by considering themselves as farmers and quitting their job during the harvesting period as my research revealed.

My field research revealed that the flexibility and connection with agriculture changed according to generations. In the first generation, while women worked on the farms, working for animal stock, doing housework as well as taking care of their children in the village under the control of their husband's family, men worked as seasonal wage laborers in the mine and came back to the village in the harvesting periods.

In the second generation, this system is similar to the previous generation but the ties of the rural village area and working site are weaker. There is an increase in immigration to Soma with the effect of agricultural transformation, the increase of population as well as the effect of retirement policies. For the second-generation, ties with the village are determined in relation to how much they have land in the village. If a miner

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21 Nurşen Gürboğa, "Mine Workers, the State and War: The Ereğli-Zonguldak Coal Basin as the Site of Contest, 1920-1947" Unpublished Ph.D. Diss., (Boğaziçi University, 2005).

22 Donald Quataert, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Madenciler ve Devlet Zonguldak Kömür Havzası 1822-1920, trans. Azat Zana Gündoğan and Nilay Özok Gündoğan, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2009), 21; Donald Quataert, Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire: The Zonguldak Coalfield, 1822-1920 (New York : Berghahn Books, 2006).

family had lands and engaged with agriculture in the village, they have strong ties with the village. If they have small lands in the agriculture or are landless peasants, the connection to village has become weaker.

FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD

This thesis argues that one needs to consider miners as a mining community including their families and their habitus as well as their migration and family history and experiences. This approach is in line with scholarship that has shown that the working class acts as a household unit as Wallerstein ideas[23] "all members of the household are capable of obtaining income for the household by their labor inputs, and in most cases participate in income-securing activities."[24]

In the field research, I experienced that the miners' families support and encourage their children and the men to work in the underground mine because it is a household strategy to live in better conditions. This thesis argues that family is an important and leading factor for the miners to work in the mine pits. Family becomes one of the primary motivations for miners to work in the mines in various situations including when getting married and establishing a family, securing insurance and health coverage for family members, giving children better education and living opportunities and so on.

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23 "It is indeed the case that, as late as the late nineteenth century, there were some parts of the world in which something near a "subsistence economy" continued to exist. What is important to underline is that, in such areas, it was also the case that When such an area is incorporated into the world-system (Hopkins et al., 1987), one of the many consequences is the disappearance, or at least the reduction in the economic role, of such communities and the creation of household structures such as we have been describing in this work. Immanuel Wallerstein, "Core-Periphery and Household Structures," in Creating and Transforming Households, eds. Joan Smith and Immanuel Wallerstein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 255.

24 Immanuel Wallerstein and Joan Smith, "Introduction," in Creating and Transforming Households, eds. Joan Smith and Immanuel Wallerstein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 12.

For the mining community, families have a household strategy and division of labor within the family. Within the family, only the male mine workers are in the formal working sector, making it possible to have health coverage for the entire family. Therefore, working in mines is a household strategy for peasants. The wives of miners continue to work in agriculture without coverage and secure social insurance through their mineworker husbands. The latter phenomenon is explained by Coşku Çelik[25] as the feminization of agriculture in her study on the Soma Coal Basin.

In the case of Selimli village, when the inner migration started in Turkey after the 1950s, the villagers of Selimli used a similar strategy like the feminization of agriculture. Men earned social security and retirement by working in the mines in Soma and came back to the village during the harvesting time. These first and second generation of men were circle migrants. Their wives stayed under the control of their husband's family in the village and continued agricultural and livestock activities. However, for the third generation from Selimli who worked in the mines after 2000, the education of children gained more importance and agricultural activities decreased in the village. Since the flexibility of agriculture and mining decreased, immigration to Soma as a family has become a phenomenon after the 2000s.

In most cases, working in the mine is a condition for marriage. That's why this thesis asserts that not only mineworkers but also their families should be included in the research. Most of the current miners' stories, in the case of being mineworkers, start just before they decide to get married. When a man decides to found a family and talk to the family of the women, the first thing they encounter in the community is "to have a formal, insured, well-paid occupation." Working in the mine is also part of masculinity because young males have to show to the community that they can work in the underground mine to get married.

25 Coşku Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means of Rural Livelihood: Patterns of Proletarianization and Labor Process in Soma Coal Basin" PhD Diss., (METU, 2019).

For miners, marriage is essential and has a crucial role in their lives. Working under tough conditions for hours in a stressful environment, miners need care from their families, especially their wives. Miners are deprived of many necessities in the underground mines, including eating, communication, fresh air and even toilets. Also, the migrant miners the research focused on stayed in the worksite in miserable conditions. Therefore, it was important for these miners to have good care when they arrived home. Thus, marriage is seen as escaping the miserable conditions of the worksite.

A PERIPHERAL VILLAGE

One of the main arguments of this thesis is that the peripheral status of Selimli is one of the main factors for this peasant community to become mine workers. In Soma, most peasant miners working in the mine usually come from similar disadvantaged peripheral areas away from the central areas, from mountain villages such as Selimli.

In these peripheral locations, distance to city centers decreases the chance of accessing the government facilities like hospitals, schools, and public transportation. Yet, this inability to access public facilities shall not be seen as a "natural" constraint merely following from the geographic status of Selimli as a mountain village. Instead, the peripheral status of Selimli is also linked to political decisions which historically deprived this rural area of government investment. In other words, the lack of public infrastructure in this region also defines the peripheral status of the village.

Given this lack of infrastructure, including roads, Selimli's relation to the market was limited and a barter economy was used in the village until the 2000s. The village's peripheral status did not allow peasants to sell their products to districts and centers. These dynamics pushed the peasant community of Selimli to become a mining community as well.

§ 1.3 Three Generations: Changing Patterns of Migration and Labor

The thesis will follow historical developments from the 1960s onwards by following the themes of peripheral location, retirement, agricultural relations, mining, and migration. It will do so by focusing on the experiences of three different generations since the research questions have been answered differently by different generations in the fieldwork. Hence, I divided my sample into three in terms of age to understand the changes and the patterns of labor, internal migration, and the social history of Turkey. Changing patterns through these three periods are retirement, social security, gender roles, relation with agriculture, and the way of describing identity.

The migration history in Turkey from the countryside to industrialized areas started in the 1950s. From the 1960s through the 1980s, it was the largest migration wave from the village to cities. In the research area, peasants worked circularly in mining, agriculture, and construction sectors, usually considered part-time workers or peasant workers are known in the literature.[26]

26 Sinan Yıldırmaz, Politics and the Peasantry in Post-War Turkey: Social History, Culture and Modernization (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2017); Sema Erder, İstanbul'a Bir Kent Kondu: Ümraniye (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996), 13.

Generations	First Generation	Second Generation	Third Generation
Ages	over 65	45-65	18-45
Working Years	1960-1980	1980-2002	2002-2020
Employment in the Mining Sector	Mining companies have difficulties finding employers High turnover rates Labor shortages in the mines	Workers preferred State-operated mines. Labor shortages in private mines.	Workers have difficulties in finding jobs in the mines Labour Surplus in the mines
Patterns of Migration to Soma	Circular and seasonal migration	Circular and permanent migration	Permanent migration as well as reverse migration
Working Typology-Relations With Agriculture	Seasonal wage laborer in the mines Intense Relation with Agriculture	Seasonal and permanent laborers in the mines Still strong ties but decreased relation with agriculture Semi-Proletarianization	Permanent workers in the mines Less agricultural activities, the emergence of industrial agricultural activities Proletarianization
Settlement and Accommodation	Workplace Apartment and village house Working time in Soma and harvest time in the village.	Working Site Soma City Center	Working site with their family Soma or Cenkyeri
Literacy	Men have basic literacy while women have no literacy	Primary School	High School
Family and Household Situation	Farming and animal husbandry, Feminized agriculture in the village	ming and animal husdry in the village sonal agricultural larer in Soma	All the family settled in Soma or Cenkyeri
Self Identification	They do not define themselves as workers. Instead, they define themselves as farmers or retirees.	They define themselves as farmers or concerning their job after retiring from mining. There are entrepreneurs among this group.	They define themselves as mine workers.
Main Reasons to Work in the Mines	The peripheral condition of the village, social security and social policies	Social security and social policies, poverty	Marriage, social security
Relevant macro changes	Law of Social Insurance (Sosyal Sigortalar Kanunu) in 1964	24 January 1980 Decisions 1999 legal changes in social security	2014 Soma accident, 2001 and 2008 economic crises, 2008 social security reforms

Years and Insurance Premium Days in Mining and Retirement Age	Retirement in any formal job after 1800 working days 30 Years-1800 days	Retirement Age: 38 20 years-4800 days 50 and 55	Retirement Age: 50 (if they work 4000 days, the retirement age will be 50, and if they work more than 4800 days, the retirement age will be 43) 12 Years-5000 days after 2014 Legal Changes
Turkey's General Social-Economic Situation Social Policies	Import substitution period had better working conditions and social security rights. The unemployment rate was lower. Mine have difficulty finding miners	Neo-Liberal Period Globalized Word Decrease of wages Transformation of Agriculture Increase in cash dependency	Privatization and the Redevance system High Unemployment rates Transformation of Agriculture Increase in cash dependency

Table 1.1: The Generation Table

The migration from Selimli fits into this larger trend of inner migration in the country. The interviews reveal that migration from Selimli started around 1965s as men migrated to the mines as seasonal workers. During the harvesting time in summer, these part-time workers returned to the village and spent four to five months in the village before going back to work in the mines in Soma.[27] This first generation worked in the mines in Soma between the years 1960-80, the historical period between

27 For example, Osman (65) from this first generation stated that "We didn't work like this all the time, like young people now, we used to work for three or four months, we used to raise the threshing in the village, plough our fields and go back to the mine so that we could have our retirement." "Biz böyle sürekli çalışmazdık şimdiki gençler gibi, üç dört ay çalışır gelirdik emekliliğimizde olsun diye, köyde harmanı kaldırır, tarlamızı sürer öyle dönerdik madene."

the two coups and the period of import substitution.[28] The age of these men is over 65 now, and they were all born in Selimli village.

The retirement age of this first generation and the number of days they had to work for retirement were lower in comparison to those of the younger generation.[29] Also, during this period, the turnover rate in the mines was higher. Hence, it was easy for these peasant-miners to leave work for harvesting and then return to work at the mine. Therefore, miners in this period had an intense relationship with agriculture, and production levels stayed the same.

During this period, while men moved to cities as circular migrants, their wives stayed under the control of their husband's families. They cared for farms, animals, and children which were in line with the general pattern of rural-to-urban migration in Turkey at the time. This led to feminized agriculture in the village.

This first generation did not define themselves as mine workers or retired workers. Instead, they defined themselves as farmers or in relation to the new jobs such as construction working, they started doing after retiring from the mines. Men of this first generation did not consider themselves as "(mine) workers" because they spent only a few years in an underground mine, and they continued for many years to do agriculture and animal husbandry

In this period, the welfare state was viewed globally and in Turkey. The constitution of 1961st was also influential in this period. Thus, the generation of 1960-1980 had better working conditions and social security rights. The unemployment rate was also lower.

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28 Şevket Pamuk, Türkiye'nin 200 Yıllık İktisadi Tarihi : Büyüme, Kurumlar ve Bölüşüm (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2015).

29 Retirement age and premium days simply, the first generation of miners were retired in any age if they work more than 4000 days in 20 years. They were retired mostly at the age of 38. If miners started working after 2008, the retirement age is 50 for them and they needed to complete 4.000 workdays insurance premium. However, miners can be retired at 43 if they work more than 4.800 workdays. Hence, working more days in underground mines decreases the retirement age of miners.

The second generation is those who worked between 1980 after 24 January decisions and 2001. This period corresponds to the neoliberal era. Men from this second generation are currently between 45 and 65 years old. The majority of them were also born in the village. This group continued agriculture activities at the same time they worked in the mines. In this neoliberal period, cash dependency in this rural community increased with the increase of overall consumption nationwide. At the same time, the decrease in agricultural subsidies and the neoliberal transformation of agriculture pushed this generation to work in the mine pits.[30] Still, the fieldwork findings show that the connection to land and agriculture continued even if to a lesser extent for this second generation.

The second generation has the same retirement and social security rights as the first generation. They also continue agriculture. Unlike the previous generation, this generation took their families with them a few years after they migrated to Soma. Hence, women's role in the family began to change in this generation. Like the previous generation, this generation of men do not define themselves as mineworkers. Although some still work in the mines. They consider working in the mine as a "temporary job" and as a way of getting retirement rights. They have other occupations, and they are still farmers in their view.

Thus, as argued earlier, the flexibility and possibility of combining mining and agriculture was a primary reason for both the first and second generation of men from Selimli to work in the underground mines in Soma. However, as I discuss below, the 2014 mine accidents in Soma destroyed this flexibility of mining with continuing agriculture. In addition, given the overall agricultural transformation and the labor surplus in the mining sector, it is difficult to talk about the flexibility and combination of agriculture and mining after 2014.

30 Çağlar Keyder and Zafer Yenal, Bildiğimiz Tarımın Sonu (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013).

The third generation is composed of those who work(ed) in the Soma mines from 2001 to 2020 in the period of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government. This group of men is younger than 45, and the youngest is 18. The majority were not born in their native village but in the migrated area in Soma.

For Soma mine workers, this period of the 2000s entailed essential macro changes, affecting the lives of both retired miners and those who still work. These important macro developments include the 2008 Social Security Reform, the 2001 and 2008 economic crises, and ARIP (Agricultural Implementation Reform Project).

One of the most significant macro changes for Soma mines in the 2000s was privatization and the redevance system with subcontracting companies. In this period, the production of mines increased in the region. This increase in output also increased the number of miners in the region.

The younger generation from Selimli, whose age is between 25-30, were not working in the mines at the time I conducted my research. The increase in retirement age was one major reason for this group of younger men not to choose to work in the mine. In 2008, the retirement age was increased with the reform of law number 5510. Before 2008 miners could be retired after working 5000 days, with this law, the retirement age became 50 for those who started to work before 2008 and 55 for those who started to work after 2008.[31] Also, the retirement age could

31 "One other essential adjustment pertains to the period of premium payments.
In order to harmonize the three divergent social security institutions and equalize the period of premium payment for all three institutions, Law No. 5510, which was enacted in 2006, increased 7000 days of premium payments for SSK workers to 9000 days. After the amendment to the Law No. 5510, Article 27,175 the number of premium payments to be paid by SSK insurants was lowered to 7200 days (…) The structural reform of 1999 was the first stage of a planned two-staged pension reform package. In this first phase, short-term, parametric measures 162 were addressed. The abolition of the minimum retirement age limit, introduced by right- left coalition government of the DYP and SHP in 1992, was vital in the discussions as a financial disrupter of the system. First, a minimum retirement age for all new entrants into the SSK, Bağ-Kur, and ES schemes were introduced. To continue,

change according to miners' working time. While miners were able to retire at age 38, when they worked 20 years in the mines. With the 2008 Social Security Reform, underground miners retirement age became 55 until the 2014 changes. Given these legal changes, many young males, sons of miners, have become professional soldiers, according to data from the field. With the professionalization of the army in the country, miners' families also started to choose to have their children join the army as professional soldiers instead of work in the mine.

However, the 2014 accident in Soma was a turning point. After the accident, the retirement pension age for mineworkers decreased again. With this change, the retirement age for miners became 50 and even 45, 43 with depreciation because of it is risks.[32] Also, mineworkers' salaries increased with the law stating that the pay of miners might not be less than two minimum wages.[33] Miners were also granted two days a week

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within this transitory period, the law raised the minimum retirement age to 52 for women and to 56 for men. Previously, regardless of age, 20 years of full contributions for women, and 25 years of full contributions for men had been sufficient in order to be eligible for retirement. Along with the law, entitlement to the right to receive a pension became harder to acquire since it extended the process (…) Social Insurance and Universal Health Insurance Law, currently named Law No. 5510, was re-enacted on 17 April, 2008 with amendments titled in Law No. 5754. The law became effective as of October 2008. Thus, the social security reform process that started in the 1990s ended in 2008, yet it continues to be a hotly disputed topic. Its importance will continue considering mainly two things. First, the reform itself, with its controversial articles, is the source of the waning of retirement conceptualization as a moderate life time reward for the working population in old age. Second, the incompatibility of the social security system despite the reform with the prevailing labor market relations will likely continue." Asya Saydam, "Changing Retirement Patterns in Turkey: A Comparative Study of Metal and Municipality Sector Workers" (Boğaziçi Üniversity, 2015), 50-55.

32 Erdoğan Kaya, Soma Maden Kazasından Sonra Sağlanan Haklar https://www.sinerjias.com.tr/pdf/soma-maden-kazasindan-sonra-saglanan-haklar.pdf

33 Law No: 6552: There are rigts and changes with this law, accepted date: 10.09.2014 MADDE 9 – 4/6/1985 tarihli ve 3213 sayılı Maden Kanununa aşağıdaki ek madde eklenmiştir.

as a holiday. These legal changes caused the younger generation to turn back to mines again.

During this period, the relation with agriculture decreased because the overall unemployment rate has been higher and the turnover rate in the mines decreased. The mineworkers cannot quit the job and go back to work in their agriculture quickly as the first generation did. Most of them still have a little agricultural area in Soma however, the production is not the same as in the previous generations.

This third generation lives with their family in Soma. Women have a stronger voice in the family compared to previous generations and are influential in the decisions about the family's future. A lot of families and women require men to work in the mine for marriage. Also, this young generation defines themselves as mine workers They complain about the difficulty of working in the mine and say, "time does not pass in the underground mine". The change in these dynamics indicates that the miners' and the rural community of Selimli's outlook on mining has changed. Unlike previous periods, mining is now considered an important occupation, not just a temporary job or merely a means of obtaining retirement.

§ 1.4 The Scope and Some Notes on Miners and Mining

1.4.1.1 Who are the miners working in Soma?

Firstly, it is logical to clarify who the miners are working in Soma for mine extraction and where they originally come from. What was the workers' previous occupation? Soma is a small mining town in western Turkey. It is surrounded by the Yunt Mountains. The city's population was

"EK MADDE 9 – Bu Kanunun 2 nci maddesinde sayılan 4. Grup madenlerden "Linyit" ve "Taşkömürü" çıkarılan işyerlerinde, yer altında çalışan işçilere ödenecek ücret miktarı 4857 sayılı Kanunun 39 uncu maddesi uyarınca belirlenen asgari ücretin iki katından az olamaz." (Kanun No. 6552 -ana kanun numarası, Kabul tarihi: (10.09.2014)(https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/09/20140911M1-1.htm)

109,946[34] in 2020, while it was 39,088 in 1985.[35] The city's population has increased with labor immigration. The number of mineworkers in the mine pits is approximately 17,000 and only about 7,000 mineworkers working in these pits come from the surrounding villages of Soma, from the local population.[36] The majority of mineworkers come from Kütahya, Balıkesir, Zonguldak, and the workers' suppliers of Zonguldak, such as Bartın, Ordu, Çorum, Giresun historically.[37]

In the relevant literature, Çelik[38], identifies two main groups among the mine workers in Soma: the migrants and locals. Based on my field research, I identified three main groups of workers according to the place of origin and labor typology.

The first group is composed of workers from Soma and neighboring areas such as Akhisar, Kırkağaç, Savaştepe, Kınık, and the villages of Soma and these towns. This group started to work in mines lately mainly due to the privatization of TEKEL and the decrease in tobacco production in the region. The second group I identified consists of those from the Black Sea region and Eastern Turkey. They had worked in the Zonguldak mines and the eastern mines. They migrate to Soma due to the decrease in mine investments in the Zonguldak region after the 1991 strike. The third group includes workers from the east of western Turkey, the Inner Aegean, and the South Marmara regions. They have come from the peripheries, rural, underdeveloped areas of Balıkesir, Manisa, Kütahya, and Bursa. The mineworkers from the village of Selimli who form the sample of this thesis belong to this third group.

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34 Soma Nüfusu, accessed 30 May 2020. https://www.nufusu.com/ilce/soma_manisa-nufusu

35 Nuran Taşlıgil, "Manisa İlinin Nüfus Gelişimi ve Özellikleri." Ondokuz Mayis University Journal of Education Faculty 7, no. 1 (1992): 231.

36 Onur Bütün, Yedi Kat Yerin Altından Uğultular Geliyor: Yeni Çeltek'ten Soma'ya Maden İşçileri (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2015), 247.

37 Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means," 4.

38 Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means."

1.4.2 *Surface Miners and Underground Miners*

Mines and miners are divided into two on a simple level depending on the occupation area: underground miners and surface miners. The number of accidents in underground mines is larger, the deaths are more numerous, and the working conditions are more severe. In surface mines, working conditions seem relatively better than underground, but working hours are longer, income is lower, and the retirement age is higher. Surface mines offer similar working conditions and economic income as in other industries in Turkey for unskilled workers.

The research findings show that the miners likely prefer to or are obliged to work in underground mines instead of surface mines because of higher income, lower working hours, and retirement age advantages. The miner who cannot descend to the underground mine due to health problems might not be satisfied with his job. For example, Rasim (42) (surface mine worker), used to work in the underground mines before. However, for seven years, he could no longer work in the underground mines because of his health problems. He was not comfortable with this situation because his peers had already obtained their retirement. In contrast, he had to work longer years in the above-ground mines with longer working hours and would receive a lower pension compared to his peers who retired from the underground mines.

1.4.3 *The Scope: Underground Miners*

The thesis is mainly about underground miners and their families because the risks of an underground mine are more compared to surface mines. In the field research, I also made interviews with surface mine workers and with their families, yet it seems inaccurate to discuss two groups of miners unitedly because there are divergences between surface mine workers and underground miners related to working conditions, retirement conditions, and the working hours. Therefore, the scope of this thesis is largely for underground miners and their families.

1.4.4 *The Working Conditions of Miners*

Working conditions in the mines are difficult. Miners work in a stressful environment. Miners start their sentences with, "if you do not know the mining, you might die immediately."[39]

Mining is a labor intensive job. Mining goes on with three shifts on a day without any break. Mine workers are not able to enter mines with their phones. Hence, they have no information from their families for eight hours daily. There are no toilets in the underground mines. When the shift ends, miners come out of the underground mine with aches and with coal in their bodies. Another thing that many miners mention is that miners have difficulties going out on sunny days because of working many years without sun.

When I asked and listened to the working conditions of the miners, there were three different responses to the question. The responses changed in relation to where I did my interview and with whom. If I was in the miners' homes and if their families were with us while conducting the interviews, miners did not complain about working conditions. They showed their families how strong and how masculine they are. For example, Refik (31) explained how it is easy to work in underground mines. He explained worksite areas that allowed him to save money. "The worksite areas were not good, but we had free food, and bedding and could save money."

On other occasions, I asked about working conditions in the coffee houses among male workers. They responded either with jokes or by swearing. For example, Refik was swearing about the worksite accommodation and said it was the worst part of his life. Also, Mahmut said that he deleted the worksite accommodation from his memories.

I gained another perspective when I conducted one-to-one interviews with men in the streets or at home when they were alone. They explain working conditions with nightmares. İsmail, Refik, and Ümit explained how they had many dreams and nightmares when they started

39 "Madenciliği bilmiyorsan, hemen ölürsün."

working at the age of 18 or 19. They told me that they saw their close friends' deaths and accidents, and these moments remained alive in their memories and appeared in their dreams repeatedly.

§ 1.5 Contribution to Literature

The study contributes to the literature on miner communities in Turkey firstly by focusing on a different geographic area (Aegean) rather than the Zonguldak/Black Sea region which has mostly been the site of study. Secondly, the thesis brings in mineworkers' families' perspectives and household strategies into the analysis rather than just focusing on male mine workers. Thirdly, by covering a wider time span through its focus on the experience of three generations, the study offers a broad perspective of the miner community from its first formation and reveals the dynamics that have changed over time.

The main geographic area of focus in the literature on mining and mining communities in Turkey has been the Black Sea region, particularly Zonguldak.[40]

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40 Quataert, Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire: The Zonguldak Coalfield, 1822-1920; Gürboğa, "Mine Workers, the State and War: The Ereğli-Zonguldak Coal Basin as the Site of Contest, 1920-1947"; Can Nacar, "Our Lives Were Not as Valuable as an Animal" 1: Workers in State-Run Industries in World-War-II Turkey." International Review of Social History 54, Supplement 17 (2009): 143–66; Can Nacar, "Working Class in Turkey During the World War II Period: Between Social Policies and Everyday Experiences." Unpublished MA Thesis, (Boğaziçi University, 2004); İbrahim Sarıkaya, "Work Accidents as the Most Afflictive Face of Neoliberalism: The Zonguldak Hard Coal Basin Case," accessed 25 May 2021, https://www.ippapublicpolicy.org/file/paper/1433965757.pdf; İbrahim Sarıkaya, "Work and Work Accidents in the Flexible Working Regime: The Zonguldak Hard Coal Basin Case" Unpublished M.A. Thesis, (Boğaziçi Universitesi 2012); E. Attila Aytekin, *Tarlalardan Ocaklara, Sefaletten Mücadeleye: Zonguldak-Ereğli Kömür Havzası Işçileri, 1848-1922* (İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2007); Erol Kahveci, "Review of Life and Death at Work: Industrial Accidents as a Case of Socially Produced Error, by T. Dwyer," Sociology 27, no. 2 (1993): 327–28. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42855191; Theo Nichols and Erol Kahveci. "The condition of mine labor in Turkey: injuries to miners in Zonguldak, 1942–90," *Middle Eastern Studies* 31, 2 (1995): 197-228; Nurşen Gürboğa, "Compulsory Mine Work: The

This thesis focuses on an understudied region, Aegean which has not received equal attention until recently. While there has been a growing literature on the Soma mines after the 2014 accident.[41] This thesis

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Single-Party Regime and the Zonguldak Coalfield as a Site of Contention, 1940–1947." *International Review of Social History* 54 (2009): 115–42. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26405433; Murat Metinsoy, "Wars Outside the War: The Social Impact of the Second World War on Turkey." MA Thesis. (Boğaziçi University, 2004); Mübeccel Kıray, *Ereğli : Ağır Sanayiden Önce Bir Sahil Kasabası* (Ankara: Devlet Plânlama Teşkilâtı 1964); Figen Uzar Özdemir and Atilla Barutçu eds, *"Yüz Karası Değil Kömür Karası": Zonguldak* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2017).

41 Fikret Adaman, Murat Arsel, and Bengi Akbulut, "Neoliberal Developmentalism, Authoritarian Populism, and Extractivism in the Countryside: The Soma Mining Disaster in Turkey," Journal of Peasant Studies 46, no. 3 (April 16, 2019): 514–36, doi:10.1080/03066150.2018.1515737; Sumru Tamer, "State-Making Through Disaster Management: The Case of Soma" 2017; Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means of Rural Livelihood"; Coşku Çelik, "Tarımdan Madenciliğe, Madencilikten İşsizliğe Soma'da Sınıf İlişkilerinin Dönüşümü – Sosyal Demokrat Dergi," *Sosyal Bilimler Derneği*, 2018, http://www.sosyaldemokratdergi.org/cosku-celik-tarimdan-madencilige-madencilikten-issizlige-somada-sinif-iliskilerinin-donusumu/. Hatice Çoban Keneş and İnan Özdemir Taştan. "Madencinin Acısına Bakmak: Ulusal Basında Soma Maden "Facia"sının Haberleştirilmesi"." *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi* 71 (2016): 125–60; Elif Türten, "Soma Maden Faciası Karikatürlerinin Değerlendirilmesi: Salih Memecan, Mehmet Çağçağ, Osman Turhan ve Behiç Ak Örnekleri (Evaluation of Mine Disaster Soma Cartoon with Samples:.....)," *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Elektronik Dergisi* 3, no. 2 (, 2015): 137-158. doi:10.19145/guifd.29583. *Çiğdem Yumbul, "Life in Soma, Turkey, After the Mining Massacre of 2014: An Autoethnographic Account of Mental Health Relief Efforts to Affected Families," PhD Diss. (University of Minnesota, 2017)*; Ayşe Buğra, "Geliyorum Diyen Facia Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Soma Araştırma Grubu Raporu," ed. Nuri Ersoy (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2014), 185–202. Özge Kantaş, "'Madenin Altı Ölüm; Üstü Zulüm…,'" *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi* 70(2) (2015): 485-497; Fuat Ercan and Şebnem Oğuz, "From Gezi Resistance to Soma Massacre: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle in Turkey." Socialist Register 51 (2015): 114–35; Halil Gürhanlı, "Mass Murder in Soma Mine: Crony Capitalism and Fetish of Growth in Turkey," Politiikasta, last modified 9 June 2014, https://politiikasta.fi/mass-murder-in-soma-mine-crony-capitalism-and-fetish-of-growth-in-turkey/; Erhan Atay, Habibe Ilhan, and Serkan Bayraktaroglu, "The Turkish Soma Coal Mining Disaster," *Journal of Business Ethics Education* 16 (2019): 231–46, doi:10.5840/jbee20191613; Mukaddes Esra Aysan, "Özelleştirmenin Maden Işçilerinin

differs from these studies on Soma as well as other studies on mining in Turkey in terms of the period on which it focuses.

Some research on mining during the Republican era focus on the Second World War period. For example, Can Nacar in "Our Lives Were Not as Valuable as an Animal" written in 2009 which focuses on the "workers inside and outside workplaces during World War II."[42] Studies about Soma, including Tamer (2017) [43] and Adaman et al (2019) [44] , mostly focus on the neoliberal era and the privatizations during the AKP period. However, this thesis tries to make sense of the origin of today's Soma and mining debates by looking at a broader period. For this purpose, it uses archival documents for the period before 1960 while mainly building on field research with different generations of the post-1960 period. Thus, it provides a broad perspective of the miner community beginning from its first formation. It reveals changes from generation to generation and highlights the dynamics that have changed over time. This research also

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Çalışma ve Sosyal Hayatına Etkisi: Soma Örneği," Unpublished MA Thesis (Ordu Üniversitesi, 2019); Çağatay Topal, Fatma Umut Beşpınar, and Çağrı Topal, "Soma'da Madencilerin Risk Anlamlandırmalarında Kurumsal ve Yerel Bilginin Üretim Dinamikleri," *Mülkiye Dergisi*, 42 (3), 371-402; Matteo Spada and Peter Burgherr, "An Aftermath Analysis of the 2014 Coal Mine Accident in Soma, Turkey: Use of Risk Performance Indicators Based on Historical Experience," *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 87 (2016): 134–40, doi:10.1016/j.aap.2015.11.020; Arife Karadag, "Changing Environment and Urban Identity Following Open-Cast Mining and Thermic Power Plant in Turkey: Case of Soma," *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment* 184 (2012) 1617-1632, doi:10.1007/s10661-011-2065-z.

42 Can Nacar, "Our Lives Were Not as Valuable as an Animal" 1: Workers in State-Run Industries in World-War-II Turkey." International Review of Social History 54, Supplement 17 (2009): 143–66.

43 Sumru Tamer, "State-Making Through Disaster Management: The Case of Soma." MA Thesis, (Boğaziçi University, 2017).

44 Fikret Adaman, Murat Arsel, and Bengi Akbulut. "Neoliberal Developmentalism, Authoritarian Populism, and Extractivism in the Countryside: The Soma Mining Disaster in Turkey." The Journal of Peasant Studies 46, no. 3 (2019): 514–36. doi:10.1080/03066150.2018.1515737.

aims to show ordinary lives and times. In the literature, the mining studies in Turkey focus on *mükellefiyet*[45] during the Second World War or the May 13, Soma accident as mentioned above. These two periods are unusual times. In these unusual circumstances, miners' experiences, and the encounters between the state and mining communities differ from usual times. In this thesis, although the starting point is the Soma accident, the main emphasis is on miners' experience and mentalities of the mining community in ordinary times. Therefore, this study examines a longer period and miners' obligations *(*mecburiyet*)* during common periods.

The biggest contribution of this thesis is that it testifies the perspective of the miners and their families on working in the mining sector. It examines how miners, and their families consider such a risky and deadly job as underground mining. By involving the miners' families, the study makes visible the other members of households, the children and wives, since mining is not the only individual strategy of the male workers but rather a family strategy to survive. As this thesis aims to show, for the peasant mining community, families have a household strategy and division of labor within the family. Mining is a lifestyle experienced by every family member in the mining community. This research contributes to including the family in the research agenda.

Lastly, this thesis differs from existing studies on mining in the Soma region in terms of the group of mineworkers it focuses on. Many studies conducted about Soma focus on local workers in the region.[46] In this thesis, Soma will be investigated through the transformation of Selimli village and by looking at Soma from peasant workers' perspective.

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45 Mükellefiyet is obligatory work implemented by the state without consent of the citizens. It was implemented in the 19th and 20th centuries in the mines because of labor shortages in the mines. In the Ottoman Empire period, it started in Zonguldak mines in 1867. In terms of Inner Aegean mines, during the Second World War, mükellefiyet was implemented with the National Protection Law.

46 Tamer, "State-Making Through Disaster Management"; Aysan, "Özelleştirmenin Maden Işçilerinin Çalışma ve Sosyal Hayatına Etkisi: Soma Örneği."

This study emphasizes migration by choosing Selimli since it is one of the labor suppliers of the Soma mine pits.

Another important contribution is that it takes a different perspective by examining not only the mining region of Soma but also the migrating village of Selimli. Thus, it reveals a picture of both migration and labor history through the eyes of miners and miners' families who emigrated and stayed behind. Also, this study emphasizes the connection of miners with land and agriculture.

In summary, this thesis becomes distinct from other studies in that it looks at mining from the perspective of miners, focuses on a wider time period and a different geographic area, addresses those who emigrate and remain behind, and makes family members part of the research, and tries to make sense of the changes that occur over time by focusing on three different generations.

§ 1.6 Literature Review

This section will offer a review of the mining community literature under three main headings: 1) global mining community literature, 2) national mining community studies, and 3) local mining community (Soma and Aegean) literature.

1.6.1 *Global Mining Community Literature*

There are several research about global mining communities. I want to give only a few examples. I want to start with "Coal is Not Just a Job, It's a Way of Life": The Cultural Politics of Coal Production in Central Appalachia by Philip G. Lewin article.[47] The article is written in 2019 based on Appalachia fieldwork. It is relevant to my study because it shows that despite the adverse effects and health risks to society, the mining community gives popular support to mining.

47 Philip G. Lewin, "'Coal Is Not Just a Job, It's a Way of Life': The Cultural Politics of Coal Production in Central Appalachia," Social Problems 66, no. 1 (2017): 1–18, doi:10.1093/socpro/spx030.

Similar to my research field, many people in the Appalachia region feel like second-class citizens because the U.S. government ignores them. With the high unemployment rates and poverty in the region, the mining sector creates easy opportunities for males to find a job. For male workers, mining creates a dignified and masculine occupation because it's a sector where the number of women workers are rare. This causes a positive attitude towards mining in the region and makes it a "way of life" instead of only a job as Lewin explains.

Lewin links his "way of life" argument to Gramsci's theory of hegemony. In his words, as Antonio Gramsci explains "dominant groups secure consent for economic exploitation by exercising moral and cultural leadership."[48] In this Gramscian theoretical framework, hegemony is seen as essential for the mining communities' consent. Hence it becomes crucial for mining studies to theorize the cultural and leadership hegemony.

Another essay is Richard York Bell, Shannon Elizabeth, "Community Economic Identity: The Coal Industry and Ideology Construction in West Virginia."[49] They take theorization from a neo-Marxist paradigm and emphasize the companies' desire for increasing profits. They also focus on mechanization in the extractive industries, arguing how employment in the mines decreased with mechanization. In the fieldwork of Soma, mechanization was also a relevant phenomenon. In the region, mechanization caused the decreased the flexibility of mineworkers to shift between mining and agriculture because labor shortage in the mines is not a phenomenon anymore.

There are differences and similarities among the mining communities across the world. Another example of a mining community study is Federico M. Helfgott's research about Peru miners,' "Transformations in

48 Ibid, 2.

49 Shannon Elizabeth Bell and Richard York, Community Economic Identity: The Coal Industry and Ideology Construction in West Virginia, Rural Sociology 75 (1) (2010): 111-143. doi.org/10.1111/j.1549-0831.2009.00004.x

Labor, Land and Community: Mining and Society in Pasco, Peru, 20th Century to the Present."[50] It builds on ethnographic research in Peru and focuses on social history, household, and everyday life. The study is relevant to my thesis since it takes households and household strategies into consideration.

These global studies on mining communities show that mining communities have their own culture and local understanding of the world as well as their own rationale and motivation for working in mine pits. The studies mentioned above show these motivations and the mining communities' way of life.

Another important essay is Ad Knotter's "Migration and Ethnicity in Coalfield History: Global Perspectives". It is an overview article that analyzes the historical relationship between migration and coalfield globally through the 19th and 20th centuries. He emphasizes the labor shortages of mining companies and peasant miners' involvement in the mines. He also defines "the concept of the "mining community" itself, as a closed, homogeneous, and often isolated settlement.[51] It is a good picture of global mining communities and the patterns of mining in the case of ethnicity and migration. Knotter also talks about Turkey and Zonguldak in the case of rotational work and forced labor. In the 19th century, forced labor was used in the Ottoman Empire, where the laborers were supplied by migration. Even though there was no forced labor in the 20th century, the Turkish mining community witnessed a brief period of forced labor during the Second World War. However, after this period, the mining occupation turned into a family tradition in Zonguldak as Knotter displays.[52] While we do not see any example of forced labor in Soma in the 21st century, I will show that this family tradition in Soma became involuntarily practiced in the 21st century in Soma because of the economic situation of the country.

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50 Federico M Helfgott, "Transformations in Labor, Land and Community: Mining and Society in Pasco, Peru, 20th Century to the Present," PhD Diss. (University of Michigan, 2013).
51 Ad Knotter, "Migration and Ethnicity in Coalfield History: Global Perspectives," IRSH 60 (2015): 13–39, doi:10.1017/S0020859015000413.
52 Ibid.

1.6.2 *Turkey Mining Community Literature*

The main research area for academic studies on mining in Turkey is Zonguldak. Donald Quataert's contributions and his works are essential for the improvement of Turkish labor history. Quataert's book, "Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire: The Zonguldak Coalfield, 1822-1920" was written based on archival research.[53] His study covers a long period, which inspired me to look at the mining community of Selimli from a broader time perspective.

Quataert's research gives particular importance to the state and its effect on coalfields. He said that sometimes the local authorities, mukhtars were used to control and discipline the workers.[54] He also argues that Zonguldak mines differ from Britain, France, and the USA mines where "coal mines come into being through the efforts of private entrepreneurs using their own and investors' capital to open and operate mines. By contrast, the Zonguldak mines owed their opening and initial exploitation to state efforts."[55] Donald Quataert explains that historically there was an alternate system (münaveli) for mining in Zonguldak.[56] He says that workers have a connection with their lands. In other words, they are "peasant workers", similar to African and South American examples. In Soma and Kütahya, there were no alternate systems officially, but the workers were creating the same situation by considering themselves farmers and quitting their job during the harvesting period in the summer months. Quataert's emphasis on local notables and the the dual status of peasant-miners is similar to my case of study.

Another important contribution to the working-class and mining community of Turkey is Ahmet Makal's essays and his book *Ameleden İşçiye*. Makal mentions working class strikes and movements. The book

53 Quataert, "Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire."
54 Ibid, 4.
55 Ibid, 5.
56 Quataert, "Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire," 1-21.

also mentions the Aegean mines and miners.[57] One of the important contributions of Makal was to include the prisoners in the analysis. Prisoner workers were obliged to work in the mines after the mükellefiyet period.[58] It was interesting to hear the prison workers' stories from the field research, parallel to Makal's book. Also, Makal's emphasis on poems written by the workers and their families in the Inner Aegean which has less cultural poems and songs in Zonguldak is also interesting.

Another classic and first book about the Zonguldak area is Ereğli: Ağır Sanayiden Önce Bir Sahil Kasabası written in 1964 by Mübeccel Kıray which focuses on the town of Ereğli before industrialization.[59] Kıray emphasizes that the modernization of the town is not only related to the opening of factories but also, it is related to the changes and relations in the country.[60] Mübeccel Kıray's book is relevant to my study since it emphasizes the country general relations as well as the power relations between miners and tradesmen. The use of agricultural products for trade which she refers to is relevant since the barter economy was important for the village of Selimli as I discuss later in the thesis.

Another important piece of research about the mining community in Zonguldak consists of Erol Kahveci's essays. Kahveci focuses on mine accidents and the division of labor from the 1930s to the 1990s.[61] He analyzes the dynamics around migration and ethnicity in the region in his article Migration, Ethnicity, and Divisions of Labor in the Zonguldak Coalfield, Turkey in 2015.[62] He shows us that there was a division among mineworkers: While Laz origin migrants were permanent full-time surface

57 Ahmet Makal, Ameleden İşçiye (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), 138.

58 Ibid, 35.

59 Kıray, "Ereğli," 240.

60 Ibid.

61 Erol Kahveci, "Migration, Ethnicity, and Divisions of Labor in the Zonguldak Coalfield, Turkey." International Review of Social History 60, no. S1 (2015): 207–26. doi:10.1017/S0020859015000425.

62 "Systematic mechanization in the mines would necessarily have meant a sharp reduction in the number of temporary, unskilled workers. To drive up productivity by mechanization, the mines would have had to steer the miners away from the old model of semi-

mine workers, underground workers were rotational workers.[63] Also, Kahveci emphasizes the decrease of investments in Zonguldak in the 1990s. His findings give an idea about the differences between surface and underground mine workers. In my case study, the underground mines workers became permanent workers in the Soma mine pits because of the retirement advantages offered to them.

Another essay from which I benefited for my study is Tamzok's essay on the structural changes in the mining sector. His writings gave me an idea about the periodization of the mining sector in Turkey.[64] Especially, Türkiye Madencilik Sektöründe Yapısal Dönüşüm ve Sonuçları[65] is an important essay to understand the state operated mines and private companies and the transformations they underwent in Turkey. Tamzok separates mining history into five periods:[66] 1)1923-1935 as the Early Republic period, 2) 1935- 1950 as the Etibank Period, 3) 1946-1960 as the Second World War and Democrat Party Period, 4)1961-1980 as the Planned Period, and 5)1981-2000 as The Neo-Liberal Period. Tamzok

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peasant, semi-industrial worker. However, because the government never provided sufficient investment to modernize the Zonguldak mines, the underground mining methods did not require a new composition of the labour force. As a consequence, after 1948, underground workers, recruited from the peasantry, continued to work on a monthly basis, dividing their time between mining and agriculture, while surface workers were employed on a permanent basis. Even in the 1990s, over 50 per cent of the underground labour force continued to work rotationally. The policies of the mining company resulted in certain sections of the labour force becoming full-time industrial workers, 50 but it was impossible to overcome the divisions within the labour force. Labour continued to be divided in terms of locality, work patterns, and ethnicity, and such divisions were further deepened by the favouritism shown by the company to permanent workers" Ibid. 222

63 Ibid.

64 Nejat Tamzok, "Türkiye Madencilik Sektöründe Yapısal Dönüşüm ve Sonuçları," Türkiye 19. Uluslararası Madencilik Kongresi Bildiriler Kitabı, 2014, 5–20.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

portrays the transformation of the mining industry and explains the privatizations.[67]

It is important to note that the case of the Soma mine differs from the general mining history of Turkey offered by Tamzok. The Soma mine was first private, then it started to be operated by the state, TKİ in the 1978 and then mines was operated by private companies in 2005 by redevance mechanism.[68]

There is also research conducted about the Zonguldak coal basin and mine workers, mainly during the Second World War. For example, Can Nacar in Our Lives Were Not as Valuable as an Animal written in 2009 focuses on the "workers inside and outside workplaces during World War II." Nacar focuses, the recruitment of miners, their lower income and miserable working conditions and their reaction to these situations. He emphasizes the turnover rates and social policies.[69] Nurşen Gürboğa focuses on the relationships among the people of Zonguldak, mining companies, and the state in the Early Republic in the article Mine Workers, the State and War The Ereğli-Zonguldak Coal Basin as the Site of Contest, 1920-1947, the essay is written from her thesis.[70] Murat Metinsoy in his MA thesis Wars Outside the War: The Social Impact of the Second World War

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67 Ibid.

68 Nejat Tamzok, "Soma: Bir Facianın Tarihçesi," Enerji Günlüğü, 30 June 2014. https://www.enerjigunlugu.net/osmanlida-komurun-devreye-girisi-ve-somanin-kesfi-9188yy.htm Ercan, Fuat, and Şebnem Oğuz. "From Gezi Resistance to Soma Massacre: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle in Turkey." Socialist Register 51 (2015): 114–35.117

69 Nacar, "Our Lives Were Not as Valuable as an Animal."

70 Gürboğa, Mine Workers, the State and War."; Nurşen Gürboğa,"Mine Workers, the State and War: The Ereğli-Zonguldak Coal Basin as the Site of Contest, 1920-1947." P.h.D Thesis, (Boğaziçi Universitesi 2015); Reşat Kasaba, "Donald Quataert. Miners and Their State in the Ottoman Empire: The Zonguldak Coalfield, 1822–1920. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006. 288 Pages, Illustrations, Map, Bibliography, Index. Cloth US$80.00 ISBN 1-84545-133-3." Review of Middle East Studies 43, no. 1 (2009): 122–23. doi:10.1017/S2151348100000422; Donald Quataert and Nadir Özbek, "Ereğli Kömür Madenleri." Tarih ve Toplum 181, (1999): 11-18; Donald Quataert and Yüksel Duman. "A Coal Miner's Life During the Late Ottoman Empire." International Labor and Working-Class History 60 (2001): 153–79. doi:10.1017/S0147547901004501.

on Turkey also focuses on the social impact of the war outside the war.[71] His thesis focuses on peasants, poor people, children, and women, the daily life outside of the war. Another research[72] is İbrahim Sarıkaya's thesis which focuses on working accidents by emphasizing subcontracted firms. This research is relevant because the redevance system is also studied. He explains the Zonguldak Coal Basin in the 1980s period. He argues that "the redevance system offers important possibilities for understanding the contradictory and tense relation between the labor, the capital, and the state."[73]

1.6.2.1 Inner Aegean Mining Community- Soma Local Mining Community Literature

The mining communities of the lignite coal basin of Inner Aegean have received less attraction in the literature. As discussed above, the main geographic area of focus in academic studies on mining communities in Turkey has been Zonguldak. Especially before the 2014 Soma accident, there were very few studies about miners and the mining communities in the Inner Aegean region.

One of the first studies conducted on the Inner Aegean mines before the 2014 Soma accident is by Kalaycıoğlu and Kezban Çelik.[74] Their study is based on fieldwork conducted in Tunçbilek, Kütahya in 2011. The Tunçbilek Coal Mine was state operated mines between the 1940s and 2000, and then it was privatized during the 2000s. Kalaycıoğlu and Çelik analyze privatization's and neoliberal policies' effects on miners' lives and experiences.[75] They point to the differences between the state

71 Murat Metinsoy, "Wars Outside the War: The Social Impact of the Second World War on Turkey." MA Thesis. (Boğaziçi University, 2004).

72 Sarıkaya, "Work Accidents as the Most Afflictive Face of Neoliberalism".

73 Ibid.

74 Sibel Kalaycıoğlu and Kezban Çelik, "Tunçbilek Kömür İşletmelerinde Özelleştirmenin Madencilik, İşçilik ve Tunçbilek Üzerine Etkileri," ISGUC The Journal of Industrial Relations and Human Resources 16, no. 1 (January 1, 2014): 01–19, doi:10.4026/1303-2860.2014.0243.x.

75 Ibid.

operated and privatized mines: According to them, the working conditions are deteriorating, job security is decreasing, and poverty is increasing among mineworkers in the privatized mines. They argue that mining which was a permanent job in state-operated mines has become a seasonal job with the privatizations in the 2000s.

This study on Tunçbilek mines is relevant to my research as it explores the differences between the state-operated and privatized mines in the Aegean region. However, I should first note that the Soma mines' historical trajectory differs from the general historical trend of mining in Turkey, which is defined by the transition from a statist to a privatized period as also seen in the case of Tunçbilek. However, the Soma mines were first private, then they started to be operated by the state in the 1970s, and then in 2005 they were subcontracted with a redevance system under TKI by giving purchasing guarantee[76] as I discuss more in detail in Chapter 2. Also, the findings from my field research in Soma differ from Kalaycıoğlu and Çelik's argument on the increase of seasonal jobs in private mines in Tunçbilek in recent years. My field research has shown that seasonal jobs in the mine pits are no longer a possibility after the 2014 Soma accident. With legislative changes after the accident, underground mining jobs have been linked to relatively higher incomes and retirement advantages compared to other unskilled jobs in Turkey. Given the general high unemployment rates in the country and the difficulty of finding jobs in the mines which are no longer defined by labor shortages, the underground miners are more likely to keep their jobs on a permanent basis until retirement.

While the Soma coal basin only attracted the attention of a few social scientists such as Kalaycıoğlu and Çelik before the incident of 2014, several important studies on Soma emerged after the catastrophe of

76 N Tamzok, "Türkiye Madencilik Sektöründe Yapısal Dönüşüm ve Sonuçları," in Türkiye 19. Uluslararası Madencilik Kongresi ve Fuarı, IMCET2005, İzmir, Türkiye, 09-12 Haziran 2005 Türkiye, 2005.; Ercan, Fuat, and Şebnem Oğuz. "From Gezi Resistance to Soma Massacre: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle in Turkey." Socialist Register 51 (2015): 114–35.117

2014. One of the most important research projects was conducted by University Soma Research Group (Boğaziçi Soma Araştırma Grubu).[77] This report is prepared by the academics of Boğaziçi University from various disciplines.[78] The scholars offer a general analysis of the Soma mine pits, highlighting the failure to implement precautions that could prevent the accident. The report also provides practical solutions to decrease work accidents by emphasizing the importance of occupational health and safety.

Buğra's analysis in the Boğaziçi Report on Soma is significant for my thesis.[79] Buğra contextualizes the Soma case and miners' situation within Turkey's general employment situation and its social policies. She compares unemployment rates among the OECD countries from 2007 to 2013 and shows that Turkey has a higher unemployment rate compared to the average unemployment rate in OECD countries.[80] Lastly, she asserts that it is difficult to talk about the existence of egalitarian social aid mechanisms in Turkey. She argues for the need to implement European minimum income support policies to alleviate the uncertainty of life arising from poverty. [81] Buğra's article is relevant for my study as it inspired me to think about Soma miners in the context of the national employment patterns.

77 Nuri Ersoy, ed., Ge-Li-Yo-Rum Diyen Facia: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Soma Araştırma Grubu Raporu, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015).

78Lale Akarun, Nuri Ersoy, Ali Kerem Saysel, Fikret Adaman, Ayşe Buğra, Ferhan Çeçen, Mahmut Ekşioğlu, Günay Kocasoy, Ayşın Baytan Ertüzün, H. Işıl Bozma and H. Levent Akın

79 Ayşe Buğra, "Türkiye'nin Sosyal Politikaları ve Soma Felaketi," in Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Soma Araştırma Grubu Raporu, ed. Ersoy Nuri, (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları., 2017), 185–202.

80 Ayşe Buğra, "Türkiye'nin Sosyal Politikaları ve Soma Felaketi," 6. Also, she shows that miners' employment rate is 4,4 percent among all employment rates in Turkey.

81 Ibid.

Adaman et al.'s contribution to the Boğaziçi Report on Soma[82] as well as Adaman et al.[83] are also relevant to my thesis in certain aspects. They use a Gramscian theoretical framework, emphasizing authoritarianism, hegemony, and consent. Similar to this thesis, they also question why workers seek and continue to work in a hazardous job such as mining. They consider the deaths in mine accidents as the structural outcome of the prevalent economic model and highlight informality, populism, and growth fetishism in Turkey mainly during the AKP period. My research findings are similar to Adaman et al.'s findings regarding high informality in the labor market and social security. Hence, their focus on informality was beneficial for building my analysis.

Adaman et al. also consider the impacts of neoliberal developmentalism on the agricultural sector in Turkey. They highlight that many miners in Soma were of rural and agricultural origin, mostly involved in tobacco and oil production in the region.[84] Tobacco production decreased after liberalization politics and ARIP and this caused de-peasantisation of Soma rural areas. Yet, these analyses focus on local workers and their contribution to understanding local Soma mine workers is very essential. However, my research differentiates itself from these analyses by focusing on migrant workers and families in Soma the region.

Similar to Adaman et.al other research conducted on the Soma mines and mineworkers which I discuss below (Tamer 2017, Çelik 2019)

82 Fikret Adaman, Çiğdem Artık, Önsel Gürel Bayrali, Banu Can, Nur Sultan, Fethiye Erbil, and others, "Türkiye'de Büyüme ve Kalkınma Sorunsalı Üzerine Bazı Gözlemler," in Ge-Li-Yo-Rum Diyen Facia: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Soma Araştırma Grubu Raporu, ed. Ersoy Nuri, 147–71.

83 Fikret Adaman, Murat Arsel, and Bengi Akbulut. "Neoliberal Developmentalism, Authoritarian Populism, and Extractivism in the Countryside: The Soma Mining Disaster in Turkey." The Journal of Peasant Studies 46, no. 3 (2019): 514–36. doi:10.1080/03066150.2018.1515737.

84 Ibid, 523.

also emphasize that the transformation of agriculture.[85] For the major elements of the transformation in agriculture (see Keyder and Yenal 2013)[86] is essential to understand Soma mining communities and the situation of the working class in the region. In my study, the agricultural transformation was also effective, but it was not as effective as in the case of Soma local population analyzed in the literature. This has to do with the fact that the village of Selimli was not integrated with the market and did not sell agricultural products to the market. In other words, self-sufficient agriculture was carried out in Selimli, and no tobacco or commercial products were produced This was a point often brought up by my informants in the field[87] as I discuss in Chapter 3.

Among studies on Soma mines that flourished after the 2014 accident, Tamer's[88] MA thesis is worth mentioning. It examines the state making after the disaster and explains changes in energy and agriculture policies in Turkey and how the "state's hegemony is disrupted through people's everyday encounters with it."[89] It shows that agricultural and energy policies affect the miner's obligation to work in mines. The second chapter of the thesis begins with a quotation from tobacco agricultural workers and explains their descending to the mine.[90]

Tamer's thesis was useful for me to understand local miners and farmers during the AKP period. However, like most research on Soma

85 Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means of Rural Livelihood", Tamer, "State-Making Through Disaster Management: The Case of Soma."

86 Keyder and Yenal, "Bildiğimiz Tarımın Sonu."

87 For example, as Ferah (66) commented for the village "We do not have an industrial product such as hazelnuts, tea, tobacco. Also, our land is not fertile." 87 Another example is the village headman who said that "in the village, we use the traditional method to cultivate. When I go to İzmir, Bursa, they have the technology, they have machines. Here people do not use technology and cannot buy these machines." The village headman also described the use of the barter economy.

88 Ibid.

89 Tamer, "State-Making Through Disaster Management," 3.

90 Ibid, 8.

mines, Tamer's study also focuses on local workers. My study would like to contribute to the understanding that Soma mining communities do not only consist of existing locals because there has been immigration to this area. My thesis argues that many miners were miners from their parents already before these neoliberal policies were implemented and that one needs to look at the mining communities of Soma from a broader perspective.

Another important research is a Ph.D. thesis written by Coşku Çelik based on a fieldwork study in Soma Coal basin after the 2014 accident, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means of Rural Livelihood: Patterns of Proletarianization and Labor Processes in Soma Coal Basin."[91] Çelik's research is very comprehensive. She emphasizes the local labor supply by mentioning the decrease in tobacco production and the proletarianization and emphasizes immigration to the Soma mine pits from other cities. Çelik's thesis focuses on invisible female labor and the feminization of agriculture in the area.[92] Her thesis contribution is important since she emphasizes the other members of the household. Çelik's study has been inspiring to me in my own research and our studies have similar findings such as feminization of agriculture and immigrant workers and local workers differences.

In addition to these theses, there is the study by Oğuz and Ercan which analyzes the Soma accident by considering three main dynamics: Privatization, redevance system and subtracted labor, and the hegemony of the state. [93] Apart from these studies that focus on the political and socio-economic dynamics that led to the Soma disaster, there are some

91 Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means of Rural Livelihood."

92 Ibid.

93 Ercan, Fuat, and Şebnem Oğuz. "From Gezi Resistance to Soma Massacre: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle in Turkey." Socialist Register 51 (2015): 114–35.

studies which have investigated the representation of Soma miners in the national media such as İnan Özdemir Taştan and Hatice Çoban Keneş. [94]

Overall, in the literature on the Soma coal basin region discussed above, migrations to the Soma mine pits are less emphasized. As mentioned earlier, the number of miners in the Soma coal basin is approximately 17,000 and about 10,000 of these workers are migrant workers.[95] These migrant workers come from the Inner Aegean region and mainly from Kütahya. Kütahya coal basin[96] was also the second miners' supplier during the World War II,[97] but still the relation between Kütahya and Soma did not receive much attention in the literature. Thus, this thesis contributes to the specific literature on the Soma coal basin by particularly bringing migrant mineworkers and their families into the center of analysis.

In sum, in the literature on mining and mining communities in Turkey, until recently, the main geographic area of focus has been the Black Sea region, and particularly Zonguldak. The study contributes to the literature on miner communities in Turkey firstly by focusing on a different geographic area (Aegean). It contributes to the emerging literature on the Soma coal basin by bringing migrant mineworkers into the focus of analysis. Secondly, the thesis brings in mineworkers' families perspectives and household strategies into the analysis rather than just focusing on male mine workers. Thirdly, by covering a wider time span through its focus on the experience of three generations, the study offers a broad perspective of the miner community from its first formation and reveals the dynamics that have changed over time.

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94 Hatice Çoban Keneş and İnan Özdemir Taştan. "Madencinin Acısına Bakmak: Ulusal Basında Soma Maden "Facia"sının Haberleştirilmesi"." Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi 71 (2016): 125–60.

95 Onur Bütün, Yedi Kat Yerin Altından Uğultular Geliyor : Yeni Çeltek'ten Soma'ya Maden Işçileri (Ankara : Dipnot Yayınları, 2015).

96 Significant part of miners in Soma are from Kütahya and its surrounding districts and villages. Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means," 122.

97 Makal, "Ameleden İşçiye," 175.

§ 1.7 The Research

This research is interdisciplinary. A variety of methods have been used provided by social sciences, mainly history and anthropology, while conducting the fieldwork. The data is based on oral history: I listened to the life stories of the community members. I also conducted ethnographic research, employing a multi-sited ethnography[98] introduced by Marcus E. George. Finally, for the archival research, the Archive of National Library of Turkey in Ankara and T.C. The Presidency State Archives in Istanbul were used to collect data about the history of mining in the region.

1.7.1 Research Period

The research was conducted with the miners' community in Soma starting from their village, Selimli and then extending to Soma and Cenkyeri on different expeditions between June 2019 and August 2020. Five visits have been done to conduct the fieldwork on the dates of October 26-30, October 11-13, December 4-11, February 6-13, and June 4-7. The research plan was to stay a longer period in 2020, however, Covid-19 pandemic hindered me to conduct a longer visit after March 2020. Therefore, phone calls were also made to contact miners and their families for the research.

1.7.2 Research Methods

This research benefits from oral history and ethnographic research methods as well as from archival research. The fieldwork started with grounded theory.[99] The research followed snowball sampling and started

98 George E. Marcus, "Ethnography In/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography." Annual Review of Anthropology 24, no. 1 (1995): 95–117. doi:10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.000523.

99 Grounded Theory was used. Grounded Theory is developed in the USA by two social scientists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. Grounded theory posits that theory is grounded in or emanates from data analysis. Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, The

with focusing only on male mineworkers. However, the findings from the field indicated that it seems also necessary and important to hear mineworkers' families regarding men's decision to work in the mine. Men often used the term "the boss"-to refer to their wives in explaining about their decision to migrate to Soma to work in the mines, pointing to the influence of women and families in migration decisions. Therefore, the interviews were not only conducted with male mine workers but also with the households, also considering the lack of research focusing on miners' families in the literature.

I started the research with unstructured interviews at the beginning to include miners in the research agenda and to understand the field. The aim was to include peasant miners into the research agenda because the history of popular mass is written by elite people,[100] therefore, I have done my best to include miners in the research agenda and to hear their voices. However, after familiarity with the field, the research was carried out with semi-structured interviews.

At the beginning of the research, the interviews were recorded. However, I realized that the interviewees were not comfortable when I started recording from the very beginning of the interview. Therefore, I started to talk first and began the interviews when they started feeling comfortable. The research was conducted by taking permission to take jotted notes and record them.[101]

The research plan was to conduct only in-depth interviews. However, the village headman's desire to talk publicly and the weather conditions caused some of the discussions to be conducted as a focus group.

Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1967), 93. Also, the theoretical background was taken from the Annales Ecoles which was affected historiography. The Annnales Ecoles affected the research in two ways. The first one is the categorization of Braudel; event, conjecture, and structure. The second one is geography.

100 Edward Hallett Carr, What Is History? (London: Penguin, 1991), 93.

101 The Ethnographic Methods course in the Ataturk Institute for Modern Turkish History helped me to improve my interviewing skills.

The participant observation method was also used by joining *hayırs,* which are lunch given as charity to the community as well as by going to coffee houses and joining the miners' protests.

22 interviews were made with 12 households with a total of 41 interviewees. Seven of them were focus group interviews. 24 of my interviewees are men and 17 are women. I used snowball sampling to reach interviewees. I introduced myself as a historian, which led me to interview many retired miners. The oldest miner I interviewed was 80 years old and the youngest one was 18. Many miners interviewed are older than 30 because there are fewer miners between the ages of 25 and 30. This has to do with the increase of the retirement age and professionalization of the military after 2008. This group is more educated and after working a short period; many of them became professional soldiers. However, after the accident of 2014, there were legislative changes which again decreased the retirement age of mineworkers and granted them advantageous salaries. Hence, there was again an increase of miners from Selim when young men between the ages of 20-25 started to work in the mine pits. This latter group of young men is also included in my sample.

1.7.3 Expectation and Reciprocity

At the beginning of the research, I stayed in hotels. However, later, I was not able to stay in hotels because mineworkers' families insisted too much that I stay with them. There were friends of my mother and my father that I have never seen in my life, and they did not allow me to leave their home in order to stay in hotels. My parent's familiarity with the field made it easy as well as difficult to move around for conducting other interviews. For instance, although my research plan was to conduct in-depth interviews, I had to do focus-group interviews in some cases. The reason was that people wanted to host me in their house, and when I insisted on going to other houses to conduct interviews, they suggested inviting these people to their own house for me to conduct interviews.

There was also the expectation[102] by interviewees because of their relation to my field.

My hosts' invitations of neighbors to their house for interviews and their accompanying me on my visits to other houses made it difficult to conduct in-depth interviews. But these situations made it possible for me to conduct focus-group interviews and collect more data about villagers' perception of mining through the participant observation method. Also, in November, because of weather conditions, the houses were equipped with heaters (soba) in one room which led me to do my research through focus group interviews.

On the one hand, the familiarity of my parents made the interviews slower, but on the other hand, the familiarity of my parents earned the trust of the community quickly and allowed me to tackle the "right persons" to make interviews. For example, when I asked a question about the barter economy and how it worked, villagers told me that "there was a grocery store owner *(bakkal)* in the 1980s" and "he can explain to you better," they added. They accompanied me on a home visit, and they also asked questions to the grocery store owner while I was interviewing, which contributed to my research.

When villagers hosted me in their houses, they had an expectation and kept saying that "we will come to İstanbul and you must host and show us around in İstanbul."[103] Except a few families, no one has ever been to İstanbul in their entire life and in their perception, İstanbul is a

102 "Ethnographic research can take place, and has taken place, in a wide variety of types of setting: villages, towns, inner-city neighbourhoods, factory shop floors, deep-shaft mines, ships, farms, retail stores, business offices of various kinds, hospital wards, operating theatres, prisons, public bars, churches, schools, colleges, universities, welfare agencies, courts, morgues, funeral parlours, etc. These settings vary from one another in all manner of respects that are relevant to the nature of the relationships that are possible and desirable with the people who live and/or work in them." Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, Ethnography: Principles in Practice (London ; New York : Routledge, 2007). 63

103 Şefika, Refik, Celil, Safa.

very huge, prestigious, and expensive city. Hence, after finishing the interviews, I have usually been asked questions about İstanbul as well as questions regarding the education of their children, national politics, and so on.

The second expectation miners' families had from me was to call them and ask about their health. They were trying to include me in their social capital by taking my phone number. Their third expectation was for me to settle in Soma. Considering me as an insider and as Ali Osman's son, the miners and particularly the elderly generation kept insisting that I should settle down in Soma and work in the mine.[104] Moreover, their compared miners' income and those of academics as seen in the story of Bilal's House.

Their insistence caused me to think of Meeker's argument and his research. In Meeker's study on Of, he develops his main argument based on locals' insistence that he shall convert to Islam and settle in Of, suggesting that interpersonal relations based on Islamic sociality is what constitutes the community.[105] Similarly, I have used my informants' persistence on me to work in the mines to formulate and answer the main questions which have shaped this thesis: How is it possible that a peasant farmer community accepts such risky and heavy working conditions such as underground mining and chooses to migrate to work in the mines? Why is underground minding such a desirable job in the eyes of this community?

1.7.4 *Researcher's Character*

As a researcher, I was a little bit shy at the beginning to start my interviews. I had difficulty convincing people to conduct interviews. Initially, people often refused my request for an interview, kindly suggesting that I interview other people. Also, I am not a talkative person which caused difficulty to start my research. However, not being very talkative

104 Whereas the younger generation suggested that I work at the university in Manisa

105 Michael E. Meeker, A Nation of Empire: The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity (California: University of California Press, 2002).

also helped me with listening carefully, and further helped me in the later stages of fieldwork by collecting more data and stories.

In the community, people who were not willing to do interviews with me at the beginning, afterwards listened to my questions in the focus group and gained familiarity with me. They were more willing to talk in the focus group and later asked me to interview them, inviting me to their home in order to be interviewed. In my opinion, I was able to convince people that what they were saying is important and worthy. For example, Fadime (32), Aysel (67), and Hasan (50) told me at the end of focus groups that "come to my home and I can tell you more stories and my husband also have many stories and historical knowledge that he can explain to you." Therefore, my character made my job difficult at the beginning but then provided me with more data because of being a good listener in the eyes of the community.

The fieldwork is an essential journey for a social scientist. While conducting the research, I have listened to many stories about miners and their families as well as about my family and my childhood. Nevertheless, during the research, feeling helpless was inevitable since the research group is a miner's community and working-class which is one of the lowest strata in a capitalist world. It was especially difficult when I listened to some of the heartbreaking stories and could not know what to do and how to help. In every house, there was a tragic story to listen to, although I did not elicit it on purpose. After listening to tragic stories, I only could make small comments or often chose to be silent. The main comments by women about miners' deaths were that "their life was limited"[106] or that "everybody has a different exam."[107] During these conversations, men chose to be silent and made jokes to ignore tragedies. If this research was directly about the 2014 accident, it seems that silence would be one of the main themes.

106 Duygu (46).
107 Ayşe (51).

What I wondered most about while I was doing my research was whether I was an outsider or an insider. In their eyes, I was one of them because of my parent's history. However, I kept asking myself: Spending only a few years of my life with them and visiting the village only a few days in a year and being away the rest of the time- does it makes me an insider?

1.7.5 *Access*

I was successful in accessing the community and finding interviewees with the help of two of my relatives who acted as sponsors of my research. I strengthened my relations in the field through joining meetings, going to coffee houses, and visiting homes. Also, I managed to find and interview women thanks to the help of my wife and my female cousin.

However, I was not very successful in making interviewees talk at the beginning when my questions were formulated as too intellectual for them. Also, given the low literacy rate in the community, my research was not seen as important. Instead, kept asking me "are you going to earn money from this?" Most people were not aware of what a master's degree and thesis are, and they have regarded my research just as homework, something just to be completed like their children's homework. For example, when I asked Kamile (48) about the times' electricity was first used in the village after listening to her stories about electricity, she said that "just write 1983; the teachers cannot understand and prove when it was."

I was receiving answers such as "never mind", "you tell me", and only one sentence explanations whenever people did not want to explain something. At the beginning of the research, I had experienced these kinds of responses more because of my lack of prior fieldwork experience. Afterwards, I have taken the Ethnographic Methods class at the Ataturk Institute and learned about the importance of introducing myself to the field. After going to the field for the third and fourth time, I learned more about the field, and this changed the way I introduced myself and my research to the community. I told them, "I came to listen to your ideas

and your stories for my research" and then I explained my research to them.

While using snowball sampling, people were explaining to me historical stories because they knew that I had graduated from the history department. Therefore, I was more successful in collecting data from the interviews with elderly because of being considered as an insider and a historian in the community. Whereas snowball sampling worked well with the elderly generation, I struggled to conduct interviews with the younger generation with the snowball sampling method. Participant observation method a provided me more data for the younger generation in the field.

1.7.6 *Ethics*

From the beginning of the research, I used a recorder as well as taking notes. In every interview, I asked for the interviewees' consent to use the recorder and take notes, which the majority of interviewees allowed. I could do covert research because of my relation to the field but for ethical considerations and not to exploit them, I tried to tell why I was there, i.e., because of research, from the beginning. However, people were often not that interested in how I was going to use the research, because it was just homework for them, and they were not aware of what the master thesis is.

I had one very emotional moment and felt awful after doing the interview in which I had asked a man about his wife, which caused his eyes to tear up. Then, I learned that he had lost his wife three months ago. While conducting my ethnographic research, it is likely to be said that the older generation was in a more powerful position than me while conducting the interviews. Nevertheless, for the young generation, I, as the researcher was in a more powerful position to direct the interviews. There

was an invisible hierarchy between the researcher and the researched as suggested by Portelli's reflections on oral history.[108]

§ 1.8 Thesis Outline and Organization

The first chapter is the introduction to the thesis. In this chapter, I explain the research problems, the methodology, the main arguments, and the field. Also, I discuss the three generations which constitute the sample for this study. In addition, I highlight the thesis' contribution to the literature, and provide a review of the relevant literature.

In the second chapter, I discuss the historical background of the mining industry by the local, national, and global developments based on archival materials and field research by trying to connect it to the literature. In this chapter, the history of mining in Turkey is periodized.

In the third chapter, I will explain the field notes and findings under the headings and fields of Selimli and Soma. This chapter describes the transportation, the settlement, the region, housing, and settlement.

In the fourth chapter, the transformation of the peasant farmer community is explained in the changing patterns of migration and labor, social policies, and family dynamics.

In the fifth chapter, the research will be summarized shortly and concluded.

108 Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different?" "On the Peculiarities of History," in History Workshop Journal, 54-60, (Oxford, England, 1981), 57.

AN INNER AEGEAN PEASANT-MINER COMMUNITY IN TRANSFORMATION: UNCOVERING MIGRANT WORKERS' PERSPECTIVES IN THE SOMA COAL BASIN

2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the historical background of the mining sector in Turkey. Using academic studies and archival documents, I will discuss the historical development of mines in Turkey, taking into local, national and global developments. The chapter will offer a general periodization of the development of mining in history as well as discuss the local history of Inner Aegean lignites, mainly Soma and Kütahya mines within this periodization. The chapter discusses four main periods in the history of mining.

Within this general periodization, I will also highlight the specific trajectory of mining in the Soma region: Soma mines' historical trajectory differs from the general historical trend of mining in Turkey which is defined by the transition from a statist to a privatized period. The Soma mines were first private, then they started to be operated by the state in the 1970s, and then in 2005 they were subcontracted with the redevance system under TKI by granting purchasing guarantee.[1]

1 "In the case of Soma, the lignite mines were formerly a state-owned property in the hands of Turkish Coal Enterprises (TKİ), and were privatized in 2005 in line with the 'redevance' system" ;Ercan, Fuat, and Şebnem Oğuz. "From Gezi Resistance to Soma Massacre: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle in Turkey." Socialist Register 51 (2015): 114–35.117.; Tamzok, "Türkiye Madencilik Sektöründe Yapısal Dönüşüm ve Sonuçları."

§ 2.1 History of Mining in Turkey and Periodization

Making periodization is problematic, but it makes the issue at stake easier to understand.[2] There are different periodizations of the mining sector in Turkey.[3] For example, Tamzok divides the history of mining into six periods: 1-Late Period of the Ottoman Empire 2-The First Period of the Republic, (1923 – 1935), 3-Etibank Period, (1935 – 1950), 4- Post-WWII and Democratic Party Period (1946-1960), 5-Planned Development Period (1961-1980), 6- "Neo-Liberal" Transformation Period, (1981-1998).[4] Differing from him, I discuss the history of mining in four periods because I try to periodize more in tune with global dynamics and include up to date developments.

The first period I discuss is the Late Ottoman Empire Period, corresponding to the years between 1829, the foundation of Zonguldak mine reserves and 1923, the proclamation of the Republic. In this period, foreign capital dominated the market. The second period is the Early Republican Period, which started with the foundation of the Turkish Republic. This period might be called as the Nationalized Period because the mines were nationalized and operated by the state with the effect of the 1929 crisis and statist ideology. The third period is the Post-War Period; a planned period which started with the end of the Second World War. There were both private and state mines in this period. Also, in this period, inner migration and turnover rates in the mines were high. The last period of Turkish mining history is the Neoliberal Period, the privatization period which will be examined under two parts: (i) 1980-2000 period and (ii) 2000-2020 period. Privatization increased and redevance

2 Eric Jan Zürcher, Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi, trans. Yasemin Saner Gönen, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004).

3 Tamzok, "Türkiye Madencilik Sektöründe Yapısal Dönüşüm ve Sonuçları," Kalaycıoğlu and Çelik, "Tunçbilek Kömür İşletmelerinde Özelleştirmenin,"

4 Tamzok, "Türkiye Madencilik Sektöründe Yapısal Dönüşüm ve Sonuçları,"

system was used intensely in these years. Late Ottoman Period: The Foreign Capital Period

The foreign and non-Muslim capital was dominant in this period and foreign capital benefited from this situation.[5] The major capital in the mining sector was German, French, and English.[6] The main mine extraction area was Zonguldak. The discovery of coal by Uzun Mehmet in Zonguldak dates back to 1829 and the first Mining Regulation in the Ottoman Empire was issued in 1861.[7] Mining production increased significantly in this period. Between the years 1902 and 1911[8] many mines were exported, so, foreign capital managed and used the mines. The foreign capital period was interrupted in 1914 when the First World War started and ended in the Early Republican era when the capitulations were abolished after the Lausanne Peace Treaty.

§ 2.2 Aegean Lignite and Soma in the Late Ottoman Period

2.2.1.1 The History of Soma Coal Basin

The history of the mine in Soma has a history of more than a century, which goes back to the 1860s.[9] The discovery of lignite mines in Soma was thus before the Republican period.[10] In 1863-1864, a research group was sent to Soma[11], and the findings of the research group was compared with the mine of Zonguldak. [12] In the first year, the mine was

5 Kalaycıoğlu and Çelik, "Tunçbilek Kömür İşletmelerinde Özelleştirmenin," 5.

6 Tamzok, "Türkiye Madencilik Sektöründe Yapısal Dönüşüm ve Sonuçları," 5.

7 Şerife Yorulmaz, "Türkiye'de Kömürün Keşfi ve Kömür İşletme İmtiyazları (1829- 1937)," Türkiye 11. Kömür Kongresi 10-12 Haziran 1998 Bartın-Amasra, 283–98.

8 "Türkiye Madencilik Sektöründe Yapısal Dönüşüm ve Sonuçları," 5.

9 Mustafa Küçükkayapalı, "Soma kömür tarihinden bir yaprak," Evrensel, 13 May 2016. https://www.evrensel.net/haber/279978/soma-komur-tarihinden-bir-yaprak

10 According to İsmail Ergün, it is the first lignite mine in the history of Turkey. İsmail Ergün, Soma Maden ve Enerji Tarihi, (Kütahya: Soma Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2018), 98.

11 Şerife Yorulmaz, "Aydın Vilayetinde Madenler (1850-1908)," PhD Diss. (Dokuz Eylül University, 1994), 220; BOA, MV, 51-16, 27 Cemaziyelahir 1307 (13 February 1890).

12 Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means," 102.

sold to the owner of the cotton factories.[13] According to the archival documents, there were not many candidates to operate the mines at the beginning, but it was clear that in the future the number of candidates to operate the mines would increase.

According to "Maaddin-I Hümayuna Nizamına"[14] this one year would be a trial period. Another important issue about the Soma Lignite mine is the "Meclis-I Vükela" decision.[15] We learn from this decision that the right to operate the mine was given to Yanoko Efendi. In 1890, the tender was transferred to families from İzmir. [16] It was for 99 years, and the state promised two thousand tons of production annually. However, the death of Reşit Efendi in 1891 led to the split of the heritage between shareholders and several of them were sold as understood from the Ottoman archive document.[17]

In 1913, the pits of Soma were opened.[18] During the First World War, Soma lignite was important, and it was operated by Germans. After the Armistice of Mudros, the French companies[19] operated these mines.[20] Thus, at the local level, Soma mines were operated by the European Great Powers. Also, in 1914 in Tırhala, Soma the lignite was discovered and the right to operate was given to Osman Efendi and his shareholders.[21]

13 Yorulmaz, "Aydın Vilayetinde Madenler (1850-1908), 221.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., MV, 51-16.

16 Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means," 102.

17 BOA. A.} DVN. MKL. 33-4, 10 Muharrem 1309 (16 August 1891).

18 BOA. DH.EUM.VRK. 18-27, 27 Cemaziyelahir 1336 (9 April 1918).

19 BOA. DH. İ. UM. EK. 50-28, 11 Receb 1337 (12 April 1919).

20 Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means," 123.

21 BOA. İ. MMS. 192-40, 26 Muharrem 1333 (14 December 1914); BOA. BEO, 4327-324464, 1 Safer 1333 (19 December 1914).

§ 2.3 Early Republican Period: Nationalized Period

The second period is the Early Republican Period, which might also be called as the "nationalization of mines period." In this period, the enterprises were important, but the essential idea was nationalization. The mines were vital for the Early Republic of Turkey. However, there were not enough entrepreneurs and capital in the country after the long ten years of wars, including the Balkan Wars, Great Wars, The First World War, and the Turkish War of Independence. Therefore, the state took over the industrialization and development activities.[22] As Tamzok states, the idea was "The people of Turkey, for its national production and operating mines, will attempt to recognize the wealth than anyone else."[23] After the 1929 economic crisis, this situation became an ideology which was called *"statism."*[24] Statist and protectionist policies took place in Turkey after the 1929 crisis Great Depression as it has been the case in the entire world. Also, this period affected the mine workers around the world.[25] Turkey's coal potential in this troubled period, especially in the Zonguldak Basin and Soma, gained more importance. Therefore, the government tried to increase the production in Zonguldak coal basin and Soma, which was successful. The production, around 900 thousand tons before, exceeded 2 million tons in 1936.[26]

The risks of the mining sector made private companies doubtful to invest in the mines' operations. Hence, state-run enterprises were founded during this period.[27] Sümerbank was founded in 1933. In 1935,

22 Zafer Toprak, "Türkiye'nin Ekonomik Gelişimi 1923-2018." In Modern Türkiye Tarihi. Edited by Ahmet Şimşek, 240–58. Ankara: Pegem Akademi, 2019.

23 Tamzok, "Türkiye Madencilik Sektöründe Yapısal Dönüşüm ve Sonuçları."

24 Zafer Toprak, Türkiye'nin Ekonomik Gelişimi 1923-2018." In Modern Türkiye Tarihi. Edited by Ahmet Şimşek, 240–58. Ankara: Pegem Akademi, 2019.

25 For example, a coal mine strike of 500,000 workers in the UK in 1926 has had a crucial impact on Turkey.

26 Tamzok, "Türkiye Madencilik Sektöründe Yapısal Dönüşüm ve Sonuçları."

27 Nacar, "Our Lives Were Not as Valuable as an Animal," 143.

MTA[28] (General Directorate of Mineral Research and Exploration) and Etibank were established to operate the mines. While MTA explored the mines, Etibank provided the capital.[29] After the foundation of MTA and Etibank, mines were nationalized rapidly by taking from German and French shareholders one by one.[30]

The fundamental problem in the industry in this period was the turnover rates. Workers had stronger ties with their village and agriculture and worked as temporal in the mining sector.[31] As Nacar showed "Garp Linyit İsletmeleri might work 9.000 workers, but they can employ only 4.500 workers."[32] In the case of social policies, labor law was enacted in 1936. [33] With the law, the working hours could not exceed more than eight hours for the miners.[34] Labor code of 1936 was the outcome of the foundation of Etibank and Sümerbank because the number of workers under the state had increased.[35] Also, the same year the new Penal Code was enacted after the labor code.[36]

28 Maden Tetkik Arama Enstitüsü

29 Makal, "Ameleden İşçiye," 241.

30 Kalaycıoğlu and Çelik, "Tunçbilek Kömür İşletmelerinde Özelleştirmenin," 6.

31 Nadir Özbek, Cumhuriyet Türkiyesi'nde Sosyal Güvenlik ve Sosyal Politikalar (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı: Emeklilik Gözetim Merkezi, 2006), 130.

32 Nacar, "Our Lives Were Not as Valuable as an Animal."

33 Zafer Toprak, "Modernite ve Türkiye'de İşçi Sınıfının Doğuşu." Toplumsal Tarih 275 (2016): 50–53.

34 Makal, "Ameleden İşçiye," 61.

35 Ali Sipahi, "Convict Labor in Turkey, 1936–1953: A Capitalist Corporation in the State?" International Labor and Working-Class History 90 (2016): 245.

36 Ibid, 246.

2.3.1 Soma and Kütahya Mines Inner Aegean Mines during the Nationalized Period

2.3.1.1 Soma Mines

After the proclamation of the Republic, the mining sector obtained positive results from the investigations carried out in the coal mines of Soma. In 1926, Soma lignite commences were operated by local firms. According to Şerife Yorulmaz, Soma coal could sufficiently supply the coal requirement of İzmir in this period.[37] After the foundation of Etibank in 1935, new national mines were opened. Tavşanlı, Değirmisaz, Yerköy, and Gerenez lignite mines which were opened by the private sector and were taken to state operation by Etibank in this period just before the Second World War. Also, in 1939 Soma mine started to be operated by Etibank.[38] Under the state, the production of lignite rose dramatically in Soma. Lignite production rose to 100 thousand tons in 1937[39] and 1 million tons in 1948 after the Second World War. State-owned mines increased to 81 percent at the end of the Second World War.[40]

During the Second World War era, [41] the dominant theme of this period was mükellefiyet under the National Protection Law. The workers of mines during this period were "stable and experienced laborers, vil-

37 Şerife Yorulmaz, "Aydın Vilayetinde Madenler (1850-1908)," 293.

38 Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means," 103.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Madenlerde ücretli çalışma yükümlülüğünün kaldırılması bir uyum sürecinin ardından Ereğli Kömür Havzası'nda K/654 ile 19 Ağustos 1946 tarihinde Garp Linyitleri İşletmesi'nde K/707 ile 17 Ekim 1947 tarihinde gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Savaş döneminde görev yapan T.C. Hükümetleri bir yandan halkın kömür gereksinimini karşılamaya çalışırken, aynı zamanda diğer alanlarda artış gösteren kömür talebini de karşılamak zorunda kalmıştır. Bu nedenle kömür tüketiminin kontrol altına alınması kaçınılmaz olmuş ve Koordinasyon Heyeti Milli Korunma Kanunu'na dayanarak bazı tedbirler almıştır. Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means," 103.

lagers commuting between industrial enterprise and their villages, compulsory workers, and prisoners."[42] Soma mining operation was transferred to TKİ from Etibank in 1957.[43] After the end of the war, the obligatory workforce was not immediately terminated because the workers were unwilling to work.[44]

2.3.1.2 Kütahya Mines

Kütahya is a city where miners have historically lived extensively. Tunçbilek, Değirmisaz and Seyitömer mines have been operated since the Republican period.[45] It is the second miner's city after Zonguldak, where obligatory labor was used the most during the Second World War.[46] The history of Kütahya mine pits is not older than Soma lignite coal pits. The beginning of the coal mine is in the Early Republican Area after the foundation of Etibank and MTA in 1935. Firstly, Seyitömer was opened. Then, Tunçbilek and Değirmisaz mines were opened in 1939 and 1937, respectively, just before the Second World War. [47]

Kütahya mines started in the period of the Second World War and with obligatory work *(mükellefiyet)* with the National Protection Law.

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42 Nacar, "Our Lives Were Not as Valuable as an Animal,"147.

43 Tuğrul Erkin, "Türkiye Kömür Madenciliği ve Geleceği." Bilimsel Madencilik Dergisi 8, no. 1 (Şubat 1969):31.

44 Madenlerde ücretli çalışma yükümlülüğünün kaldırılması bir uyum sürecinin ardından Ereğli Kömür Havzası'nda K/654 ile 19 Ağustos 1946 tarihinde Garp Linyitleri İşletmesi'nde K/707 ile 17 Ekim 1947 tarihinde gerçekleştirilmiştir.112

Savaş döneminde görev yapan T.C. Hükümetleri bir yandan halkın kömür gereksinimini karşılamaya çalışırken, aynı zamanda diğer alanlarda artış gösteren kömür talebini de karşılamak zorunda kalmıştır. Bu nedenle kömür tüketiminin kontrol altına alınması kaçınılmaz olmuş ve Koordinasyon Heyeti Milli Korunma Kanunu'na dayanarak bazı tedbirler almıştır.

45 BCA, Kararlar Daire Başkanlığı, 30-18-1-2 / 98-44-18, 25 May 1942.

46 Makal, "Ameleden İşçiye," 175. During the Mükellefiyet period, coal mines in Ereğli with approximately 25 thousand employees and Kütahya with a workforce of 4 thousand were the most.

47 Tamzok, "Türkiye Madencilik Sektöründe Yapısal Dönüşüm ve Sonuçları," 6.

The coal produced was 10000 tons in 1941. But a very short time after, in 1949, it increased to 225000 tones, and in 1944, produced lignite rose to 534000 tones.[48]

During this period, it was understood that those who did not want to work because of the heavy working conditions in the mines were punished with exile by "politics." According to a study, in 1944, an average of 4,552 people worked in Soma, Değirmisaz, and Tunçbilek mines daily. 58.2 percent were permanent and alternate taxpayers subjected to forced labor, 27 percent were voluntary workers, and 14.81 percent were prisoners.[49]

From the beginning of the coal operation in Turkey in 1829, the shortage of workers was always a problem. Therefore, obligatory work was seen as a solution, and in the long run, it was thought to be successful. In the 19th century, it was implied in Zonguldak with *Dilaver Pasha Nizamnamesi* and implied the second time during the Second World War, which labor historians mostly studied.[50] Also, in the Aegean Lignite during the war, soldiers and prisoners were forced to work as a workforce in the region and had special rules.[51] Ali Sipahi also mentions prisoners workers in the mines in his article Convict Labor in Turkey, 1936-1953: A Capitalist Corporation in the State.[52]

48 Reşat İzbırak, "Türkiye'de Madencilik." Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi 3, no. 2 (1945): 222.

49 Alev Özbil, "Türkiye'de Savaş Ekonomisi Uygulaması Olarak Milli Korunma Kanunu (1940-1946)," PhD Diss. (İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2015), 225.

50 Nacar, "Our Lives Were Not as Valuable as an Animal"; Gürboğa, "Mine Workers, the State and War."

51 Erol Çatma, Asker İşçiler, (İstanbul, Ceylan Yayıncılık, 1998).

52 Sipahi, "Convict Labor in Turkey, 1936–1953," 246.

§ 2.4 Post-War Period: Planned Period

After the Second World War, with Bretton Woods system, Keynesian policies were implemented.[53] This period in the post-war era was called a golden age by French scholars. [54] In this period, the population increased, and inner migration started in Turkey.

What we see in this period is that the mines belong to the state with social facilities. Although the mining areas had good facilities and workers' rights were more established as a result of the new constitution, it was still challenging to find workers. The biggest problem in this period was the turnover rates were too high. The reason for that was that immigrants were coming to coal pits by leaving their families in their villages, and in the period of harvesting, they were going back to their villages.[55] Keyder highlights that;

> Semi-proletarianization rather than full proletarianization was the norm in Turkey in the post-war period. Both in the developmental era and its aftermath during globalization, agrarian transformations have brought about the formation of semi-proletarianized households with significant ties to the rural areas. The nature of the commodity markets (particularly land) in urban areas and the predominance of informal work relations contributed to this outcome.[56]

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53 Zafer Toprak, Türkiye'nin Ekonomik Gelişimi 1923-2018," in Modern Türkiye Tarihi, ed. Ahmet Şimşek, 240-258, (Ankara: Pegem Akademi, 2019), 246.

54 Zafer Toprak, "Modernite ve Türkiye'de İşçi Sınıfının Doğuşu." Toplumsal Tarih 275 (2016): 50–53. 53.

55 Erol Çatma were saying it for Black Sea Region miners. Çatma, "Asker İşçiler."

56 Çağlar Keyder, and Zafer Yenal. "Agrarian Transformation, Labor Supplies, and Proletarianization Processes in Turkey: A Historical Overview." Journal für Entwicklungspolitik 27 (2011): 44–71.

In the field of Soma, it was the same. The most prominent solution for decreasing turnover was social policies and social facilities among the mines.

In the case of mining, the state wanted to keep mine workers in the mines. Therefore, many social services were implemented after the war, and mining companies provided accommodation facilities for miners. Also, flexible working was established between labor wage and subsistence agriculture.[57] For instance, "300 personnel houses, a hospital with 30 beds, a library, cinema, clubhouse, guesthouse with 24 rooms, sports courts, and a primary school was built in Soma."[58] These were the facilities which the miner's community in these districts still knows about.

Similar to Soma, the state-operated mine Değirmisaz was built as modern in a very modern way to convince people to work in the mines.[59] There were facilities such as houses, a cinema, and sports places, etc... Social policies were an affective component in this Keynesian period.

During this period in Soma, the critical part of the lignite mine was produced by underground mining. However, surface mining became significant by the effect of the Marshall Plan[60] during the period of the Democrat Party. In 1957, the state established TKİ (Turkish Coal Enterprise) to operate lignite pits. Therefore, Soma mines shifted to TKİ from Etibank in 1957. After 1957, the increase in lignite extraction activities resulted in rapid migration flow[61] and settlement in Soma, like Turkey's general migration trend that started in the 1950s. Migration from Selimli to the area started in the 1960s as the elderly generation explained in my field research.

In the planned period, after the 1960s coup, mining was an essential part of the natural resources in Turkey. It gained more importance

57 Gürboğa, "Mine Workers, the State and War."

58 Tamzok, "Türkiye Madencilik Sektöründe Yapısal Dönüşüm ve Sonuçları."

59 Biray Anıl Birer, "Türk Modernleşmesinin Erken Döneminde Oluşturulmuş bir Maden Kenti: Değirmisaz." Toplum ve Bilim 149 (2019): 77.

60 Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means."

61 Arife Karadag, "Changing Environment and Urban Identity"

after the energy crisis in 1973-74. These years the production of mine was stable. But, after the 1980s, the mine production in Turkey increased drastically. In the following years, the production remained stable again.[62] Before the 1980s, there was a discussion about the owner of the natural resources and mines in this period. These debates were tried to be determined by laws. In 1978, during the Bülent Ecevit government period, some of the mine operations were nationalized, making him popular among the mineworkers.

2.4.1 *Soma in the Post-War Period*

In this period, "Turkish Coal Enterprise (TKİ) and operation of the lignite pits of Soma was transferred from Etibank to TKİ."[63] In this period, with surface mining operated by the TKİ, the production increased, and the deadly mine accidents were fewer.[64]

In this period, although there were mines were privatized in Soma.[65] Also, in Soma, miners, and locals emphasize that small-scale private companies were repeatedly opened and closed during this period. The majority of mines in Soma were operated by TKİ in this period. At the end of this period, because of energy crisis, the mines operated by private companies were tried to be operated by the state. "In 1978, in accordance with the Law no 2172 on Mines Operated by the State, all coal

62 Kalaycıoğlu and Çelik, "Tunçbilek Kömür İşletmelerinde Özelleştirmenin," 6.

63 Under TKİ, the first unit of the coal-fired power plant was installed, and, in a decade, it arrived at the production of a tone in 1966. Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means." 103.

64 Ibid.

65 BCA, Başbakanlık Kararlar Daire Başkanlığı 30-18-1-2/193-19-5, 14 March 1966. İşletme imtiyazı Ege Madencilik AŞ'ye verilmiş olan Manisa ilinin Dere, Arapseki ve Çamlıcadağı-Eynez köylerinde bulunan maden kömürü sahalarının birleştirilerek aynı şirkete verilmesi

BCA, Başbakanlık Kararlar Daire Başkanlığı 30-18-1-2/179-41-5, 14 July 1964. (40 yıl işletme imtiyazı ege madenciliğe verilmiş. 1964 de. Manisa'nın Eynez köyünde bulunan maden kömürü işletme imtiyazının Ege Madencilik AŞ'ye verilmesi.

pits operated by the private firms were transferred to TKİ in order to increase the production of domestic coal and solve the problem of supply security." [66] The mining of history of Soma has similarity and differences to the general mining sector development in Turkey. The produced coal is used in electricity production, industry, and houses, as İsmail Ergün emphasizes.[67]

2.4.1.1 Inner Migration

When one looks from a broader perspective, agriculture, migration, and mining shaped the region in this period since, in Soma most miners were peasants coming from the countryside. Also, the labor surplus was emerging in the country in this period. "The expanding use of tractors and other agricultural implements, as well as the even more rapid introduction of trucks for transporting people and crops, brought about a situation of surplus labor."[68] In the general industry of Turkey, the labor surplus was emerging and for mining sectors, the turnover rates were still the problem.

SOCIAL SECURITY, SOCIAL POLICIES, RETIREMENT

In this period, social policies shaped miners' motivation. After 1946 with the beginning of multi-party system, receiving the political support of the masses gained importance in Turkish politics. Therefore, populist laws were implemented, including those in the field of social policy. First, "İhtiyarlik Sigortası was accepted in June 2, 1949 and it was shifted to 6900 no Maluliyet, Ihtiyarlik ve Olum Sigortalari Kanunu in 1957. Retirement laws were also an important part of the legal changes.

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66 Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means."104.

67 İsmail Ergün, Soma, (İzmir: NEŞA Ofset ve Ambalaj Sanayi ve Ticaret A.Ş., 1997), 98-99.

68 Ahmet İçduygu, İbrahim Sirkeci and İsmail Aydıngün, eds. Türkiye'de İçgöç: Türkiye'de İçgöç, Sorunsal Alanları ve Araştırma Yöntemleri Konferansı 6-8 Haziran 1997 Bolu-Gerede; Türkiye'de İçgöç ve İçgöçün İşçi Hareketine Etkisi. (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1998).

The retirement age was 60, but for hard jobs, the age would be decreased."[69] After this law, the number of workers in the insurance increased significantly between 1950 and 1964.[70] Law of Social Insurance (Sosyal Sigortalar Kanunu) was accepted on July 17, 1964, and implemented in 1965, the same period as the elderly generation in the field stated that their motivation to work in the mine was the development of social policies. After the Second World War, the welfare state gained importance. For workers, social policies and legal changes regarding retirement were significant factors shaping their decision to migrate to start working in the mine pits.

§ 2.5 Neoliberal Period: Privatization Period

The fourth period is the privatization period. This period is called the neoliberal period. It started with Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Reagan in the USA and with Turgut Özal in Turkey in 1980. In this period, mine extraction industry was privatized, parallel to global developments. After the 1980s, the state investment decreased, and the public-private or mixed structure of enterprises increased.

The *"Redevance System"* was used in this period frequently. *"Redevance Mechanism"* means that the state was giving a purchasing guarantee to buy produced coal.[71] The reason for that, in the 1990s, there was a sharp decrease in the investments made in the mining sector in the public sector. The crisis in the 2000s caused a decline in mining production. Hence, in 2003, numerous mines were taken in the privatization program.[72] These processes are similar to the developments in the world, which is called the "neoliberalism" period after the end of the 1970s.

69 Özbek, "Cumhuriyet Türkiyesi'nde Sosyal Güvenlik," 238.
70 Ibid, 244.
71 Adaman, Arsel, and Akbulut. "Neoliberal Developmentalism, Authoritarian Populism," 525.
72 Kalaycıoğlu and Çelik, "Tunçbilek Kömür İşletmelerinde Özelleştirmenin," 7.

This period was also the period of rural transformation, which led to the flow of the peasants to urbanized areas. Hobsbawm remarked on this period in his book; "*Age of extremes: the short twentieth century, 1914-1991*" in 1995 as the following: "Only one peasant stronghold remained in or around the neighborhood of Europe and the Middle East – Turkey where the peasantry declined, but in the 1980s, remained the absolute majority."[73] However, today, in 2020, it is difficult to say that Turkey is a peasant country. Turkey has urbanized and depeasantized after he published the book. The reason for losing the validity of this sentence is inner migration in Turkey. When it is regarded as the trend of rural and urban populations, in the 1950s, 75% of the population lived in the countryside. In the 1970s, the rural population constituted 62%[74] of the total population, and in the 2000s, the rural population declined to 38.5%.[75] There are conflicts about the rural population after 2007 because the villages were made as quarter of the metropolitan municipalities. In this way, in 2020, the rural population seemed remained only 7.7% of the total [76] as well as TÜİK records, the rural population declined from 22,72% to 8,65% in 2013.[77] Although the municipality laws, the migration from rural to urban in Turkey is the reality. This population trend shows that the rapid inner migration flow to the urbanized areas started in Turkey after 1950, the latest urbanization in the European region since the peasantry discourse of Early Republicans.[78]

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73 Eric Hobsbawm, Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991 (London: Abacus, 1995), 338-339.

74 Okan Ceylan, "The Transformation of Agricultural Structures through Government Policies in Edirne Province between 1939 and 1960." Unpublished MA Thesis. (Boğaziçi University, 2015), 140.

75 Ibid.

76 It is also related to Metropolitan Municipalities that villages in the metropolitan municipalities accepted as District no a village after 2012, but still, villages are less than 20 %.

77 TÜİK

78 M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "Agrarian Populism as an Ideological Discourse of Interwar Europe," New Perspectives on Turkey 26 (2002): 59–93, doi:10.1017/s089663460000371x.

2.5.1 *2001-2020 Period*

After the 2001 economic crisis, the mines started to be liberalized, which continued excessively in the AKP government period, similar to the world's neoliberal trend. Tamzok explains this period in the following sentences:

> TKİ was quite limited given that the budget necessary for new investment capacity could not be allocated, there was no available external credit, and the employment of new personnel was not allowed. Therefore, TKİ's cost of production rose dramatically, and TKİ started to transfer specific tasks to the private sector. In 2001, according to the development plan prepared by TKİ, the expected amount of marketable coal production from the Soma basin was determined as 10.6 million tons.[79]

During the AKP period, in Soma, the number of miners and immigration to the area increased. Çelik stated in her thesis that in Soma, "as underground mining has quite a labor-intensive production process, from 2004 onwards the number of miners has increased significantly."[80]

For Soma mine workers, this period became essential to change their lives for retired miners and those who still work. This period was shaped by the economic crisis in 2001 and then in the AKP period, which was the effect of EU integration and ARIP, the Agricultural Reform Implementation Project. Then, it was affected by the 2008 economic crisis and 2008 Retirement Laws.

In the local Soma case, the biggest issue was privatization and the Redevance System, and the increase of miners in the region and economic crisis. Also, with the professionalization of the army, miners' families began to choose to have their children join the army instead of becoming mineworkers.

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79 Tamzok, "Türkiye Madencilik Sektöründe Yapısal Dönüşüm ve Sonuçları."

80 Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means."

Another most effective issue in this period and the reason for this thesis writing was the 2014 accident that led to the deaths of 301 miners. The accident affected not only the life of 301 miners and their families but also the society and remaining mine workers especially in Soma, which made the Parliament and ILO (International Labor Organization) to make a new law. The laws changed miners' lives on paper and theory, however, it is still ambiguous whether their working conditions improved in terms of work safety. But what is sure is that the income of miners increased as a result of the law that "their salary might not be less than two minimum wages" and their weekly holiday increased to two days and the retirement age was reduced to 50 from 55 and it is possible to retired at the age of 43, for those who have 7.200 days working days. As I observed in my research, these changes constituted the principal reasons for considering working in the mines as advantageous and increased the desire to work in mining.

§ 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief overview of the historical background of mining. This chapter argued that the mining development in Turkey might be summarized and categorized into four periods: foreign capital, nationalized, planned and privatization periods. In this chapter, I tried to explain the similarities of the national mining history in Turkey in relation to global developments. In addition, I discussed how the local mines in Soma and Kütahya fit in this general periodization of mining in Turkey.

Resim 2- Linyit Sahaları Rezerv Haritası [4]

Figure 1.1 Lignite Reserve Map of Turkey[81]

81 http://www.mta.gov.tr/v2.0/daire-baskanliklari/enerji/images/siteharitalar/4.jpg

3

THE FIELD: Selimli, Soma and Cenkyeri

In chapter two, the historical background of the mining sector has been explained based on academic researches and archival resources. In this chapter, I will be explaining the researched field sites.

§ 3.1 The Portrait of Selimli: a Village in the Periphery

One of the main arguments of this thesis is that the peripheral status of Selimli is a major factor for the peasant farmers' community to migrate to Soma mine pits and become mine workers. This peripheral status shapes the mining community's perception of their work. Selimli's peripheral status is defined by geography[1], including natural environment, climate, location, and distance to city centers but also political preferences which historically deprived the region of infrastructure.

In other words, distance to city centers decreases the chance to access the government facilities like hospitals, schools, and public transportation. Yet, this inability to access public facilities shall not be seen as a "natural" constraint merely following from the geographic status of Selimli as a mountain village. Instead, the peripheral status of Selimli is also linked to political decisions which historically deprived this rural

1 These ideas were inspired by Ibn Khaldun and inspired by the Annales School ideas and their highlight on geography for historiography. One of the key figures of Annales School, Fernand Braudel emphasizes the importance of geography to shape the lives of humans.

area from government investment. In other words, the lack of public infrastructure in this region also defines the peripheral status of the village.

Given this lack of infrastructure including roads, Selimli's relation to the market was limited and barter economy was used in the village until the 2000s. The village's peripheral status did not allow peasants to sell their products to districts and centers. These dynamics pushed the peasant community of Selimli to become a mining community as well. Research on villages has shown that every village is different from each other.[2] For villages, it is difficult to generalize because of their unique situations. In what follows, I outline the village of Selimli's specific characteristics.

Selimli is a mountain village where most first-generation and second-generation mine workers and their families are located. It has remained in the periphery and far away from city centers. Selimli is in the mid-zone of Bursa, Balıkesir, and Kütahya. The village administratively belongs to Kütahya and the distance to the city center of Kütahya is 110 km, while it is 210 km away from Soma. The village is on the border of Balıkesir, but the natural environment, and mountains[3] cause poor transportation to Balıkesir.

3.1.1.1 Transportation

Braudel says "distance is the first enemy"[4] in his famous book the *Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Distance affect villagers' life in Selimli and their connection to the world. In addition, the poor public transportation system hinders their lives further.

There is only three times public transportation in a week from the village to the districts. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, minibuses go to Simav or Tavşanlı, which are two districts of Kütahya, at 7:00 in the morning and return to the village at 5:00 p.m. Apart from these times, it

2 Keyder and Yenal, "Bildiğimiz Tarımın Sonu," 53.

3 The mountains of the area reminded me of Stirling's sentence; "Turkey is almost all mountains." Paul Stirling, Turkish Village (New York: John Willey and Sons, Inc., 1966), 14.

4 Braudel, "The Mediterranean," 355.

is not possible to find public transport to the village. Distance and transportation also posed troubles in my field research. It was difficult to go to the village whenever it was needed due to lack of public transportation.[5]

3.1.1.2 Settlement

The settlement in the village is a collective settlement. The houses have mainly two floors. On the ground floor, there is a place for animals and machines such as tractors, cars, and harvesters. The first floor is the living area for the household. Houses have heaters, TV satellites, and solar energy systems. There are also a few long apartment-style houses that are colorful, but they were constructed by mine workers who went to Germany to work in the late 1960s.

The number of houses in the village is about 70 and the population of the village was 107 in 2020. The population that migrated to Soma is over 500, as headman and peasants declared. There are no newborn babies and there are no children younger than ten years old except those women who come back to the village with their children after divorce. The following quotation from Hatice (55) shows the village's situation: "Two years ago a baby was born, and the baby was crying, and we said to the baby's mother, do not stop your child crying, the village misses the baby voice." Many of the peasant farmers in the village are elderly, the only exception is young widow women and disabled people. Most of the people in the village live alone in their home. The village seems like a derelict village.

3.1.1.3 The Region: Güzelyurt

In the surrounding region, Selimli is not the only derelict village characterized by its peripheral status. The region is named Güzelyurt, while it was called Dağardı (behind the mountain in Turkish) in the past.

5 İbrahim Yasa in his book of Hasanoğlan Köyü written in 1955 says that villages change with the improvement of transportation. However, for the Selimli village, the change is slower, and the transportation system has not developed, and it is like it was in 1955. İbrahim Yasa, Hasanoğlan Köyü (Ankara: Doğuş Matbaası, 1955).

It is claimed that the name of Dağardı has been changed because the civil servants, teachers, and doctors have not preferred when they saw the name Dağardı Güzelyurt region is composed of a minimum of 30 villages that have similar characteristics to Selimli. The region provides the labor suppliers of mines in Soma, Kütahya, Balıkesir, Bursa, the Black Sea region, and overseas Germany.

The Güzelyurt region is located among the Bursa, Selimli, and Balıkesir, close to the mine pits of Odaköy, Tunçbilek, Seyitömer, Değirmisaz and Balya. Every village in the region has about 60 -70 houses and many elderly men in the villages are mostly retired from the mining sector. Apart from them, the villages are inhabited deceased miners' wives, widow women as in Selimli. The population of the villages continues to decline drastically. The houses are similar to Selimli's homes. They have two flats. On the ground floor, animals and machines are located and the first floor is the living area for the people. Colorful apartment-style houses were made by Turkish-German mine workers. Hence, in the Güzelyurt region, the settlement, population, culture and homes are similar to each other in different villages.

Güzelyurt is a center village surrounded by 30 small villages in this region. Güzelyurt was one of the *nahiye* centers in the past until the 1970s. Cevdet Yılmaz defined nahiye as the administrative unit where a village at approximately equal distance to those villages is selected to ensure the safety and respond to the needs of the region. All nahiyes had about ten soldiers for safety.[6] Some of nahiye lost their importance in time and finally, they were removed from the administrative chain and their existence ended.[7] Hence, in the region, while the nahiye administrative ended, public facilities including the health center, military and the school have been located in Güzelyurt because of it is role in the past. In every village, there are only five-six children, and they attend the Güzelyurt Primary School by commuting to school by minibuses. Many minibus drivers also retired mineworkers.

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6 Cevdet Yılmaz, "Türkiye Kırsal Yerleşme Coğrafyası Literatürü'." Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi 17 (2019): 526.
7 Ibid., 527.

3.1.1.4 Arrival in the Village

In the first part of field research, I went to Selimli with my wife and my cousin by renting a car. Since I have relations through my parents, my access to the village and interviewees was easy. My cousin had come to the village fifteen years ago, and I had visited Selimli two years ago, while my wife was coming for the first time.[8] The people of the village remembered me because of my family background, and I remembered some of them as well. My cousin did not remember anybody from the village, but villagers remembered him although it had been 15 years since they had seen him. This surprised us. Their remembrance shows us the power of the local knowledge and local memory in a village.

My first gatekeeper and sponsor[9] was one imam who had worked in this village and told the peasants about my plans to conduct research in the village. Gatekeeper and sponsor is "the person who act as hosts the research" and provides access points for the research.[10] Also, I talked to the village headman and with an elderly council member called as aza, who also told the villagers about my research. I chose these people as my gatekeepers and sponsors because they have authority in the village.

When we entered the village, we found ourselves by the mosque, and the office of the village headman, which are in the center of the village. The villagers welcomed us. When we arrived at the village and the villagers were building a wall in the village square under the control of

8 In the case of my wife, I had thought that her presence would make my job easier since she could more easily conduct interviews with women. However, because of their Aegean accents, my wife could not communicate well enough with villager women to conduct interviews. This has shown us how challenging it is to make rural study research.

9 "Seeking the permission of gatekeepers or the support of sponsors is often an unavoidable first step in gaining access to the data. Furthermore, the relationships established with such people can have important consequences for the subsequent course of the research." Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, Ethnography: Principles in Practice. 58.

10 Ibid.

village headman which reminded me corvée of 19th century.[11] Mübeccel Kıray mentions in her book on Ereğli that the traders and the headman have power over the peasant-miners. In Selimli, the headman and trader are the same people, which increases even further the authority they have on villagers. Also, the imams and teachers as more educated people have authority over the villagers and they represent religious and, state authority in Selimli. The buildings that welcomed us upon our arrival in the village, the mosque, and the office of the headman which was used as a school in the past symbolize these power relations in the village.

As already stated, the peripheral status of Selimli hindered the village's socio-economic relations with the outside world. This situation was also reflected in a story which villagers often told to me throughout my field research. Through this story which I shall call "Neslihan's Burning Little Papers" story, villagers persistently expressed that they did not use money in the village until recently and that the increase of cash dependency recently forced them to migrate. The story of Neslihan is one of the best examples that shows the village's condition, its relation with the world, and the life of peasants in the 1960s.

Neslihan was born in 1936. She lost her family at a very young age. When she married Süleyman, she looked after her father-in-law and did not have a mother-in-law. She weaved carpets. Neslihan lost her first child in 1996 in the Soma mine. In 1997, she lost her son-in-law in Değirmisaz in an underground mine. In 2008, her son died in the Soma mine. In 2014, her oldest grandchild survived by chance the mine accident in Soma. Despite the loss of her two sons in the mines, she got angry with her little grandchild because he did not accept to work in the underground mines. In 2015, she moved to Soma because of her illness, and she died there in 2016. The story told below is from 1969.

11 Corvée is obliged to people to work, it was banned in the 19th century by The Constitution of the Ottoman Empire (Kanun-ı Esasi). However, in 2019, it reminds me corvée of the 19th century in the village which made me think about the power of state authority in the village.

THE PORTRAIT OF THE VILLAGE IN THE 1960S: NESLIHAN'S STORY FROM 1969: BURNING LITTLE PAPERS

Neslihan woke up early in the morning. She firstly took care of their animals; two cows, and five sheep. She and her husband Süleyman did animal husbandry for themselves. She milked the cows and fed the animals. Then, she prepared breakfast for her husband, children and her father-in-law. Afterwards, she went to the farm with the animals and children. They were doing subsistence agriculture. After spending time on the farm, she came back home to prepare dinner for the family. Husbandry and farming took most of the day since agriculture and animal husbandry were the main source of their livelihood. Also, they used the animal products and what they got from the harvest for barter.

When Neslihan came back home from the farm, she was tired. But Neslihan needed to milk the cows and prepare dinner for her husband and children. To cook, she needed to light the stove. Neslihan used the old newspaper pieces in the cupboard to light the stove. She saw little papers in the newspaper which burned very well but she could not understand what they were. Then, she prepared their family dinner and waited for her husband to come back from the mill. In the evening, Neslihan's husband Süleyman came home, and they had dinner together. After the dinner, Süleyman asked where the money was… Neslihan responded she did not see the money. Then, Süleyman asked where the newspaper was, and he got very angry when Neslihan told him that she burned them in the stove. Then, Süleyman beat his wife Neslihan because she did not understand that those little papers were money.

Neslihan did not know about money that much since in the village she gave eggs to the grocery store to buy what she needed. She gave wheat to get flour, sunflower to get oil, and milk to get other stuff. Money usage was not common in the village those days.

> Neslihan did not have literacy; she could read the numbers and notes on the money. She could not read and compare the prices of goods in the grocery store which was the only one in the village. But she knew how much wheat she should give for one sack of flour.

Neslihan's story tells many things about the life of peasants of Selimli in the 1960s: subsistence agriculture and animal husbandry, barter economy, illiteracy, gender roles, and the daily lives of peasants in a village which was not integrated into regional and world markets. As Keyder and Yenal state for Ottoman Anatolia:

> Anatolia was one part of the Ottoman Empire which had not been deeply integrated into world markets. When compared with the fertile areas of the Balkans, the share of market-oriented production in agriculture was meagre. The yield of the land was not high and most producers operated within the technological constraints of traditional family farming. Small ownership was the rule…[12]

Stories told in my field research suggested that similar socio-economic conditions were prevalent in Selimli in the 1960s and these continued until the 2000s. In order to understand these socio-economic conditions better, we need to examine more closely how agricultural production and the barter economy worked in the village.

AGRICULTURE AND BARTER ECONOMY

The common agriculture in the region is subsistence-agriculture like the majority of Central Anatolia. According to field research, the common economy transaction was barter economy in the village until the 2010s. How did the barter economy work? I listened to interviewees from different generations explain to me numerous times the barter system. They tried to explain how the barter system worked in the village with less use of money. Using snowball sampling, I reached three people who were from the family of the grocery store and trader of the village.

12 Keyder and Yenal, "Bildiğimiz Tarımın Sonu."

One of them was Bilal who was a grocery store owner in the 1970s and he explained to me the barter system in a home visit. Another person, Ayşe (60), was the daughter of the grocer and Melek, whose husband and herself was a grocery store owner at the beginning of the 2000s.

Based on their accounts, barter economy worked in two ways: one of them is by eggs and the other by products that peasants cultivated. Merchants have grocery stores in the village, and they are originally from the same village. Peasants took their eggs to the grocery store and bought whatever they wanted to buy only by giving their eggs. If they wanted to buy more expensive products, they gave more eggs. Another option was giving the products that peasants have produced, for instance crops such as wheat, corn, and barley.

Kıray explains a similar barter system in Ereğli where people used eggs, chicken, vegetables, and fruits.[13] The difference between Ereğli and Selimli is that in Ereğli the barter system was for secondary production. In Selimli, however, however, subsistence was with the barter system for primary production. Also, the natural environment and lack of public infrastructure did not allow peasants of Selimli to go to districts and centers to sell their products. Therefore, they had to give their product to the merchant in the village, who was also the village headmen.

As Ayşe explained, "then the traders took these eggs to the Tavşanlı districts or Simav districts and sold it in the market. They carried the eggs by donkey or horse in the 1970s and by cars later in the 1980s." Bilal, who was a grocery store owner in the 1970s, told how the system was and how he transported the eggs on the horses and went to districts and sold them because he did not have a vehicle for transportation until the 1980s.

13 "In the region, especially women grow products such as egg, chicken, vegetables, fruits and they give it to the trader of them even though they had changed to sell it more expensive. The trader of the village decides himself the price and payment terms." Kıray, "Ereğli," 62.

The second way of barter economy was using tracks coming to the village to exchange cultivated products such as wheat, chickpeas, sunflower, and barley with certain goods. The peasants gave sunflower and took ten percent less oil in return from the merchants coming by truck. Another example was that peasants gave sixty kilograms of wheat and took fifty kilograms of flour in return, and peasants gave chickpeas and took nuts in return. This situation continued until the 2010s. Today, the trucks are still coming to the village and the system somewhat continues, but many peasants give money because the agricultural production is less, and they do not produce sufficient agricultural products to exchange.

The research findings show that peasants rarely use money within the village even today. In the village, egg and wheat allows them to get whatever they need. People buy their bread with an egg. They fill the gasoline with wheat. Also, about 90% of the products were already grown and made by themselves in the village. Rare use of money and not going to the districts to sell their products, provided the villagers with a sense of a community, but this situation also caused poverty and led to their exploitation by traders, all factors pushing the villagers to the mine pits.

When I asked about peasants' reasons for not going to the city to sell their products, they responded that they did not have vehicles; minibuses, trucks, and so on, to take their product to the markets. As Kemal responded, there were only a few people who had a vehicle. They were also the grocery store owners. When peasants needed to go to the district in an emergency time, they asked the merchant for a ride because he has a car. Therefore, they had to sell their products cheaply to the grocery store and to the trucks that came to the village. This situation contributed to their motivation to work in the underground mines.

Thus, the peripheral status of Selimli historically led to a barter system in the region.[14] During the focus group interviews I conducted in

14 One reason for the use of barter systems in the region may be the nomadic background of the region. The villagers of Selimli denied they are nomads but in the region, there are villages known as nomads' villages. In the Ottoman Archive, the documents show that the

Soma, numerous people who have migrated to Soma from villages other than Selimli also confirmed that the use of barter system was common in their villages, or at least they listened to it from their parents. The use of barter economy seems to be a theme for disadvantaged and peripheral villages in the region.[15] The barter economy system in the region was in effect with modifications even in the neoliberal period when technology, modernization, and intensive consumption practices entered the village. The barter system is also valid in a way today among the mining community in Soma through an informal economy by bartering their agricultural products among them.

TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURE, THE CHANGE OF CONSUMPTION PRACTICES AND INCREASE OF CASH DEPENDENCY

With the effect of neoliberal transformation, agricultural subsidies decreased in Turkey, and the liberation effect caused depeasantization.[16] In the Soma region, there has been a transition from tobacco to olives. However, the fieldwork of rural areas of Kütahya and Balıkesir shows that there is no industrial agriculture in this region: Products such as olives and tobacco are not produced. Farmers in this region are self-sufficient: they produce wheat, corn, and do animal husbandry and sell milk and eggs. Another important phenomenon is that peasants in Selimli did not have title deeds for their land until the 2000s and could not benefit from

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area was the place where the nomads were located. Also, the first generation has stories about nomads that were going next to their village.

15 As reflected in the news, there are still villages that use the barter system in Turkey such as Selim district in Kars and Ahlat in Bitlis. All these villages are defined by distance to the city centers and markets.

"Bu Köyde Para Geçmiyor!" Habertürk, accessed 2 July 2020. https://www.haberturk.com/yasam/haber/607395-bu-koyde-para-gecmiyor-video

"Bu Köyde Para Geçmiyor." Yeni Mesaj, accessed 2 July 2020. http://www.yenimesaj.com.tr/bu-koyde-para-gecmiyor-H1089892.htm

"Bu Bakkalda Para Geçmiyor." Posta. Accessed 2 July 2020. https://www.posta.com.tr/bu-bakkalda-para-gecmiyor-148044

16 Keyder and Yenal, "Bildiğimiz Tarımın Sonu".

agricultural supports until the 2000s. They have taken agricultural subsidies after the 2000s at a time when agricultural supports decreased.

After the 2001 economic crisis and ARIP (Agricultural Reform Implementation Project), with the decrease of animal husbandry and agricultural activities, money usage increased and barter economy activities for transactions decreased in Selimli. Whereas before, villagers could buy approximately 90 percent of their needs with their products, (even oil and gasoline they could get with the barter system), in time their cash dependency increased.

When I asked villagers for what they needed cash most, İbrahim responded "look there are tractors and cars in every house's garden now. Each house has a solar energy system. Everybody has a mobile phone and a television. Every month, I pay half of my retirement wage only for the invoices and the oil for the car. In the past, there were no cars, tractors, machines, nor motorcycles."

In Turkey, during the Democrat Party period, with Marshall Plan aid, the use of technology in agriculture increased: the number of tractors rose from 10,000 in 1946 at the end of the 1950s.[17] Moreover, the transportation system developed, and rural and urban areas were better connected in the 1950s and 1960s. However, agricultural machines and cars came to Selimli late. In the 1970s, there was only one tractor in the village whose owner was a trader. The coming of tractors to the village and region are later than the 1970s and the roads have also been built lately.[18] This shows that the development of the villages differ from each other, and it is difficult to generalize among villages in rural studies.

Nonetheless, in the present, villagers of Selimli cooperate with world in terms of consumption practices and changes in technology by

17 Pamuk, "Uneven Centuries," 208.

18 Many women had not travelled to any place outside their village. For example, Aysel said that "If I go over two kilometers by car, I vomit. Therefore, I go nowhere. Most of the women in the village were the same and had not gone to a different place than their village in their entire life.

using domestic appliances, televisions, phones, and cars similar to other rural areas of Turkey.[19]

This change of technology and consumption practices has increased villagers' cash dependency in Selimli. The use of money and the increase of cash dependency increased the demand for money, constituting another reason to migrate to mine pits.

POWER RELATIONS

The peripheral status of Selimli has also affected personal and power relations in the village. The key authority figures in the village have historically been the headman, the imam, the teacher, and traders which include grocery store owners, the milk deliverer and minibus drivers. Teachers have not existed in Selimli for the last fifteen years because the school was relocated to the school in Güzelyurt.

Today, the headman is the grocery store owner and trader of the village. He is the son of the Turkish-German worker parents who went to work in Germany in the 1960s. The headman's brother is one of the minibus drivers in the village. The headman is the only high school graduate in his generation and his first headman period started in 1984. The headman and his brother, the Yıldırım family have connected the village to the world and the global economy through their trade. For this reason, they have authority over peasants.

The interview I conducted with the headman was one of the most interesting interviews of my field research.[20] I asked to have an in-depth interview with him. However, he suggested making a group interview in front of the villagers. He responded a minimum of fifteen minutes to each question with an influential voice, like a politician who is giving a public speech. He responded to questions but also gave a speech to the people of the village. His audience was the peasants of the village rather than me,

19 Keyder and Yenal, "Bildiğimiz Tarımın Sonu," 104.

20 The headman was one of the few individuals who allowed me to voice record during the interviews.

the researcher. Then, when I asked the same question to another peasant in the focus group, he responded in the same way as did the headman. Hence, I could observe that the headman's authority was affecting even the responses villagers gave to my questions in his presence.

The headman elections were one of the dominant themes the peasants talked about in my field research. In the case of the headman elections, the traders are the principal figures to determine who the headman will be. The villagers listed five men who acted as Selimli's headman since 1965. Each of these figures are from a trader family: they were either the trader's son or brother of. For example, another trader is a milk deliverer, and he is the previous headman of the village. When a trader is chosen as headman, it provides them more authority over villagers.

Ahmet who was a candidate in the headman elections but was not chosen explained to me why the headman and the trader become the same person: "I could not take a vote from even my close friends because they said that we have business with the trader, for this reason, we will support him." When a trader was a candidate for the election, the others' chance to become headman is weaker because, in the village, there is poverty, people are too poor to buy cars, tractors to connect with the market.

When a trader is chosen as headman, it provides him more authority over villagers. In her book on Ereğli, Mübeccel Kıray explains that "the effect and influence of the merchant on villagers are often higher than the headman, the Gendarmerie commander or even the district governor."[21] I could observe a similar authority of the merchants over villagers in my field research in Selimli. For example, as already discussed when we first arrived in the village, the peasants were building wall for the headman office garden which reminded me of the corvee of 19th century. The headman told me in the interview what they did was not legal, but people do it because they are thinking about the future of their children and working for the development of the village.

Imams and teachers have been the other important figures in the village. Since the money exchange is less in the village, civil servants seem

21 Kıray, "Ereğli," 61.

richer compared to villagers. They are educated and help villagers whenever literacy needed such as when they need to read invoices or medication manuals etc. Also, the mosque and coffee-houses are important for the lives of the villagers, as often mentioned in the literature because they are public spheres, and they shape peasants' perspectives. Also, the village rooms (köy odaları) were crucial places for peasants' life. When the transportation system was limited, these important rooms which were built by notables were used for people to the guest.[22] In Selimli, there is one room for guests under the mosque and also one room under the mosque is a gathering place. There are coffee houses as well. Tea and coffee are made by younger people of the village and the tea is generally bought by the imam or the headman.

LACK OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

The peripheral status of Selimli and Güzelyurt has also historically been defined by political preferences which deprived the region of public services and infrastructure. Historically, the region was *nahiye*, but nahiye was not a solution for bringing services to Güzelyurt. The public infrastructure and services including health facilities, schooling is still very insufficient in the region. This situation was best expressed by Murat (30) (who is an ex-miner and works in education sector now) depicted the region as a "deprivation zone" (mahrumiyet bölgesi) to emphasize the geographic conditions and the lack of services.

The village institutions had an essential role in the history of Turkey. However, in Selimli, peasants could not benefit from such public facilities. Most first-generation villagers do not have literacy. Only few people among the first generation have literacy and males learned to read and write during their military service. In case of women, the illiteracy rate is higher. For example, as seen in the "Neslihan's Burning Little Papers" story, Neslihan could not read the numbers and notes on the bills. Like Neslihan, first generation females cannot read and compare the

22 Halil İnalcık, Köy,Köylü ve İmparatorluk (Ankara : Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1990), 5.

prices of goods in the grocery store. They only know how to shop with barter economy rules.

In Selimli, the opening of school for the first time in the village is remembered by the villagers as 1961. This date is approximate. Since mine workers knew I am a history student and history teach the dates in their understanding, in a focus group interview, Kezban (54) said that "write 1961 was the opening date of the school and when you write it your professors will not understand whether it is true or not."[23] In the village's memory, the first day of school is remembered. As Meltem (61) explains; "For the first time, the teacher arrived in the village and education started. On the first day, the teacher wrote in front of the school "Uyan Ey Halkım" (wake up my people) and this was told many times by the elderly people in the village."

Most mineworkers are either illiterate or primary school graduates. This educational status of miners is also mentioned by Onur Bütün.[24] Illiteracy and lack of education which follow from the peripheral status of the region has turned villagers into unskilled laborers who are suitable to be the labor suppliers of the mine pits. Having difficulty to find jobs as uneducated and unskilled men, villagers from Selimli have been inclined to migrate to the Soma mine pits.

How did the opening of the school in the village affect the villagers? First and second-generation state that after the school was opened, there was a vital increase in their expenditure because the students needed uniforms, books, and pens. The opening of school, hence increased cash dependency, and this resulted in the first generation's migration work in the mine pits to earn wages. For the next generations, schooling and the state services were one of the major reasons and motivations for their family to migrate to Soma and mine basins. In other words, for younger generation families, the desire to give better education to their children and benefit from better public facilities, which is lacking in the Güzelyurt

23 This sentence also shows how they consider research which they see as unimportant duty and just as homework.

24 Bütün, "Yedi Kat Yerin Altından Uğultular Geliyor," 125.

region, constitute major reasons to migrate to mine basins and become mineworkers.

Until now, I discussed the peripheral status of Selimli/Güzelyurt defined by the natural environment, climate location and distance to city centers but also political preferences which historically deprived the region of public infrastructure and services. All these factors caused rural poverty which is the major reason of the migration in the region. In addition, the transformation of agriculture, the change in consumption practices and the increase of cash dependency in the recent period contributed to the reasons to migrate. When these factors combined with the economic income and social security to be gained through working in the mines, peasant families from Selimli began to migrate to the Soma region and working in the coal basin became an advantageous decision in the mentality of the researched community.

§ 3.2 Soma Field

3.2.1.1 The Portrait of Soma; Cenkyeri and Station District

Soma is the migrated area, where mainly second and third generation miners located. I went to Soma one month after I conducted ethnographic research in Selimli.

In Selimli, I had taken the phone numbers of villagers' children and I contacted them through social media. I have already known some of them, which made the connection easier. Since the research is multi-sited ethnography, at this point, I will discuss two of my field sites in the place of migration: Soma and Cenkyeri.

SOMA

Soma is a small mining town in western Turkey. It is surrounded by the Yunt Mountains. The city's population has increased with the labor immigration from 39.088 in 1985 to 109.946 in 2020. Soma is closer to Manisa as well as to İzmir which has markets and ports. It is also suitable for agriculture; olive, tobacco, and cotton are grown in the region and there are vineyards as well.

The first family that I contacted before going to Soma said that they were migrating to Cenkyeri from Soma that week. Cenkyeri is a small town populated with 3.100 people and 10 km away from the Soma city center. When I asked the family (Mevlut and Şefika) their reason for migrating to Cenkyeri, Şefika (30) responded that:

> We bought land from Cenkyeri to build our own house. The lands in Cenkyeri are cheaper than land in Soma town center. Also, there are our fellow townsmen, kin and the air is cleaner because there is the thermal plant in Soma city center. Also, there is more place for our children to play. Furthermore, Cenkyeri is close to the working area and the buses always come to Cenkyeri to take workers to mine companies.

Before moving to Cenkyeri, Şefika was living in the Station District, mainly a gecekondu settlement in Soma were close to the thermal plant.[25] Living costs, in the Station District were cheaper compared to Soma district center as she stated. Therefore, in Soma, there were two main sites that the peasant workers of Selimli chose as a destination place: Cenkyeri

25 Mines were used in the Thermal Plant. The biggest Thermal Plant is Soma B Thermal Power Plant in Soma. The power plant belonging to Konya Şeker Energy company. "It is Turkey's 19th and Manisa's largest power plant with an installed power of 990 MWe. The facility is also Turkey's 8th largest Lignite Thermal Power Plant. Soma B Thermal Power Plant can meet all the electrical energy needs of 1,238,912 people in their daily lives (such as housing, industry, metro transportation, government offices, environmental lighting) with an average electricity production of 4,499,730,137 kilowatt-hours." https://www.enerjiatlasi.com/komur/soma-termik-santrali.html; The Thermal Plant in Soma is also similar pattern in the Neo-Liberal Period because it was also privatized and owned by Konya Şeker Sanayi ve Ticaret A.Ş.http://somatermik.com.tr/Tr/kurumsal

District which is ten km away from the city center and Station District in Soma, which is close to the train station. Most of the peasants of Selimli and Güzelyurt were mainly located in these two places. Hence, these two districts were my field sites in Soma.

In the literature, it is known that miners come mine pits from surrounding villages. For example, Oskay explains that,

> Mine workers generally live and work in the villages and located in the surrounding villages of the mining pits instead of settling in the city center. Most of them go to work by shuttle service. This provides great convenience for them in terms of housing costs and the education cost of children. People living in nearby villages do not think of settling in the city center for now....[26]

My field research findings corroborate Oskay's argument. I observed that many peasant-miners from Selimli choose close places to the city center rather than living directly in the city center. Some of them chose to live in Soma Station District. The early migrants were located in these two districts (Station District and Cenkyeri) and their relatives and network who migrated later also settled in these sites. In Cenkyeri, one street is mainly composed of people from Selimli, and another street is surrounded by peasants of Habibler, of Güzelyurt, which is the neighbor village of the Selimli in Kütahya and the other street is Beciler which is another neighborhood of Selimli. The trend of migration and settlement is not different from the trend of migration in Turkey. The housing and settlement are in the same district for those who came from the same village or same regions.

3.2.1.2 Housing and Mining Settlement

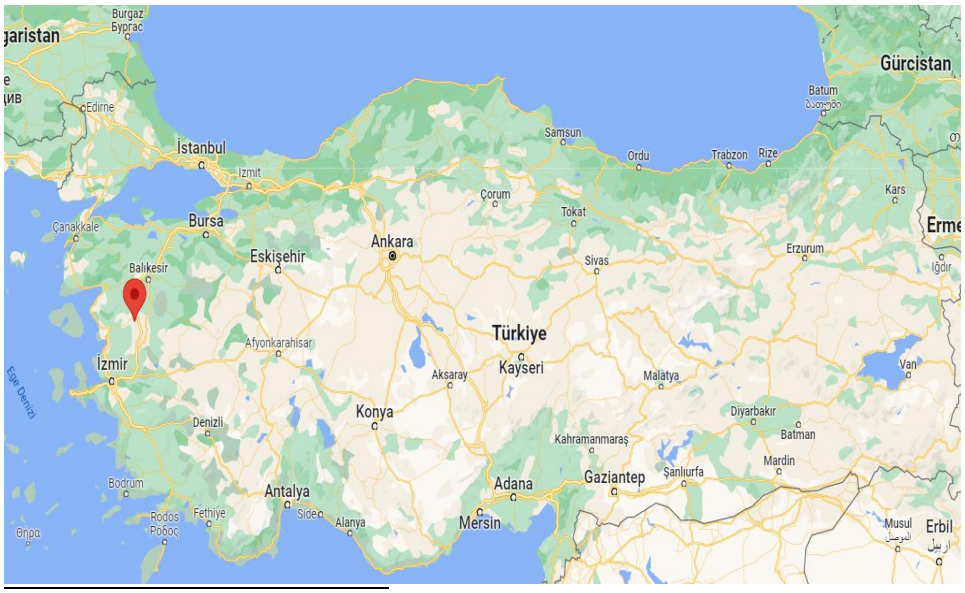
Houses in Selimli and houses of Cenkyeri and Soma have obvious differences from each other. The biggest difference is that there is no

26 Ülgen Oskay, Geçiş Dönemi Tipi Olarak Zonguldak Kömür Havzası Maden İşçisi: İhsaniye ve Gelik Ocaklarında Çalışan Maden İsçileri Üzerine bir Araştırma (İzmir: Ege Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1983), 83.

place for animal livestock on the ground floor in Soma and Cenkyeri whereas, in the Selimli, the ground floor is a barn for animals. In Cenkyeri, the homes are mainly three floor apartments, which were constructed by buying land and year by year. The second difference is inside of the homes in Soma/Cenkyeri are relatively luxurious, giving the impression that it is a middle-class home. Sitting rooms, televisions, curtains are relatively luxurious in Soma/Cenkyeri whereas, in Selimli, they are humble ordinary village houses.

This relative luxury and wealth are coming after retirement and after the death of 301 miners in 2014. The reason is the income of mine workers is relatively better after the deaths of 301 miners. The research findings and the mentalities and the perception of mines will not be the same if the research was conducted before 2014 or just after the accident. This research was conducted between 2019 and 2021. The findings show that the perception of working in the mine and mine workers is prestigious in the eyes of both the mining community and the local community in Soma because mineworkers have relatively better economic conditions and better working hours after the 2014 accident.

Figure 4.1. Soma Map[27]



[27] Google Maps

CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a brief overview of the field sites in the rural region and in Soma. By focusing on both the original place of settlement, the village of Selimli and the place of migration, Soma, the discussion traced the changes in the social environment and life of the community under study. The discussion on Selimli highlighted the village's peripheral status and lack of infrastructure in the region and how this situation has shaped power relations, economy, and settlement in the village as well as the perspective of the community. Then, the discussion focused on, Soma, the immigrated area, and the housing and the settlement in the two locations where the community in Soma has settled: Cenkyeri and the Station district.

4

TRANSFORMATION OF SELIMLI: FROM A PEASANT COMMUNITY TO A PEASANT-MINING COMMUNITY

§ 4.1 Social Policies

As already discussed in the Introduction, this thesis argues that the miners' and their families' experience with the general socio-economic conditions of Turkey have shaped their perspective towards their occupation. These experiences have to do with; the country's labor market situation defined by the rise of unemployment rates, labor surplus, the high number of minimum wage workers and informality; inner migration; the transformation of agriculture; and the transformation of social policies and retirement patterns in Turkey. Given these socio-economic realities, mineworker families consider working in the mining sector as having relatively better conditions in terms of income, social security, retirement age, and working hours compared to other unskilled jobs in Turkey.

Turkey's labor market realities shape the miners' motivation toward their occupation. In the Turkish labor market, the unemployment rate, the informality rate, and the number of minimum wage workers are

high.[1] According to SGK records, the percentage of informal labor in Turkey is 30.59% in all sectors in 2020.[2] The mining sector has relatively lower and one of the least informal workers rate which is 4.51% in 2020 because of its risks.[3] Regarding the social security system, Turkey has until the 2000s been defined by an inegalitarian, corporatist social security system which linked benefits to employment status.[4] Informal workers as well as most peasants, were not included in this formal system and until the health reform of the 2000s, "more than one third of the national population did not have health insurance coverage."[5]

Where do the peasant-miners of Selimli stand in this macro picture? Miners are usually coming from the agriculture sector according to my observation in Soma. Those who earn their livelihood from agriculture are mostly self- employed in Turkey and have to pay their premiums themselves to be covered under the social security system. Historically under the scheme of BAG-KUR, most of these peasant families have not been included in the social security system because of not being able to pay premiums given their low income. Hence one of the major reasons why the peasant miners choose to work in the mining sector in Soma is because in doing so they get themselves and their families covered under the social security system. The story I elicited through an oral history in-

1 Buğra, "Türkiye'nin Sosyal Politikaları ve Soma Felaketi".

2 Sosyal Güvenlik Kurumu. "Kayıtdışı İstihdam Oranları," accessed 1 September 2020. http://www.sgk.gov.tr/wps/portal/sgk/tr/calisan/kayitdisi_istihdam/kayitdisi_istihdam_oranlari

3 Ibid.

4 Ayşe Buğra, Kapitalizm, Yoksulluk ve Türkiye'de Sosyal Politika (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008). Nadir Özbek, "Cumhuriyet Türkiyesi'nde Sosyal Güvenlik," Berna Yazıcı, "The Return to the Family: Welfare, State, and Politics of the Family in Turkey." Anthropological Quarterly 85, no. 1 (2012): 109. doi:10.1353/anq.2012.0013

5 Ayşe Buğra and Çağlar Keyder, "Turkish Welfare Regime in Transformation." "Turkish Welfare Regime in Transformation." Journal of European Social Policy 16, no. 3 (2006): 211-228.

terview with Kemal (67) in the field illustrates the socio-economic factors summarized here as well as the villagers' reasons for becoming mineworkers.

4.1.1 *The Desire for Inclusion in the Social Security System: Kemal's Story*

Kemal got married in 1970 and had four children. He spent his life as a farmer in the village, cultivating wheat and barley. He had a tractor. In 1993, Kemal's wife got sick, but Kemal and his family did not have social security and health insurance. Kemal needed 15 billion[6] Turkish liras for the surgery and he sold his tractor. The money was not enough for the operation. He had to borrow more, and it was recommended that he starts to work in formal a job such as mining. If he worked for 6 months in this formal job with social insurance, he would be included the social security system and thus would pay less for the operation.

For the first time, after the age of 45, Kemal started to work in underground mines to include his wife in the social security system. Then, his wife Döndü had her operation and recovered. But Kemal continued to work in the mine because he could not use other people's tractors each time for the cultivation. He worked in the time, completed 5.000 workdays required for retirement and retired the age of 58. He worked in the mine at the same time with his sons and he retired at the same time with one of his sons, Melih. Kemal's age was 58 and his son was 38 when they retied. After he retired, Kemal went back to the village and bought the tractor with his retirement pension benefit and continued to do agriculture. However, this time, he started growing walnuts, almonds and chestnuts to sell to the market. His son continues to work as a working machine operator. His other son who also retired from the mine is now a bus driver. His son-in-law and daughter bought

6 15000 Tl after the change of six zero from the Turkish currency

a farm to cultivate. His grandson continues to work in the underground mines today in Soma.

Kemal was among one third of the national population who did have health insurance before the health reform of the 2000s. He had to find a formal job to get his wife covered under the public health insurance system. Finding a formal job for an unskilled worker in his 40s such as Kemal was very difficult, but the mines had labor shortages and high turnover rates until the 2000s. Thus, the easiest way to start formal work for Kemal was to work in the underground mine in Soma by using his kinship and fellow townsmen networks.

Kemal's situation is common among the first and second generation of men who similar to Kemal started to formally work in the mine at an older age compared to their children who constitute the third generation. Their reasons for starting to work in the mine most probably is due to the transformation of agriculture and the desire to be included in the social security system. In the case of agriculture, agriculture has risks with harvesting because it depends on nature. After all, in the region, peasants are using traditional agriculture techniques. In the field, mine workers often compared mining and agriculture in terms of economic income. Kemal's perception was negative for agriculture. He stated, "I have done agriculture for 50 years, but the earnings are less than 11 years of work in the mine." This statement also hints to the agricultural and energy policies of the government.

In case of agricultural activities, another problem had to do with the lack of land deeds until recently. Many lands in the rural areas in Turkey obtained land title deeds very late.[7] Peasants in Selimli could not get agricultural subsidies from the government until the 2000s due to their obtaining title deeds late. Another reason why peasants of Selimli could not benefit from agricultural subsidies is their lack of information about agricultural subsidies because of being illiterate.

[7] Keyder and Yenal, "Bildiğimiz Tarımın Sonu," 46

4.1.2 *Aiming for Early Retirement*

During the field research, retirement was the major theme in the mining community. For each generation of miners, the advantages of being included in the social security system which I highlighted above as well as early retirement rights granted to the underground miners which I discuss in this section constitute the major reasons for working in the underground mines. As already discussed in the Introduction, underground mines have special rules[8] for retirement age[9] because of risky and hard-working conditions.[10] These special rules make mining and mine working attractive.

Turkey was known as the country of young pensioners because of populist policies before 2000. In 1999 and 2008 the general retirement age was increased with the effect of European Union (EU) Integration. The retirement age of underground mines became more complex because of the changes in the law after the 2014 accident. After the Soma tragedy, the retirement age has been decreased with legal regulations in 2014 for the underground miners. Simply, miners were retired at the age of 38 if they started to work before 2008. If miners started working after 2008, the retirement age is 50 for them and they needed to complete

8 İsa Karakaş, "Yer Altı Yer Üstü Ayrımında 15 Yıla Kadar Erken Emeklilik Avantajı," Türkiye, accessed 15 January 2021. https://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/yazarlar/isa-karakas/607533.aspx

9 Ahmet Kıvanç, "Yer Altı Maden Işçileri Nasıl Emekli Olur?" Habertürk, accessed 15 January 2021. https://www.haberturk.com/yer-alti-maden-iscileri-nasil-emekli-olur-2428258-ekonomi. "Mesleklere Göre Emeklilik Günü Fark Ediyor!" Sözcü, accessed 15 January 2021. https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2020/sigorta/mesleklere-gore-emeklilik-gunu-fark-ediyor-5681724/.

10 Retirement explanation can be seen from the news:
Süleyman Demir, "Torba Yasa maden işçilerine neler getirdi?" Dünya, last modified 16 December 2014. https://www.dunya.com/gundem/torba-yasa-maden-emekcilerine-neler getirdi-haberi-265874; Vedat İlki, "Madende Emeklilik Koşulları." Ali Tezel. Last modified 11 November 2011. https://www.alitezel.com.tr/madende-emeklilik-kosullari-4842/; Özgür Tutoğlu, "Yeraltı Emeklilik Hesabı Nasıl Yapılır?" 25 March 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rexsBlaz-FA.

4.000 workdays insurance premium. However, miners can be retired at 43 if they work more than 4.800 workdays.

For unskilled, uneducated villagers in Selimli, the early retirement age granted to mine workers has become very attractive after the 1999 and 2008 reforms in the social security system which increased the retirement age for the general population. The reason is that unskilled men from Selimli believe that they will live in the poverty in their entire life if they retire very late by working in unskilled jobs but if they retire early by working in the mines, they can continue to work after retirement in another sector. In this way, miners think that they can get themselves and their families out of poverty by retiring in their 40s. Miners are counting the advantages of early retirements; buying houses for the family, helping their children with education and marriage, continuing to cultivate and start a new business. Most of these miners plan for some kind of entrepreneurialism in their retired lives. In the case of miners, entrepreneurialism is a desire in the age of retirement because of early retirement advantages from the mining sector. All in all, for these mine workers, retirement does not mean retiring from working life, but it gives them the possibility of guaranteeing basic needs for their families. They thus considered early retirement as the main motivation to work but also as a strategy for eliminating poverty.

Even though there is the risk of losing one's life and six miners from Selimli had lost their lives in the mines, whenever one asks miners their main reason for working in the underground mine, they refer to early retirement and social insurance. Retirement is thus vital for miners who survive the accidents in the mines and succeed to live until receiving their retirement rights. Nonetheless, early retirement does not give the miners a wealthy life. They can only escape poverty by working in another job after retirement. Also, the miners' statements about early retirement and social insurance tell us more about the general social policies and retirement patterns of Turkey. The retirement salary of many unskilled jobs in Turkey is insufficient and under the poverty line. Hence, I argue that given the mining sector's early retirement's advantages and relatively

higher wages and pensions and the ability to be included in the social security system; peasant miners and their families consider a risky work such as mining as advantageous and gainful employment.

My field research perfectly illustrated this importance of early retirement for the miners and their families. As I already written about in the Introduction, the community and especially Bilal and Mahmut insisted a few times that I start working in the underground mines because of early retirement advantages. They suggested that I work 11 years to complete 4000 workdays insurance premium and then continue with my education and obtain a PhD after guaranteeing my future, i.e., being retired from the mines. Their insistence shows how vital it is for them to be retired at an early age.

There were also numerous occasions when miners and their family members underlined the importance of early retirement from the mines. Mineworker Mevlüt (32) explained "if you started to work in underground mines when you were 19 or 20 years old, your workday insurance premium will be paid when you are 30 including army duty, you then guarantee retirement, and you can work in any job you want or cultivate agricultural products after retirement." Another worker, Refik (30) also stated that "I cannot accept working in any place other than underground mines because the working hours are too long, the retirement age is too high, you need to pay double of the workday insurance premium you pay as a mineworker and the salaries are low". His statement explains the general labor situation in Turkey and why the Selimli miners consider working in mines as an advantage. Early retirement advantages affect workers' motivation to work in the mines, and it is a labor control mechanism in the mine pits as workers do not want to lose their jobs before retiring from the mine.

Another retired mine worker Halil (72) said "I am very thankful who is reason to work me in the mines." Halil was a farmer until he was 40. When agriculture transformation began in the region and cash dependency increased in the villagers' life, he began to work in underground mines, and he retired at 50. Ahmet (67) worked in the mine for one month and then quitted the job because the work was difficult. He

wanted to continue only farming. However, Ahmet stated that he now regrets not working in the mine.

The principal argument made by many miners and retired mineworkers was that "you work ten years in underground mines and take retirement wage for 30 years." When I reminded them the working conditions and the health problems miners faced, Melih's (47) response reveals miners' mentalities;

> Other people live ten years longer than miners, but they have to work until the age of 60 and only can take retirement wage for ten years and cannot use it for anything because they are already old. When miners are 38, and today it is 43, they are retired and free. 40s is the time we need money the most for our family, for the education of children, marriage, and so on. Other people will be retired after 60 and their children will be already grown, and they will not be able to use their retirement pension because of old age.

As can be seen from these examples, early retirement was the most important reason from the miners' perspective to work in the underground mines. Early retirement was presented as a very important reason by every interviewee including those miners who work and those retired. Miners' family members also emphasized the importance of early retirement in interviews. When I asked mothers about their sons' migration to work in the Soma mines, their responses were mainly positive. For example, Ferah (66) said that "If Recep and Ramazan stayed in the village and continued to cultivate, they could barely live and would just have their house, but in Soma they have three apartment flats thanks to working in the mine. If they lived here, they could not do it." Her statement also hints to the general trend among the miners who buy or build a house with their retirement bonus.

Early retirement advantage was not only the topic for the immigrant miners in Soma who came from the village of Selimli. It was also the topic for the local miners whom I interviewed in my small pilot research

in Kırkağaç. The interviewees in Kırkağaç complained about the possibility of losing their early retirement right if somehow, they could not continue to work in underground mines. Ali (32) said, "Only 200 days are left to complete my premium days and obtain my right of retirement. If I cannot work in the underground mines, I will have to work many years in different jobs to obtain the retirement right." Also, many mineworkers from Uyar Madencilik Company[11] already had started to work in another company without protesting. Refik (30) explained it with the following sentences. "I will have 10.000 Turkish liras from the company for compensation, if I protest and do not work, I might lose about 30.000 Turkish liras, so I started to work and I am trying to finish my days for retirement." Therefore, I argue that retirement is vital for miners both for migrant and local mineworkers in the region as it shapes their perception of their work.[12]

§ 4.2 Household Strategy, Family Dynamics, and Marriage

Working in the mine is a household strategy for the peasant community of Selimli. Peasant households resort to this strategy for various reasons. They do so to escape poverty, to secure the livelihood of the family, to live in better conditions, to secure retirement for the male mineworkers of the household, to secure social insurance and health coverage for all family members, to give children better education opportunities etc. Indeed, working in the mines has become so important for family and household dynamics in recent years that it has become like a prerequisite for young men to work in the mine to marry and establish a household. In this way, mining has also become linked to masculinity.

11 Uyar Madencilik is a mining company in Soma in the Darkale region that also works with the redevance system. The miners protested this company in Kırkağaç because they did not get their compensation and lost their early retirement rights.

12 The retirement used as a labor control mechanism in the region. In the past, the mükellefiyet laws were the control mechanism today, retirement laws and social policies are used instead of mükellefiyet laws. Peasant workers want to be guaranteed their future by retirement, but it was also used as a control mechanism over them.

In the case of Selimli, when the inner migration started in Turkey after the 1950s, the village households developed a strategy around mining along with a gendered division of labor within the family. Men earned social security and retirement by working in the mines in Soma and came back to the village during the harvesting time. These first and second generation of men were circle migrants. Their working in the mine made it possible to have health coverage for the entire family as reflected in Kemal's story. At the same time, their wives stayed under the control of their husband's family in the village and continued agricultural and livestock activities as reflected in Neslihan's story. The latter phenomenon corresponds to the feminization of agriculture as explained by Coşku Çelik[13] her study on the Soma Coal Basin.

The wives of first- and second-generation miners were not pleased with this feminization of agricultural labor which defined the earlier years of their married life, as they stated in a focus group in Şefika (32)'s house in Soma. Their dissatisfaction with life their lives in the village during these earlier times had both to do with the feminization of agriculture as well as family conflicts and disputes they experienced with their husbands' families, and especially their mothers-in-law. In the focus group, Kader (50) who lives in Soma said that "We do not go back to the village because we suffered a lot from our mothers-in-law and excessive work in agriculture and animals husbandry." In the same focus group interview, also Ayşe (60) and Kamuran (50) expressed their complaints about their husbands' families and attributed their reason for migrating from the village to them. Hence, the conflicts between the wives of first and second generation miners and their husbands' families also seem to have played a role in the migration from Selimli to Soma for these households. In other words, women's living in the control of the husband's family under a patriarchal milieu in the village was also a factor for the migration of the first and second generation to Soma.

13 Çelik, "Extractive Industries and Changing Means of Rural Livelihood."

While those who migrated to Soma offered the above explanations for their migration, those parents and parents-in-law that continue to live in the village offered a different perspective on their children's migration. For example, in the interviews I conducted in the village, Ferah (66) who is the mother-in-law of Fadime (42) explained that her son and daughter-in-law did not tell her that they were migrating to Soma. They rented a house in Soma and escaped on a way to migrate. Ferah was still angry with her children and said that "all agricultural work and animal husbandry as well as housework belongs to me after my son and his wife escaped from the village." These family disputes and conflicts are still valid for the generation older than 40 which I call the first and second generation in this research. However, different dynamics are at play for the younger generation, which I discuss below.

In most cases, working in the mine has become a condition for young men's marriage. Most of the current mineworkers' stories of becoming miners start just before they decide to get married. When a young man decides to found a family and talk to the family of the bride-to-be, the first demand he encounters in the community is "to have a formal, insured, well-paid job". Working in the mine is also part of masculinity because young males have to show to the community that they can work in the underground mine to get married. The link between masculinity and mining is also highlighted in the literature.[14] The mining sector is very masculine based. In the mine, the workers are only males except for a few cleaners.[15] This masculinity causes the new type of gender roles in the household different than agriculture sector.

In the field, I observed that the families of girls want their prospective son-in-law "to stand on his feet." Young men must show to the bride's family that he is working and can take responsibility for a family and offer his wife decent living conditions. Given the rural transformation and unreliability of income to be earned through agriculture, agriculture is no

14 Quataert, "Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire," 71.

15 Ibid.

regarded as reliable work.[16] Also, the research findings show that jobs in the family business are not accepted. As Safa (26) explained, he had to work in the mines instead of driving minibusses with his father because his wife's family insisted him to have a formal job, preferably in the mine.

Hence, in the community young men are expected to have formal, reliable jobs in order to marry. It is expected that a son-in-law earns a wage above the minimum wage, secure social insurance and can qualify to receive bank credits if needed. However, for these young men who were born after the 1980s in Turkey's neoliberal area, finding a formal job is very difficult given the high unemployment rates as well as the high level of informal, temporary, and minimum wage jobs in the labor market. Hence, for an unskilled young peasant from Selimli to become a wage laborer in the mines is mostly the only chance to find formal and reliable employment.

When I asked young men in the field their reasons for migrating to and working in the Soma mines, they often stated that they could not get married if they did not work in the mines. "Nobody accepts to give their daughter if I do not work in the mine," was a statement I often heard from young men in my research in the field. This was also research finding in the studies similar arguments on the important role marriage and establishing a household play in young men's decision to migrate and work in the mines are also raised in other studies on the Soma coal basin.[17]

Here, I should mention that most marriages take place within the community itself. Similar to Stirling's point, "fathers of daughters are expected to be unwilling to give their daughters away."[18] Hence, in Selimli,

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16 Keyder and Yenal, "Bildiğimiz Tarımın Sonu." Huri İslamoğlu, "The Politics of Agricultural Production in Turkey," in *Neoliberal Turkey and Its Discontents Economic Policy and the Environment Under Erdoğan,* ed. Fikret Adaman, Bengi Akbulut and Murat Arsel, 75–102. (London: I.B.Tauris, 2017).

17 Fikret Adaman, "Neo-Liberalizm, Otoriter Popülizm ve Soma Maden Faciası Konuk: Prof. Dr. Fikret Adaman." Medyascope. 3 April 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3s6ccv7IRw&t=5s; Çelik, Extractive Industries and Changing Means.

18 Stirling, "Turkish Village," 190.

the marriages are rarely with someone outside of the village. Kamile (48) explained this tradition of the village and stated that the girl who marries someone from outside the village is considered as "a bad girl and goes to hell".

Elderly and middle-aged wives of miners mostly advise their daughter not to stay in the village and migrate to the urbanized area to live in better conditions. They do not want to send their daughter outside of the village. The families want their groom outside of the village as wage laborers.[19] In other words, the family of young girls often require the groom to work in the mine and migrate to Soma before they give their approval for the marriage. The unwillingness of young women to stay in the village is often told by young men in a joking way. As they stated in my field research, "we work in the mine and migrate because the bosses want it". When I asked them who the bosses are, they referred to their response wives and fiancés who had asked them to work in the underground mine. Yet, working in the mine is not only a demand made on young men by their fiancés' families. Families also often desire that their sons work in the mine. For example, Kezban complained that her son is not able to find a job in the mine because retired miners continue to work. Families often pressure sons to work in the underground mines. Women may also insist on their husbands to work in mine pits.

4.2.1 The Importance of Marriage and Honor

For miners, marriage is important and has a crucial role in their life. Working under very difficult conditions for hours in a stressful environment, miners need care from their families and from their wives. Miners are deprived of many opportunities in the underground mines like eating, communication, fresh air and even toilets. Therefore, a miner needs to have lunch or dinner when he arrives home. Also, this research focuses on immigrant miners, who stayed in the worksite in miserable conditions. Migrant miners stayed in the terrible conditions of the worksite (şantiye) until the 2014 accident. Miners began swearing when

19 Ibid, 33.

I asked them about *şantiye.* Single miners or miners whose family did no to the region lived in these small buildings. After the 2014 accident, with a small increase of income, miners were not willing to stay in the bad conditions of *şantiye.* Also, mining companies do not want to give accommodation and meals to decrease their cost. Thus, staying in the worksite as a single mineworker is also a reason for young men to marry. Marriage and establishing a household are seen as an escape from such miserable conditions of the worksite.

Marriage and family are important for the miners. After marriage, family continues to be a major motivation for men to work under the difficult conditions of the mine pits. Miners seem ready for sacrificing themselves for their families and households. They joke about the possibility of death in work: "If there is an accident, and something happens to us in the underground mines, our families and our children might live in better life conditions with compensations than we can offer them." Many miners' perceptions are that "their dead body is worthier than them alive." How can we interpret these statements and jokes? They have emotional reasons for take risks by working in the underground mine. Also, working in the underground mine is related to masculinity and honor. Therefore, marriage, family, and honor are important reasons for miners to work in underground mines in risky conditions

4.2.2 Family Perception of Migration

In the field, I asked men and women their perception of village and migration. When I asked women their opinion about going back to the village, the responses were negative. Indeed, none of the women I interviewed responded positively. The only and most positive response was by Rabia (27) "If I have to go back to the village, then I might think." In the memory of women, the village is mainly linked to problems and suffering. Also, women rarely visit the village unlike their husbands who go to the village several times in a year. For example, Kader (49) explains "The last time that I went to the village was ten years ago while my husband goes at least four times a year." Women explain this situation and

their unwillingness to go to the village by referring to their children's education, being close to the market and living without animal smell and in clean conditions in a modern lifestyle in Soma.

When I asked the same question to men, their responses were positive, and they had a desire to go back to the village. They talked about dreaming about the village. They gave examples from their dreams to show how much they wanted to go back. For example, Refik's response was; "If I convince my family, I will go back today to the village" and another example is Ümit who said; "I see the village in my dreams, I go fishing, graze animals and play cards in the village coffeehouse in my dream."

There are observable gender differences in the perception of the village. The children and young adults who just finished high school are more neutral compared to their parents. Kamile explains her unwillingness and the differences of gender about the village; "My husband insists that we go back to the village, and he's saying you will only cook for me I will do all the other work, animal stock farming etc. But I don't accept because I know that after the business starts, my husband will leave the work to me."

The migration seems to have changed the gender roles and gendered division of labor. While women were very active and hard-working in the village, with migration, their workload became less while men started to work in the difficult conditions of the mine. In other words, Turkey is not able to provide formal employment to migrated women from Selimli. While men have an emotional connection with land and agriculture, women are not willing to go back to cultivate even though they work as seasonal agriculture workers during the summer in the Soma region. The change of gender roles after migration was explained by Kamile (48) in the following way, "In the past, being a woman was difficult, today it is very easy to be a woman, however, today, it is very difficult to be a man."

§ 4.3 Three Generations and Changing Patterns of Migration and Labor

While every family's story of migration and mining has some unique features, I will try to depict the general characteristics that define the experiences of three generations of men. In doing so, I aim to highlight the changes in patterns of migrations and labor over time. As stated in the Introduction, following different waves of migration to the mine pits, I divided the sample group of the study into three generations. The first generation is the workers who migrated to and worked in the mines in Soma between the years 1960 and 1980. The second generation is the migrant workers from Selimli who worked in the Soma mines between 1980 and 2001. The third generation of mineworkers from Selimli worked in the mines between 2001 and 2020.

4.3.1 *First Generation*

The migration history in Turkey from the countryside to industrialized areas started in the 1950s and in Selimli, according to the interviews, migrations began around 1965. In the period between 1960 and 1980, the villagers of Selimli started to migrate to Balıkesir, Manisa, Tracia, Bursa, and even the Black Sea areas and western European countries like Germany.[20] Men also migrated to the Soma mines as seasonal work-

20 "*Guestworkers* were employed in coalmining on a relatively large scale. To provide for workers in Germany, for instance, a German-Turkish, [Settlement to Procure Turkish Employees for the Federal Republic of German] was signed in 1961 to regulate the selection and mediation of Turkish contract workers by German agencies in Istanbul and Ankara. By 1963 10,200 Turkish miners were already employed in German coalmining, the largest group among the 27,130 foreign workers in that industry.84 After a relapse during the recession of 1966—1967, their number rose again, from about 5,200 in 1969 to 19,800 in 1973, accounting for 74 per cent of all foreign workers in coalmining. 85 The stark fluctuation of these numbers before, during, and after the recession of 1966—1967 reflects the general position of foreign workers as a flexible reserve army, both in coalmining and other

ers. During the harvesting time in summer, these part-time workers returned to the village and spent four to five months in the village before going back to work in the mines in Soma. This first generation worked in the mines in Soma between the years 1960-80, the historical period the between the two coups and the period of import substitution.[21] The age of these men is over 65 now and they were all born in Selimli village.

The retirement age of this first generation and the number of days they had to work for retirement were lower in comparison to those of the younger generation.[22] Also, during this period, the turnover rate in the mines was higher. Hence, it was easy for these peasant-miners to leave work for harvesting and then return to work at the mine. Therefore, miners in this period had an intense relation with agriculture, and the production levels stayed the same as before. For example, Osman (65) from this first generation stated that "We didn't work like this all the time, like young people now, we used to work for three or four months, we used to raise the threshing in the village, plough our fields and go back to the mine so that we could have our retirement." [23]

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sectors. Although by 1973 several German mines were staffed almost exclusively by miners of Turkish descent, in most cases Turks were to be found only at the lower end of the job ladder. As with the Moroccan workers in other European coal-producing countries, they were often employed to ensure exhausted or unprofitable mines could be closed down smoothly" Knotter, "Migration and Ethnicity in Coalfield History: Global Perspectives," IRSH 60 (2015): 13–39, doi:10.1017/S0020859015000413. 34.

21 Pamuk, "Türkiye'nin 200 Yıllık Iktisadi Tarihi."

22 Retirement age and premium days simply, the first generation of miners were retired in any age if they work more than 4000 days in 20 years. They were retired mostly at the age of 38. If miners started working after 2008, the retirement age is 50 for them and they needed to complete 4.000 workdays insurance premium. However, miners can be retired at 43 if they work more than 4.800 workdays. Hence, working more days in underground mines decreases the retirement age of miners.

23 For example, Osman (65) from this first generation stated that "We didn't work like this all the time, like young people now, we used to work for three or four months, we used to raise the threshing in the village, plough our fields and go back to the mine so that we could have our retirement." "Biz böyle sürekli çalışmazdık şimdiki gençler gibi, üç dört ay çalışır

In this period, while men moved to cities as circular migrants, their wives stayed under the control of their husband's families. They cared for farms, animals, and children which was in line with the general pattern of rural-to urban migration in Turkey at the time. This led to feminized agriculture in the village as discussed above. This first generation did not define themselves as mine workers or retired workers. Instead, they defined themselves as farmers, or in relation to the new jobs such as construction work, they started doing after retiring from the mines. Men of this first generation did not consider themselves as "(mine) workers" because they spent only a few years in an underground mine, and they continued for many years to do agriculture and animal husbandry.

There was an alternate system for mining historically in Zonguldak and they have a connection with their lands as Quataert emphasizes that.[24] In other words, miners are peasant workers. The peasant workers phenomenon is mentioned in both the literature on Turkey and world literature.[25] Ad Knotter provides an excellent picture of the situation about the coalfields of labor supply as seasonal. Also, he gives the example of Zonguldak.

> In emerging coalfields, large parts of the labor force were recruited seasonally as peasant migrants from the land. In this way labor supply and the agrarian seasons were interconnected, coal extraction proceeding in reverse tandem with agrarian seasons. Seasonal peasant workers were recruited both locally and as tem-

gelirdik emekliliğimizde olsun diye, köyde harmanı kaldırır, tarlamızı sürer öyle dönerdik madene."

24 Quataert and Duman, "A Coal Miner's Life During the Late Ottoman Empire."

25 Erder, "İstanbul'a Bir Kent Kondu." Oskay, "Geçiş Dönemi Tipi Olarak Zonguldak Kömür Havzası Maden İşçisi," 83, 89; Kıray, "Ereğli," 20, 141; Yıldırmaz, "Politics and the Peasantry,"; Donald Quataert, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Madenciler ve Devlet Zonguldak Kömür Havzası 1822-1920."

> porary migrants. A striking example of the local recruiting of peasant miners is the labor system in the Zonguldak coalfield in Turkey.[26]

In Soma and Kütahya, there were no alternate systems officially, but the workers created the same situation by considering themselves as farmers and quitting the job in the harvesting period in summers. The fieldwork findings show that the connection to land and the flexibility of combining mining and agriculture were one of the major reasons for peasant workers of Selimli to work in underground mines, for both this first generation. According to the retired miners, finding a job in the mines was very easy because there were already labor shortages, and the turnover rates were very high. Peasant miners started to work after the day that they arrived. After working two, three months and staying in the worksite, they quitted the job and went back home for harvesting. They emphasized that they were seasonal workers. When I asked them how it was possible to work as seasonal workers, İbrahim K. (66) argued that "mining companies were not able to find workers to work; therefore, it was effortless to find a job in the mining sector. As İbrahim (66) stated that "wage labor was seasonal in this region, and everybody was doing agriculture until the 2000s." Miners were seasonal mine workers in this period in this village and Güzelyurt region.

While the literature defines these men as peasant workers, it is also important to understand how they define their identity themselves. Self-identification of miners changes according to generations. First generation do not define themselves as workers or retired workers. They define themselves as farmers, just retired, or construction workers according to the job they are doing after retiring from the mines. Retired workers are not considering themselves as "workers" because they spent only a few years in the underground mine and they continued many years with agriculture and animal husbandry. They define their identity as "farmers" and when I asked them about mining, they often stated that "they are retired from mining."

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26 Ibid.,14.

4.3.2 *The Second Generation*

The second generation is those who worked between 1980 after 24 January decisions, and 2001. This period corresponds to the neoliberal era. Men from this second generation are currently between 45 and 65 years old. The majority of them were also born in the village. This group continued agriculture activities at the same time they worked in the mines. In this neoliberal period, with the increase of overall consumption nationwide, cash dependency in this rural community increased. At the same time, the decrease in agricultural subsidies and the neoliberal transformation of agriculture pushed this generation to work in the mine pits.[27] Still, the fieldwork findings show that the connection to land and agriculture also continued even if to a lesser extent for this second generation.

The second generation has the same retirement and social security rights as the first generation. They also continue agriculture. Unlike the previous generation, this generation took their families with them a few years after they migrated to Soma. Hence, women's role in the family began to change in this generation. Like the previous generation, this generation of men do not define themselves as mineworkers. Although some still work in the mines. They consider working in the mine as a "temporary job" and as a way of getting retirement rights. They have other occupations, and they are still farmers in their view. Thus, as argued earlier, the flexibility and possibility of combining mining and agriculture was a major reason for both the first and second generation of men from Selimli to work in the underground mines in Soma.

From my childhood, I knew that many peasant farmers in this geography labored in the mines. From the interviews, the findings showed that nearly all males are working in the mines or worked in mines and retired from the mines, more than my expectancy. For example, the dialogue with the minibus driver showed that the minibus driver knows

27 Çağlar Keyder and Zafer Yenal, Bildiğimiz Tarımın Sonu (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013).

mines' working conditions. When it was questioned how he knows he pronounced that "he worked in the mine in the past and quit and bought minibus when he guaranteed the retirement and waiting for his age to be retired and now, he is a minibus driver." In the region of Kütahya and Soma, many miners have the second occupation; farming, driving, construction, and so on. Even the headman worked in the mine.

However, as I discuss below, the 2014 mine accidents in Soma destroyed this flexibility of mining with continuing agriculture. In addition, given the overall agricultural transformation and the labor surplus in the mining sector, it is difficult to talk about the flexibility and combination of agriculture and mining after 2014.

4.3.3 *The Third Generation*

The third generation is composed of those who work(ed) in the Soma mines from 2001 to 2020 in the period of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government. This group of men are younger than 45 and the youngest is 18. The majority were not born in their native village but in the migrated area in Soma.

For Soma mine workers, this period of the 2000s entailed essential macro changes, affecting the lives of both retired miners and those who still work. These important macro developments include the 2008 Social Security Reform, the 2001 and 2008 economic crises and ARIP, Agricultural Implementation Reform Project.

One of the most significant macro changes for Soma mines in 2000s was privatization and the redevance system with subcontracting companies. In this period, the production of mines has increased in the region. This increase of production also increased the number of miners in the region.

The younger generation from Selimli whose age is between 25-30 were not working in the mines at the time I conducted my research. The increase of retirement age was one major reason for this group of younger men not to choose to work in the mine. In 2008, with the reform with law number 5510, the retirement age was increased. Before 2008

miners could be retired after working 5000 days, with this law, the retirement age became 50 for those who started to work before 2008 and 55 for those who started to work after 2008 Also the retirement age could change according to miners' working time. Given these legal changes, many young males, sons of miners, have become professional soldiers, according to data from the field. With the professionalization of the army in the country, miners' families also started to choose to have their children join the army as professional soldiers instead of work in the mine.

However, the 2014 accident in Soma was a turning point. After the accident, the retirement pension age for mineworkers decreased again. With this change, the retirement age for miners became 50 and even 45, 43 with depreciation because of it is risks.[28] Also, mineworkers' salaries increased with the law stating that the pay of miners might not be less than two minimum wages.[29] Miners were also granted two days a week as a holiday. These legal changes caused the younger generation to turn back to mines again.

During this period, the relation with agriculture decreased because the overall unemployment rate has been higher and the turnover rate in the mines decreased. The mineworkers cannot quit the job and go back to work in their agriculture quickly as the first generation did. Most of them still have a little agricultural area in Soma however the production is not the same as in the previous generations.

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28 Erdoğan Kaya, Soma Maden Kazasından Sonra Sağlanan Haklar https://www.sinerjias.com.tr/pdf/soma-maden-kazasindan-sonra-saglanan-haklar.pdf

29 Law No: 6552: There are rigts and changes with this law, accepted date: 10.09.2014

MADDE 9 – 4/6/1985 tarihli ve 3213 sayılı Maden Kanununa aşağıdaki ek madde eklenmiştir.

"EK MADDE 9 – Bu Kanunun 2 nci maddesinde sayılan 4. Grup madenlerden "Linyit" ve "Taşkömürü" çıkarılan işyerlerinde, yer altında çalışan işçilere ödenecek ücret miktarı 4857 sayılı Kanunun 39 uncu maddesi uyarınca belirlenen asgari ücretin iki katından az olamaz." (Kanun No. 6552 -ana kanun numarası, Kabul tarihi: (10.09.2014)(https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/09/20140911M1-1.htm)

This third generation lives with their family in Soma. Women have a stronger voice in the family compared to previous generations and are influential in the decisions about the family's future. A lot of families and women require men to work in the mine for marriage. Also, this young generation defines themselves as mine workers. They complain about the difficulty of working in the mine and say, "time does not pass in the underground mine". Younger miners keep calculating the remaining days for retirement as a prisoner counts his remaining days for freedom. One of the most talked-about topics in the coffee houses among miners is how many days are left for one to finish the workday insurance premium paid to have retirement insurance.

The pressure which the miners who work in the post-2000 period feel and the anxiety to be granted retirement as soon as possible has to with the high unemployment rates in Turkey, the increase of the retirement in other sectors as well as the requirements of agricultural work. The retired miner Osman (65) is stated that;

> We need to be retired because in old age it is very helpful. The only solution to not needing any help from other people is to be retired or to bring up a good child because in old age you cannot continue doing farming, your health will not allow you continue cultivating. Therefore, we want to guarantee retirement.

In the case of the younger generation, especially after the accident in 2014, the demand for working in underground mine has increased, since the salaries are increased, and the holidays were arranged to two days in a week with the legal changes. Also, some retired miners turned back to the job because of the increase in salaries. Local people's increasing willingness to work in the mines made it harder to find a new job in the mines.[30] For example one woman, Nermin (29) stated that "my husband waited one year and struggled to find work in the mine again and it is necessary to find "the right man" to start working again. Starting to work

30 Fadime (38) and Ümit (42)

in the mine after 2014 has become very difficult and is only possible with a "social network".

After 2014, finding a job in the mine has become harder and underground mining in Soma is no longer a flexible job. There is a pressure on men to find and keep them their jobs in the mine. This pressure also decreased their ties with agriculture and the village. Young miners want to continue their jobs in the mines until they fulfill the insurance premium days.[31] The change in these dynamics indicates that the miners' and the rural community of Selimli's outlook on mining has changed. Unlike previous periods, mining is now considered an important occupation and not just as a temporary job or merely a means for obtaining retirement.

These changes which define the differences between the experiences of three generation of men and the overall transformation of Selimli as a peasant-farmer community from the 1960s until 2020 can be summarized in the table which was already given in the Introduction. (See Table 1.1.)

31 Another insists on me to convincing to work underground mines was fellow-townsmenship (hemşehrilik) as a general phenomenon. They were asserting very similar to Feride (50) quotations that social events "funerals, hayır gatherings, marriage, going to the army, going umrah they are made by the social capital. Our social capital is here and therefore, being close to the community is important." In the memory of society, these social events are important and while telling their stories, they are explaining these stories and showing us how it is essential for them. Also, for fellow townsmen, there is a coffeehouse that many men spend most of their time whose owner is from the same geography and customers are from the same geography spend their time in these coffee houses.

5

CONCLUSION

In the mining studies in Turkey, there has been a focus on *mükellefiyet* during the Second World War or the May 13, Soma accident. These two periods are unusual times. By contrast, this thesis tried to show ordinary lives and times in a mining community. I examined the transformation of an inner Aegean peasant-miner community from a small village near Kütahya. This study built on field research with the community along with archival research. Based on interviews with three generations of men who migrated from this village to work in the Soma mine pits in three different historical periods (1960-1980, 1980-2002 and 2002-2020) and their families, the thesis traced changing patterns of migration and labor. In doing so, the thesis aimed to contribute to the understanding that Soma mining communities do not only consist of existing locals because there has been immigration to this area. I also argue that many miners were miners from their parents already before neoliberal policies were implemented and that one needs to look at the mining communities of Soma from a broader perspective. Therefore, this study examines a longer period between 1960 and 2020.

In the thesis, although the starting point is the 2014 Soma mine accident, the main emphasis is on miners' experiences and the mining

community's mentality in ordinary times. Rather than analyzing the dynamics that contributed to the 2014 accident, the thesis begins with the observation that despite the fact that the underground mining sector has the second-highest workplace-accident rate, miners around the Soma region are willing to work in the mine pits and miners' families consider mining a desirable job even after the so-called 2014 Soma disaster. Building on this observation, the thesis aimed to answer the following main questions: Why do miners continue to work in the mines even though they lose their friends, sons and fathers working there? Why is underground mining a desirable job in the Soma region? How is it possible that a peasant farmer community accepts such risky and heavy working conditions and chooses to migrate to work in the Soma mines?

This thesis argues that in addition to the peripheral status of the village under study, the miners' and their families' experience of general conditions of the Turkish economy and social conditions over time have shaped their perspective towards their occupation. These experiences include the country's labor market situation defined by the rise of unemployment rates, labor surplus, the high number of minimum wage workers and informality; inner migration; the transformation of agriculture; and the transformation of social policies and retirement patterns in Turkey. Given these socio-economic realities working in the mining sector has relatively better conditions than other unskilled labor sectors in Turkey in terms of income, social security, retirement age, and working hours. In other words, this study examines miners' obligations *(mecburiyet)* during common periods.

In the Introduction to the thesis, I outlined the research questions, provided an overview of the literature, highlighted the thesis' contribution to the literature and reflected on my experience in the field research. The second chapter provided a brief overview of the historical background of the mining sector in Turkey. Using academic studies and archival documents, I discussed the historical development of mines in Turkey, taking into local, national and global developments. The chapter offered a general periodization of the development of mining in history

as well as discussing the local history of Inner Aegean lignites, mainly Soma and Kütahya mines within this periodization. The third chapter provided a brief overview of the field sites. By focusing on both the original place of settlement, the village of Selimli and the place of migration, Soma, the discussion traced the changes in the social environment and life of the community under study. Chapter 4 discussed the main arguments outlined in the Introduction in the light of data from the field research. The peripheral status of the village, family dynamics and the desire to be included in the social security system and obtain early retirement were highlighted as major reasons for the desire to become a wage laborer in the Soma mines.

This thesis contributes to the literature on mining communities in Turkey in that it looks at mining from the perspective of miners, focuses on a wider time period and a different geographic area, addresses those who emigrate and remain behind, and makes family members part of the research, and tries to make sense of the changes that occur over time by focusing on three different generations. In the literature on mining and mining communities in Turkey, until recently, the main geographic area of focus has been the Black Sea region, and particularly Zonguldak. The study contributes to the literature on miner communities in Turkey firstly by focusing on a different geographic area (Aegean). It contributes to the emerging literature on the Soma coal basin by bringing migrant mineworkers into the focus of analysis. The study takes a different perspective by examining not only the mining region of Soma but also the migrating village of Selimli. Thus, it reveals a picture of both migration and labor history through the eyes of miners and miners' families who emigrated and stayed behind. Also, this study emphasizes the connection of miners with land and agriculture.

Secondly, the thesis brings in mineworkers' families perspectives and household strategies into the analysis rather than just focusing on male mine workers. One of the biggest contribution of this thesis is that it testifies the perspective of the miners and their families on working in the mining sector. It examines how miners, and their families consider

such a risky and deadly job as underground mining. By involving the miners' families, the study makes visible the other members of households, the children and wives, since mining is not the only individual strategy of the male workers but rather a family strategy to survive. As this thesis aims to show, for the peasant mining community, families have a household strategy and division of labor within the family. Mining is a lifestyle experienced by every family member in the mining community. This research contributes to including the family in the research agenda.

Thirdly, by covering a wider time span through its focus on the experience of three generations, the study offers a broad perspective of the miner community from its first formation and reveals the dynamics that have changed over time. The miners' stories of starting to work in the underground mines differ from generation to generation. The transformation of agriculture is the main theme for each generation. For the elderly generation, who worked in the 1960-80 period, the reasons and motivation of those who work in such a risky place have to do with social security and social policies. For the young generation of miners, the mining story begins with marriage. Furthermore, the miners' and the rural community of Selimli's outlook on mining has changed. Unlike previous periods, mining is now considered an important occupation and not just as a temporary job or merely a means for obtaining retirement.

I tried to contribute to the social history of Turkey, and literature on miner communities in Turkey through this field study. I hope my humble study succeeds in contributing to the academic literature. This study did not include the environment. For future research, it might be beneficial to examine the environment and conduct a deeper analysis of miners' families. Also, perhaps a woman researcher could further illuminate women's perspectives in the mining community from a gendered perspective. Finally, the professional soldiers, the sons of miners of the working class might be an interesting topic for future researchers.

Appendix Information of Interviewees

- Ahmet G. (67): He was born in Kütahya, in 1953. He worked in state operated underground mine one month and quitted the job. Later he started again in the state mine and he retired from Tavşanlı-Tunçbilek mine. He moved back to village and continue to be farming.
- Ahmet G. (67): He was born in Kütahya, in 1953. He worked in state operated underground mine one month and quitted the job. Later he started again in the state mine and he retired from Tavşanlı-Tunçbilek mine. He moved back to village and continue to be farming.
- Ali (32): He was born in Soma in 1988. He is a local mine worker. He worked in private mine company Uyar Madencilik. Interview was conducted while he was protesting the Uyar Madencilik in Kırkağaç.
- Ayşe P. (60): She was born in Kütahya, in 1959. She is from the Güzelyurt region. She is the daughter of the grocer. She explained the dynamics of the barter economy. Her children work in the mine in Soma. She lives in Cenkyeri.
- Aysel K. (62): She is the wife of İbrahim. She was born in 1958. Aysel is illiterate. She has never travelled to another city in her entire life. She cannot even sit in the car more than five km.
- Bilal A. (80): Bilal was born in Kütahya, in 1940. (80). He is retired from the mines. He was a farmer for about 30 years, and he was the owner of a grocery store as well. He learned reading when he was in army. He worked as a seasonal worker in both the private and state operated underground mines. He worked in the mines of Zonguldak, Balıkesir, Kütahya and Manisa seasonally. Bilal was also a grocery store owner in 1970s. He moved to Cenkyeri, Soma with his son when he was 60 years old during his retirement ages. His daughter died because of cancer when she was in her 40s and his grandson died in 2014 in the big accident of 301.

- Celil T. (45): He was born in Kütahya, in 1975. He is the son of Kemal T. He is retired from private underground mines in Soma. He is working as an earth mover operator. He has four children. He has primary school education.
- Davut (18): He was born in 2001 in the village of Selimli. After the high school graduation, he started to work in the mine when he was 18 years old. He has been working in the mine for seven months. His older brother is working in the military as a professional soldier.
- Döndü T. (63): The wife of Kemal T. She is illiterate. She was born in 1957 in Selimli. She continues agricultural activities and animal husbandry.
- Duygu (46): She was born in 1974. She has two children. She has primary education. She lost his husband because of a mine accident in Soma in 2000. She moved back to village when her children got married.
- Fadime Z. (36): She was born in 1984. She is the wife of Ümit. She moved to Cenkyeri four years after getting married. They have two children. She is a housewife and in the summer, she goes to daily agricultural works in Soma. She does not want to go back to his village.
- Ferah (66): She was born in 1954 in Selimli. Her husband died in a work accident in the forestry. Her two sons and one son-in-law are working at Soma mines. She is living with her daughter in Selimli. She is farming and has animals. She complains about not having industrial products in the region. She does not have literacy.
- Feride A. (59): Feride was born in 1961, in Kütahya. She is a housewife. She is still doing farming in Cenkyeri. She was also farming and caring for animals in her village. She moved to Soma three years after her husband. Her husband worked in private and the state mines. She is married to Mahmut.
- Halil (72): Halil was born in 1948. He was a farmer until his 40s. He started to work in the mine in the 1980s, he became retired

when he was 50. He worked in other jobs after his retirement such as cleaner. He learned reading when he was in the army.

- Hatice (55): She is living in Selimli alone. She has animals. Her children are working at private mines in Soma. She has primary school education.
- İbrahim K. (66): He was born in Kütahya, in 1954. He is illiterate. He began to work when he was 18 and retired from mining. His son had an accident in the mine and half of his body burned. Now he has sheep and he is doing animal husbandry.
- İlyas (49): He was born in 1971. He had an accident in the mine and he was retired because of the work accident at a very young age. He has two children who study at the university.
- Kader L. (50): She was born in 1970 in Kütahya. She moved to Soma, Cenkyeri when her husband bought the house. She did not go to the village for more than ten years. Her two sons died in the same year. One of them was in the army and the other died due to an illness in his 20s. Her husband retired from the mine. He is still working as a construction worker.
- Kamile T. (48): Kamile was born in Kütahya, in 1972. She is the wife of Melih. She has primary school education. Her ideas about the change of differences of gender roles are explanatory.
- Kemal T. (67): Kemal was born in 1953 and got married in 1970 and had four children. He spent his life as a farmer in the village, cultivating wheat and barley. For the first time, after the age of 45, Kemal started to work in underground mines. Until the age of 58, he worked and finished his 5000 days to be retired. He worked in the mine at the same time with his sons and he became retired at the same time with one of his son, Melih. Kemal retired at the age 58 and his son retired at 38.
- Kezban (54): She was born in 1966. She has primary school education. Her husband retired from a private mine in Soma. She has two children. One of them works as a professional soldier and another one is unemployed. His son could not start to work in the mine because of the high demand for working in the mine in the area.

- Mahmut A. (59): Mahmut is the son of Bilal and he was born in 1961 in Kütahya. His son died in the accident in 2014. He is married to Feride. He was retired in 1999 from the mines. Like his father, he worked in the private and the state operated mines in Değirmisaz, Zonguldak and Soma. Now, he continues to cultivate in Cenkyeri.
- Melek (43): She was born in 1977. She has a grocery store in Selimli in 2000s.
- Melih T. (48): Melih was born in Kütahya, in 1972. He is the son of Kemal T. Melih worked in underground mines and surface mines for 4200 days then he started his own business. He has buses and he organizes agriculture workers.
- Meltem E. (61): Meltem was born in 1959 in Kütahya. Meltem studied until third grade. Her husband died in an accident in Değirmisaz in 1997 because of the heavy construction equipment in the private operated surface mine. Also, her brother Ahmet died in Soma in 1997 in a private operated mine and another brother died in 2008. Her third brother is retired from the mine. She has only one daughter and she moved to Soma in 2013 because of health problems and the distance of the village to the city center.
- Mevlüt B (32): Mevlüt was born in Kütahya in 1988. He is the husband of Şefika. He has primary school education. He worked as a milk seller vendor until 23 years old. Then he started to work in the underground mine in Soma to get married. He had left the mine 20 minutes ago before the big accident of Soma in 2014. His brother was working in the mine but after a while, he became a soldier.
- Murat (31): He was born in 1989, in Selimli. He has high school education. He works as a civil servant. He has a high school degree. He lives in Kütahya city center. His father died in underground mines. He was insisted and blamed for not working in the underground mine within the mining community.
- Mustafa (57): He was born in 1963 and has primary school education. He worked in the state operated mines in Tunçbilek and

Tavşanlı. He continued agriculture activities. He said that he has never stopped doing agriculture.

- Nermin O. (29): She was born in Kütahya, in 1991. She has primary school education. She moved to Soma in 2009 when she got married. She lives in the station district in Soma, close to the thermal plant. Her husband works in a private underground mine, and he was unemployed for a while after the 2014 accident.
- Neslihan N: Neslihan was born in 1936. She lived in Selimli. She was a farmer and cared for her animals in the village. She died in 2016. Her two sons died in the mining. Her grandchild is still working in the underground mine in Soma.
- Oğuz K. (58): He was born in Kütahya, in 1962. He has four children. Oğuz has primary school education. His one son died because of a motorbike accident. He lives in Balıköy. He worked in several private mines in Kütahya, Balıkesir and Manisa. Like his brother, he began to work when he was 18 and retired from the mine. His nephew had an accident in the mine and half of his body was burned.
- Osman C. (65): Osman was born in 1955. Osman is the father of Şefika. He worked in the mine only a few periods of the time. He was born in Kütahya. He did not go to school but he has literacy that learned in the army. He did not migrate. He lived a big part of his life in the village. He continues agriculture activities.
- Rabia S (27): She was born in Manisa, in 1994. She has primary school graduation. She is married to Refik. She has two children. She migrated to Cenkyeri from Manisa after the marriage. Rasim (43): He was born in 1977. He has primary school education. He started to work in private underground mines in 2003. Then he worked in the surface mine because of his health problems.
- Refik S. (31): Refik was born in 1989 in Kütahya. He is graduated from high school. He started to work in the underground mine when he was 18 years old. He has almost filled the 4800 days in the underground mine. His two-uncles died in the mine. He is married and has two daughters. He is married with Rabia. He

worked in the private mines in Soma. He stayed in worksite when he was working before the marriage.

- Safa T. (26): He was born in Kütahya, in 1992. He is son of Melih Ş. He worked in the mine before his marriage because his wife's family has a condition for his daughter's marriage; working in the mine. He quitted working in the mine after wedding and he is organizing agricultural workers. He has a high school degree.
- Şefika B. (32): Şefika was born in 1988 in Kütahya. She has primary school education and has two children. She is a housewife. She is not doing farming, but she wants to cultivate if she has farms. She moved to Soma in 2009 when she got married. Her husband is Mevlüt who works in the underground mine. One of brothers is working in the mine and another is working with a minimum wage in İzmir in an air condition company.
- Süleyman (44): He was born in 1976. He worked in this village thirteen years, in the researched field during the years 2002-2015. He was my sponsor in the field research and told the peasants that the research will be conducted in the village. He is not from the Selimli, he is from a different part of Kütahya.
- The headman (66): He is the grocery store owner and trader of the village. He is the son of the German worker's parents who went to work in Germany in the 1960s. The brother of the headman is one of the minibus drivers in the village. The headman is the only high school graduated person in his generation and his first headman period started in 1984. He did not work in the mines but his nephew and his father worked in the mine.
- Ümit Z. (43): He was born in 1977. He lives in Cenkyeri since 2007. He started to work in the mine to get married. Before working in mines, he worked in the informal jobs. He is retired but he continues to work in the mine because of his children's educational expenses. He is the husband of Fadime. He has primary school education.

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