
This work focuses on three main issues. Initially Jongerden attempts to explain the logic of Turkey’s resettlement policies within the context of the 1980s and 1990s war when the mainly Kurdish sections in Turkey’s southeast witnessed violent clashes between Turkish armed forces and the PKK. Second, the author delivers an historical analysis of Turkey’s resettlement policies from the founding of the Republic up to the 1990s. Finally, he includes a somewhat esoteric discussion concerning modernisation, especially rural modernisation, and what that means for settlement and resettlement policies and the politics of identity in the Turkish state.

Turkish military forces evacuated and destroyed rural settlements in south-eastern Turkey on a large scale throughout the 20th century, most recently in the 1990s. This led to large-scale resettlement of significant numbers of displaced Kurds into urban areas in both western and south-eastern Turkey. Concurrently the Turkish Government developed various ideas and plans for the creation of a whole new settlement structure in the unsettled areas. In this work, Jongerden exposes for the reader the intrinsic inconsistencies between various settlement practices and how these are actually related to differing ideas of space and identity within the Turkish political establishment. In this way the author demonstrates that Turkish Government resettlement policies and practices have historically been, and remain so today, closely interconnected with its own nation and state building endeavours.

The structure of the book is straightforward. A well-written and discerning foreword is provided by Martin van Bruinessen, one of Jongerden’s mentors, and a leading authority on the Kurds today. Jongerden proceeds by giving the reader his own overview of the book in the introductory part. The main text of the book follows with five chapters dedicated to the following topics: Chapters 2 and 3 evaluate Turkish governmental rationale for its resettlement practices since the 1990s; Chapters 4 and 5 provide an historical overview of the development of the politics of space and identity from the ending of the Ottoman Empire, through the beginnings of the Turkish Republic, and into the formative decades of the 1960s and 1970s as the policies of today were essentially established. Then, in Chapter 6, Jongerden displays several case studies together with related information and analysis highlighting
the realities in the field. The author then closes his book with a solid summary and clearly stated conclusions in Chapter 7.

The analysis of resettlement begins with a PKK-led insurgency and State-led counter-insurgency. In the 1980s, the PKK developed its strategy around the rural environment of Turkey’s southeast, using the area as its base of operations to recruit and sustain itself for guerrilla operations. In Chapter 2, it is demonstrated that the Turkish military strategy of forced evacuation and village destruction was intended to effectively “starve” the PKK of its local Kurdish support base. This is seen in the thousands of Kurds who were displaced from their homes and the further demolition of thousands of villages. In the wake of this campaign Jongerden claims without hesitation that subsequent Turkish settlement and resettlement policy, together with its mostly negative impact on innocent villagers, was not a secondary objective, but rather one of the main objectives of Turkey’s overall counter-insurgency effort.

In Chapter 3, Jongerden expounds upon the various settlement and resettlement plans set forward by Turkish civil authorities. He carefully reveals the dissimilarities among institutional thinkers within the Turkish political and military establishment. The author’s main proposition here is that the Turkish Government was, in effect, talking out of both sides of its mouth. On one hand the military leadership’s plans of reducing support for the PKK are in conflict with those civil authorities, on the other hand, that were advocating a return-to-village resettlement policy. The tragic end result, according to Jongerden, is that little to no effective resettlement occurred, essentially furthering the military’s policy objectives.

This book affords the reader with an opportunity to gain an appreciation for the deeper social history of Turkey’s resettlement policies and practices in the midst of a stubborn war of counter-insurgency with the PKK. This history is detailed in Chapter 4, with a heavy emphasis on the impact of 18th through early 20th century philosophical developments in the study of societal modernisation. Jongerden’s main idea here is that Turkish thinking regarding its settlement policies have been impacted specifically by a desire to expand administration into its remote rural areas and generally a trenchant nationalistic desire to increase “Turkishness” by reinventing the south-eastern region and its countryside with a new type of settlement. This effort to develop a new type of settlement is detailed in Chapter 5. It is paid particular attention to how the Turkish Government, in its formative stages in the 1930s, explored ways to reduce if not in fact eliminate the barriers between the primarily Turkish urban areas, and the primarily Kurdish rural ar-