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Transforming Rural Education: Village Institutes as Architects of Modernity in Türkiye (1937-1960)

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1. Introduction

Türkiye's modernization process spans over a century, officially commencing with the Tanzimat Edict in 1839 within the Ottoman Empire. However, alternative viewpoints, notably by historians like Reşat Kasaba, Stefanos Yerasimos,[1] İsmail Cem, and Doğan Avcıoğlu,[2] suggest that Turkish modernization began in 1923 with the establishment of the modern Turkish state. These perspectives emphasize the interruptions in reform efforts prior to 1923. The prolonged nature of Turkish modernization, coupled with intermittent challenges to its progress within the country's political landscape, has engendered debates regarding the success or failure of this transformative process.

Existing literature on Turkish modernization identifies key factors contributing to its failure or incompleteness. These factors include top-down policies during the single-party regime, conflicts between traditionalists and reformists in that period, military interventions, the rise of Islamist movements, and the Kemalist project with its top-down reforms. However, the literature reveals two prevalent issues: a tendency among researchers to focus narrowly on specific aspects and a lack of attention to the significant influence of rural areas on Turkish modernization.

This dissertation shifts the focus to the rural factor, highlighting the transformative role of Village Institutes (VIs). These VIs, in operation between 1940 and 1954, emerged as pivotal agents in the modernization of Türkiye's predominantly rural regions, which constituted over 75 percent of the population until the 1960s. Despite their relatively brief existence, VIs made substantial strides in improving the social, economic, and cultural conditions of rural areas by educating more than 25,000 teachers equipped with versatile skills. However, mass rural-to-urban migration around 1960 shifted the focus away from rural areas, contributing to their neglect and fostering resistance to modernization.

This neglect, deeply rooted in a historical paradigm that viewed villagers primarily as sources of taxation and military recruitment, hindered the comprehensive implementation of Turkish modernization.[3] By centering this research on VIs, we emphasize the need to recognize and address the rural dimension for a comprehensive understanding and successful implementation of Turkish modernization.

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[1] Stefanos Yerasimos, *Azgelişmişlik Sürecinde Türkiye* (Ankara: Belge Yayınları, 1986), 115–61.
[2] İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi* (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 1998), 85–116.
[3] Baha Mutlu Aydın, *Köy Enstitüleri ve Toplum Kalkınması* (Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık, 2018), 17.

In contrast to early republican historiography that presented Türkiye as a break from the past, this study acknowledges the enduring influence of religion in rural areas and the disparity between urban and rural regions. Therefore, it examines Turkish modernization by placing rural areas and villagers at the forefront while considering other contributing factors.

The primary focus of this research revolves around unraveling the pivotal role played by VIs in Turkish modernization. This exploration extends beyond their role in education, encompassing modernization, professionalization, democratization, pedagogical methodologies, and a production-oriented approach to education. Although VIs originated with state support, they evolved into structures that, at times, challenged the very regime that had established them.

To guide this research, several fundamental questions have been formulated:

1. Can alternative theories challenge conventional perspectives on the incomplete Turkish modernization process within the education system?

2. What roles did traditional madrasahs, Western-style modern schools, and the factionalism within the ruling party play in shaping the republican regime?

3. How do VIs contribute to Turkish modernization, and how do they contrast with traditional teacher training schools?

4. What motivated and what impact did the group of rural intellectuals nurtured by VIs have on the nation's modernization and professionalization?

5. Does the discontinuation of VIs align with certain interruptions in the Turkish modernization process?

6. What were the responses of different societal groups to VIs, and what were their expectations, interests, or concerns?

The overarching aim of this study is twofold. First, it seeks to introduce VIs as a potential symbol and model for the rural transformation of developing countries, given their alignment with the unique characteristics of rural areas and their remarkable success in a relatively brief period. Second, it aims to elucidate the intricate connection between the decline of VIs and the failures of the Turkish revolution and the modernizing reforms of the Kemalists. The actors and dynamics that led to the demise of VIs have, in turn, recurrently disrupted Turkish modernization.

The logical structure of this argumentation is delineated across six main sections. The first section provides a historical backdrop, focusing on Türkiye's pre-1930 period, encompassing both the Ottoman era and the early modern Turkish state. These two periods are scrutinized

together due to their minimal impact on the socio-economic and cultural landscape of rural areas during this time, offering essential insights into the study's core issues.

The second section focuses on the pivotal decade from 1930 to 1940, offering a comprehensive analysis of significant rural developments and initiatives. This section also delves into the foundation of the VIs, encompassing parliamentary debates, critiques, objectives, and legislative underpinnings.

The third section explores VI organization, including student selection and their initial experiences, curriculum analysis, post-1940 legislation, and contributions to rural areas and villagers.

In the fourth section, we delve into the unique values and principles that distinguish VIs. These encompass work-education integration, democratic education promotion, a co-education boarding system, and a cooperative model. We also examine criticisms of these principles.

The fifth section undertakes a comparative analysis between Hasanoğlan Higher VI in Türkiye and the Hungarian Eötvös József Collegium, two institutions established in different countries and eras but both offering higher education and producing a new cadre of intellectual and elite teachers. Despite their differences, these institutions share numerous similarities and have positively impacted the development and modernization of their respective nations. This section seeks to unveil these similarities and examine the contributions of these organizations to their respective countries.

Finally, the last section examines the dissolution process of VIs, the influence of the bipolar order in the post-World War II era on Türkiye, the transition to a multi-party system in 1946, and the accusations leveled against VIs. This section serves as the culmination of the study's comprehensive analysis of the role of VIs in Turkish modernization.

2. A Short Survey of Historiographical Context

The existing literature presents several key factors contributing to the failure or delayed completion of the modernization process in Türkiye. These factors can be summarized as follows:

a. Top-Down Policies of the Kemalist Project and the "For the People, Despite the People" Mentality: Reşit Kasaba argued that Türkiye's modernization last century disconnected state power from societal forces, with elites controlling the pace and

direction.[4] Karaömerlioğlu, İlhan Başgöz, and Howard Wilson contended that the "for the people, despite the people" mentality hindered the modernization process.[5]

b. Struggle Between Traditionalists and Modernists Within the Single Party Regime: Bernard Lewis and Oğuzhan Göksel asserted that internal conflicts between traditionalist and progressive factions within the single party disrupted modernization efforts.[6] Similarly, Oya Baydar, Engin Tonguç, and Fay Kirby argued that these factional struggles prevented reforms from reaching rural areas.[7]

c. Military Coups and Interventions: Elifcan Karacan, Hasan Gönder, and Gülbahar Konak asserted that military coups are more damaging to society and democracy than the civilian governments they oust, citing power struggles, military's political involvement, democratic erosion, and curbing of individual freedoms.[8] In contrast, Korkut Boratav and Yahya Tezel proposed that military elites allied with business and landlord post-republic formation, with some transitioning into the bourgeoisie.[9]

d. Rise of Islamist Movements: Ahmad emphasized the growing assertiveness of the Islamist movement, notably the National Order Party opposing reforms and Kemalism.[10] In contrast, Çağlar Kırçak, Bozkur Güvenç, and others argued that Islamists overshadowed Turkish identity, aiming to replace the secular republic with an Islamic state under Shariah law. The military junta supported Islamists as a counterbalance to left-wing politics.[11]

In my dissertation, I identified two prevalent issues in existing literature: a narrow focus on one aspect of the subject and a disregard for the substantial impact of rural factors on Turkish modernization. To emphasize the significance of the rural factor, I investigate the VIs, a highly effective initiative in Turkish rural areas. Despite their brevity, the VIs enhanced social, economic, and cultural conditions in rural areas, educating over 25,000 teachers who

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[4] Reşat Kasaba, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge History of Türkiye*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1.

[5] Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "The People's Houses," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (1998): 77–84.

[6] Oğuzhan Göksel, *Assessing the Turkish Model: The Modernization Trajectory of Türkiye through the Lens of the Multiple Modernities Paradigm* (Durham: Durham University School of Government and International Affairs, 2015), 26.

[7] Oya Baydar, "Sınıfsal Açıdan Köy Enstitüleri," *Yeni Toplum* (1976): 19–21.

[8] Hasan Gönder and Gülbahar Konak, "Muhteva analizi yöntemiyle Türkiye'yi 1980 askeri darbesine götüren 1974-1980 arasındaki dönemin incelenmesi," *Turkish Studies- Historical Analysis* 16, no. 3 (2021): 282–7.

[9] Yahya Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin İktisadi Tarihi* (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1986), 121–7.

[10] Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Türkiye* (London: Routledge, 1993), 147.

[11] Çağlar Kırçak, *Türkiye'de Gericilik 1950-1990* (Ankara: İmge Yayınları, 1993), 75–89.

played a pivotal role. These educators formed the backbone of rural intellectuals, making substantial contributions to the country's modernization.

The existing literature on VIs reveals two contrasting perspectives and arguments. To summarize these viewpoints:

Critical Analysis of VIs**:** Some researchers argue that VIs fell short of expectations due to their short duration and limited impact on rural development, suggesting they were influenced by the single-party regime and indirectly advanced government policies.[12] In contrast, Kemal Tahir saw VIs as representative of Kemalist populism.[13] Ortaç and Vexliard noted criticism of VIs for fostering a revolutionary mindset among students, while right-wing figures used VIs as political targets in their anti-communist campaigns.[14] Some anti-communists even proposed that the VIs project was a communist conspiracy, drawing parallels with the Soviet education system, a notion refuted by Karaömerlioğlu.[15] Nureddin Ergin criticized VIs for their minimal impact on rural areas, subpar student conditions, inexperienced staff, and high state expenses, portraying them as amateur initiatives.[16]

Positive Evaluations of VIs**:** Supporters of VIs, including Engin Tonguç, deemed rural self-sufficiency a reasonable solution to Türkiye's unique challenges, viewing VIs as a means to alleviate rural underdevelopment and drive significant societal change.[17] Sadık Kartal argued that VIs contributed to reducing gender inequality, citing literacy rate data, a perspective shared by Türkoğlu, who underscored VIs' role in diminishing inequality of opportunity.[18] Yılmaz emphasized VIs' learner-centered approach, playing a pivotal role in achieving democratic education goals and shifting from a "top-down" to a "bottom-up" paradigm.[19] Pedro Orata even proposed that VIs could serve as models for countries initiating primary education from scratch.[20]

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[12] Filiz Meseci Giorgetti, "Training Village Children As Village Teachers For Village Work: The Turkish Village Institutes," *History of Education Review* 38, no. 2 (2009): 52–4.

[13] Engin Tonguç, *Devrim Açısından Köy Enstitüleri ve Tonguç* (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1970), 33.

[14] Alexandre Vexliard and Kemal Aytaç, "The Village Institutes in Türkiye," *Comparative Education Review* 8, no. 1 (1964): 45.

[15] Karaömerlioglu, "The village institutes experience in Türkiye," 66.

[16] Nureddin Ergin, *Arifiye Öğretmen Okulu ve Tarihçesi* (İstanbul: Sakarya Sosyal Araştırma Merkezi, 1968), 105–21.

[17] Tonguç, *Devrim Açisindan Köy Enstitüleri ve Tonguç,* 89–151.

[18] Sadık Kartal, "Toplum kalkınmasında farklı bir eğitim kurumu: Köy Enstitüleri," *Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 4, no. 1 (2008): 28.

[19] Kaya Yilmaz, "Democracy through learner-centered education: A Turkish perspective," *International Review of Education* 55, no.1 (2009): 23–30.

[20] Pedro Orata, "Facts, problems and progress of education in the world of today," *International review of education* 4, no. 1 (1960): 7.

When reviewing the literature on VIs, two notable observations emerge. Firstly, the presence of opposing views highlights that many researchers may have lacked a full understanding of VIs and displayed bias in their assessments. Secondly, discussions about VIs often centered solely on education, neglecting their broader contributions to modernization, professionalization, democratization, pedagogy, and production-oriented education. This dissertation aims to comprehensively analyze these aspects for a more holistic examination of VIs.

3. Theoretical and Methodological Background

3.1 Methodology

This study adopts qualitative research methods to conduct historical research. Historical research involves a systematic exploration of the past with the aim of distinguishing genuine historical accounts from fictionalized ones.[21] Qualitative research, on the other hand, relies on data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and document analysis. It adopts an interpretative approach to examine research problems from an interdisciplinary perspective, focusing on context and the meanings people attribute to facts and events.[22]

This study delves into the influence of the rural factor on Türkiye's modernization process, especially in the context of the government's longstanding neglect and absence of basic services in rural areas until 1960. It scrutinizes educational initiatives predating 1960 and analyzes state policies regarding these underserved regions. The data collection process employed a combination of sources and methods:

Data collection for this study employed the following sources and methods:

1. İsmail Hakkı Tonguç's personal archive: The cornerstone of this research lies in the extensive personal archive of İsmail Hakkı Tonguç, containing approximately 1400 documents. Tonguç, as the architect of VIs, played a pivotal role in providing education for over 20,000 teacher candidates in a short span of six years. The importance of Tonguç's documents is underscored by the loss of Ministry of Education documents due to a fire incident.

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[21] Bill Mcdowell, *Historical Research: A Guide for Writers of Dissertations, Theses, Articles and Books* (London: Routledge, 2002), 73–9.

[22] Ali Yıldırım and Hasan Şimşek, *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri* (Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık, 2008), 39.

2. Interviews: To gather diverse data, interviews were conducted with VI graduates who directly witnessed subsequent developments. Interviews allow participants to share their knowledge, feelings, thoughts, and life stories.[23] Six participants were selected based on criteria such as the VI attended, the study period (before and after 1946), and gender representation. Two female and four male graduates were interviewed to achieve a balanced perspective.

3.1.1 Analysis of Data

Document Analysis: To navigate an extensive archive of around 50,000 pages of documents, a method of examining these records was employed. This approach entailed a thorough scrutiny of written materials pertaining to the subject matter, enabling the retrieval of crucial information and the development of novel insights. This method streamlines research efforts, arranges observed data, interview transcripts, and other pertinent documents, while also assisting in the prioritization of significant facts and events.[24]

Content Analysis: This method was applied to systematically investigate data acquired from interviews, documents, and written works concerning the subject. This inductive interpretation focused on uncovering the root causes of a persistent issue in Türkiye and provided a comprehensive exploration of the problem. Content analysis seeks to uncover patterns, themes, biases, and meanings related to the core of the research. It involves a structured analytical process, starting with data coding and progressing to the identification of codes, categories, and themes, ultimately resulting in the explication and presentation of findings.[25]

Comparative-Historical Analysis: In the seventh section of this study, this approach was employed to compare two institutions: the Hungarian Eötvös József Collegium and the Turkish Hasanoğlan Higher VI. Comparative-historical analysis is a method in social science that investigates historical events to develop explanations with broader relevance. It involves systematic and contextualized comparisons and provides insights into processes and

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[23] Irving Seidman, *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006), 9–14.

[24] Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln, "Competing paradigms in qualitative research," *Handbook of qualitative research* 2, no. 105 (1994): 169–74.

[25] Mariette Bengtsson, "How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis," *Nursing Plus Open* 2 (2016): 9–13.

outcomes.[26] This method was used to highlight the striking similarities between two organizations founded at different times, in different countries, and for distinct reasons, yet both experiencing closure around the same time, coinciding with shifts in the global order.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

3.2.1 Modern, Modernity, and Modernization

The term "modern" denotes novelty and contemporaneity, symbolizing the transition from paganism to Christianity. Modernity encompasses a multifaceted process involving economic, political, and cultural transformations that give rise to a new societal structure.[27] Modernization, on the other hand, signifies the transition from the feudal systems of the past to a modern society, driven by shifts in economics, politics, socio-culture, and intellectual paradigms. It essentially represents the endeavor of less developed civilizations to ascend to higher levels of development.[28] While Western modernization unfolded gradually over four centuries due to internal dynamics, non-Western nations, including Türkiye, faced accelerated modernization influenced by external factors. This distinctive path is known as "non-Western modernity", where inspiration from the West converges with indigenous dynamics, epitomized by Türkiye's unique "Turkish modernity."[29]

3.2.2 Professionalization

Professionalization is a dynamic process that transforms occupations into competent professions through social changes.[30] Interpreted differently, Larson sees it as moving from exclusivity to democracy,[31] Max Weber as shaping rational ideas, Talcott Parsons as an ethos

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[26] Michael Bernhard and Daniel O'Neill, "Comparative Historical Analysis," *Perspectives on Politics* 19, no. 3 (2021): 700–3.

[27] Jürgen Habermas, "Modernlik: Tamamlanmamış Bir Proje," in *Post- modernizm*, ed. Necmi Zeka (İstanbul: Kıyı Yayınları, 1994), 31–32.

[28] Murat Baran, "Avrupa'da Gelişen Modernlik ve Modernleşme Anlayışları ve Bu Anlayışların Türkiye'ye Yansımalarına Tarihî Sosyolojik Açıdan Bir Bakış," *Turkish Studies - International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* 8, no. 11 (2013): 58–9.

[29] İlber Ortaylı, *The Nature of Traditional Society: Türkiye Political Modernization in Japan and Türkiye* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 199.

[30] Randall Collins, "Changing conceptions in the sociology of professions," in *The formation of professions: Knowledge, state and strategy*, ed. Rolf Torstendahl and Michael Burrage (London: Sage Publications, 1990), 94–102.

[31] Magali Sarfatti Larson, "Professionalism: Rise and fall," *International Journal of Health Services* 9, no. 4 (1979): 608–12.

of reason, and Bernstein emphasizes continuous renewal to prevent deprofessionalization.[32] Carr-Saunders and Wilson view it as a stabilizing and liberating force against growing bureaucracies.[33] Collins categorizes professionalization into "Anglo-Saxon" and "Continental European" models. Türkiye aligns more with the Continental model, marked by state support, equal participation, representation, and autonomy.[34]

3.2.3 The Relationship between Modernization and Professionalization

This dissertation delves into the intricate interplay between modernization and professionalization. They mutually influence each other. While modernization often acts as a catalyst for professionalization, it's crucial to note that professionalization predated modernization by centuries.[35] Nevertheless, in numerous instances, they have evolved concurrently. In Türkiye, professionalization has played a pivotal role in fostering a diverse environment and facilitating modernization. However, the process of modernization can also introduce political instability,[36] as exemplified in Türkiye in 1946, where professionals lost their autonomy during the transition to democracy, sparking a period of de-professionalization, particularly in rural areas. Despite the evident link, Türkiye's unique political landscape tempered modernization's impact on professionalization.

4. Sources

This study boasts a wealth of primary sources that offer valuable insights into the subject matter. At the forefront of these sources is the extensive archive of İsmail Hakkı Tonguç, encompassing around 1400 documents. These materials form the bedrock upon which the study is built, providing a direct and comprehensive view of the era and the VIs initiative.

Furthermore, the writings of İsmail Hakkı Tonguç and his son Engin Tonguç play a pivotal role in this research. Specifically, their books, which number seven for İsmail Hakkı Tonguç and four for his son Engin, including a biography of İsmail Hakkı Tonguç, serve as

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[32] Clive Kanes, *Elaborating Professionalism: Studies in Practice and Theory* (Los Angeles: Springer Science and Business Media, 2010), 4–5.

[33] Julia Evetts, "The concept of professionalism: Professional work, professional practice and learning," in *International handbook of research in professional and practice-based learning*, ed. Stephen Billett, Christian Harteis and Hans Gruber (Los Angeles: Springer, 2014), 35.

[34] Collins, *Changing conceptions in the sociology of professions*, 98.

[35] John Benton, "Trotula, Women's problems, and the professionalization of medicine in the Middle Ages," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 59, no. 1 (1985), 31–6.

[36] Emile Durkheim, *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* (Oxford: Routledge, 1992), 7–8.

primary sources that shed light on Tonguç's mindset. These texts offer invaluable insights into the planning of the VIs initiative, the execution of its activities, and the strategies employed to overcome various challenges.

The significance of two publications, "Village Institutes I-II" and "Journal of Village Institutes," released by the Ministry of Education during the active years of the VIs, cannot be overstated. These works hold special value due to their contemporaneous nature and their ability to provide a snapshot of the era in question.

Additionally, memoirs and reviews authored by directors and graduates of the VIs constitute yet another vital source category. These individuals possessed an in-depth understanding of the Institutes' inner workings, the curriculum, the difficulties encountered, and the various activities that took place. Their perspectives offer a valuable layer of understanding to the research.

Beyond primary sources, this study also incorporates secondary sources that contribute to a comprehensive analysis. After rigorous and meticulous research, relevant studies on Turkish modernization, VIs, and Eötvös József Collegium have been identified, examined, and selectively integrated into the dissertation. These secondary sources enhance the study by providing context, comparative analysis, and a broader perspective on the topic at hand.

5. Results

This comprehensive study has provided profound insights into the complex relationship between the rural factor and Turkish modernization, shedding light on the often-overlooked significance of VIs as a model for rural development in developing countries. The key findings and implications encompass a wide spectrum of historical, educational, and socio-political dimensions:

The Rural Factor and Turkish Modernization: The study has decisively demonstrated that the rural factor played a pivotal role in Turkish modernization, particularly until the 1960s. Historically, the majority of revolutionary reforms initiated by the Turkish government were predominantly concentrated in urban centers, neglecting rural regions, where approximately 80 percent of the population resided. This urban-centric approach hindered rural assimilation into the newly established republican regime and led to a divergence of views and values between rural and urban areas. Consequently, the rural dimension

significantly impacted the course of Turkish modernization, and its influence was largely detrimental during this period.

VIs as Agents of Change: The emergence and rapid success of VIs represent a groundbreaking development in Turkish history. These institutions played a pivotal role in Turkish modernization by creating a new cadre of "rural intellectuals" and training nearly 25,000 versatile teachers and educators in a relatively short span of time. These intellectuals made significant contributions to the socio-economic and cultural development of rural areas, directly impacting the country's modernization process.

The Rural Intellectuals Phenomenon: This study introduces the concept of "rural intellectuals" nurtured by VIs. These intellectuals, mainly originating from rural backgrounds, challenged the dominance of urban-educated elites. They exerted influence not only in the field of education but also in shaping the political, social, and cultural landscape of Türkiye. Their existence highlights the transformative potential of rural education and challenges the conventional narrative of urban elites driving modernization.

Shifting Trajectories in Turkish Modernization: The abrupt closure of VIs in 1946 coincided with a fundamental shift in Türkiye's modernization trajectory, moving from a focus on transformation to democratization. This change in perspective and priorities contributed to the neglect of rural modernization, as evidenced by the absence of substantial efforts to modernize Türkiye's rural areas since 1946.

Dual Education System's Impact: Contrary to prevailing literature, this study demonstrates that the dual education system, persisting from the Ottoman Empire into the early republican era, catalyzed societal divisions and resistance to reform initiatives. This division not only fragmented political parties but also permeated society, posing a significant challenge to Türkiye's modernization efforts.

Unique Nature of VIs: VIs stand as a unique entity within the Turkish context. While drawing inspiration from renowned pedagogical philosophers such as Pestalozzi, Kerschensteiner, and Dewey, these institutes were meticulously tailored to address Türkiye's specific rural dynamics. Furthermore, they incubated democratic values and practices that were not contemporaneously introduced elsewhere in the country or Europe.

International Comparisons: The study extends its scope to make international comparisons, highlighting the parallels between VIs and institutions like Eötvös József Collegium in Hungary. Despite their distinct approaches, these organizations produced

intellectual teachers who made indelible contributions to their respective countries' modernization efforts, thus illustrating the global relevance of such initiatives.

This study transcends the conventional narrative by underscoring the rural factor's critical role in Turkish modernization. It also pioneers the recognition of rural intellectuals and their significant impact on Türkiye's history and development. Despite the relatively short duration of the VI initiative, its profound influence reinforces the importance of rural education in advancing not only Turkish modernization but also development paradigms in other developing nations.

While the research primarily focuses on the period until 1960 due to the surge in rural-to-urban migration, it acknowledges the need for further exploration of additional factors influencing Turkish modernization. Moreover, this study illuminates the scarcity of historical data, particularly preceding the 18th century, emphasizing its reliance on available information from the 18th century onward.

In summation, the rural factor remains integral to Turkish modernization, and VIs represent a powerful testament to the transformative potential of addressing rural challenges, not only in Türkiye but also as a beacon of inspiration for rural development in developing nations across the globe. This research invites academics, policymakers, and bureaucrats to consider the invaluable lessons learned from Türkiye's historical experience in the pursuit of modernization through rural education and development.

Research Gap

In this study, I propose an alternative explanation for the perceived shortcomings in Turkish modernization, focusing on the impact of rural factors. I address how neglecting rural areas affected Turkish society and modernization. This research fills a gap in the literature by highlighting the overlooked rural dimension in Turkish modernization discourse. Additionally, I offer alternative interpretations of the establishment and closure of the VIs, diverging from conventional perspectives.

Unexpected Findings and Causes

Firstly, Turkish modernization experienced distinct ruptures, altering its understanding and prioritization. This challenges the notion of continuity in Turkish modernization, revealing a fusion of continuities and disconnections within its continuum. Secondly, the VIs played a crucial role in cultivating rural intellectuals, surpassing initial assumptions about instructor competence. The VIs provided comprehensive education, fostered post-graduation

organization, and contributed to rural modernization. Finally, the research delves into why the republican regime initially disregarded rural areas, revealing that this decision was influenced by necessity until 1935 and several factors and actors.

Limitations of the Study

This study primarily focuses on the rural dimension of Turkish modernization, preceding the rural-to-urban migration starting in 1960. It does not extensively explore ruptures in Ottoman modernization and post-1960 developments, leaving room for future research. While this study addresses the factors and actors impacting Turkish modernization, it does not thoroughly investigate additional aspects, leaving avenues for further exploration.

Suggestions for Future Research

This research emphasizes the significance of the issue for accelerated modernization and offers progressive solutions through the history of Turkish VIs. It also highlights the challenges faced by effective institutions in complex political environments, serving as a reference for future research. Furthermore, this study contributes to the history of rural intellectuals and underscores the VIs' role in professionalization and modernization, offering a starting point for future research on professionalization in Türkiye. Lastly, by comparing institutions like Eötvös József Collegium in Hungary and Hasanoğlan Higher VI in Türkiye, this study encourages exploration of elite education institutions in other countries contributing to modernization and professionalization.

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