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CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY-TURKEY • QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

TURKEY IN THE 2000s: A HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

Political Insecurity Persists - **İsmet Akça**

Diyarbakır: The space of war - Interview with **Mehmet Atlı**

Syrian Refugees as a Foreign Policy Instrument - **Didem Danış**

Who are refugees, what do they teach us? - Interview with **Oktay Durukan**

AKP's neoliberal social policy - Interview with **Ayşe Buğra**

Education and social inequalities - Interview with **Çetin Çelik**

Shantytown populism vs. urban rent-seeking - Interview with **Sema Erder**

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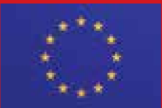

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Contents

2 EDITORIAL » Emel Kurma

4 ARTICLE » İsmet Akça
TURKEY IN THE 2000s: POLITICAL INSECURITY PERSISTS

12 INTERVIEW » Mehmet Atlı
Interview by Suna Akın
DİYARBAKIR: THE SPACE OF WAR

20 INTERVIEW » Nevin Soyukaya
Interview by Fırat Genç
SURİÇİ AFTER THE BLOCKADE AND DESTRUCTION

24 ARTICLE » Didem Danış
A NEW PERIOD IN TURKISH MIGRATION POLICY: SYRIAN REFUGEES AS A FOREIGN POLICY INSTRUMENT

30 INTERVIEW » Oktay Durukan
Interview by Ayşe Çavdar
WHO ARE REFUGEES, WHAT DO THEY TEACH US?

37 INTERVIEW » Şenay Özden
Interview by Ayşe Çavdar
THE OPPOSITION FAILED BITTERLY IN THE REFUGEE ISSUE

43 INTERVIEW » Meyman Serdar Morsümbül
Interview by Merve Erol
A MAJOR TEST FOR THE TURKISH EDUCATION SYSTEM: IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

50 ARTICLE » Ayşe Akalın
MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS MARKET IN TURKEY

56 INTERVIEW » Ayşe Buğra
Interview by Besim Bülent Bali
"WHAT WE SEE TODAY IS THE LOGIC OF ALMS-GIVING RATHER THAN SOCIAL ASSISTANCE"

62 ARTICLE » Hasan Tekgüç
ENROLMENT AND AVERAGE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN TURKEY

70 INTERVIEW » Çetin Çelik
Interview by Fırat Genç
THE WALLS BUILT BY EDUCATION ARE HARD TO CLIMB

80 INTERVIEW » Sema Erder
Interview by Ayşe Çavdar
"URBAN RENT-SEEKING HAS REPLACED SHANTYTOWN POPULISM"

85 INTERVIEW » Ayşecan Terzioğlu
Interview by Ayşe Çavdar
IN HEALTH AND SICKNESS, BETWEEN SECURITY AND VIOLENCE: WHAT CAN A CITIZEN DO?

A JOURNAL ON ISSUES AND DEBATES OF HUMAN SECURITY IN DAILY LIFE

How does the security –sovereignty– of the territorial state and of the non-territorial market deliver people from exclusion, despair and poverty? How do frameworks of nationality or the *modus vivendi* of consumers provide safe livelihoods, in integrity, dignity and conviviality? What does the conventional understanding of security and apparatus of public order serve? Do commodities of security purchased alleviate the threats spurred and perpetuated by the market? How does the promised immunity from the dangers of the outside and of the ambiguousness of the future get traded off with emancipation? Are we talking about the security of the state, of the international borders, of the market, or is the matter rather about the security of the people? What does a people-centred understanding of security imply?

This line of thinking links up with rights and freedoms, peace and justice, fair and democratic processes in handling and reconciliation of conflicts, and, dealing with contexts of violence, subjugation and domination among actors and dynamics of asymmetrical power. It calls for a review of [human] development in terms of policies and structures for socio-ecologically credible economies. It questions the issue of top-down securitization through coercive means by public authority and the violence which can neither be remedied by privatized modalities of security. Thus, it addresses the need for an emancipatory understanding, politics and practice of security, through lateral citizenship in action, as fabric of trust and constituent of the commons.

Reclaiming security cuts across peace building, democratization, dealing with conflicts and reconciliation, rights/freedoms, social peace and inclusion, accountability of authority, rule of law, impartiality of justice and fair procedure at varying scales of contexts, honing in right into the experience of daily life. Normative discourses of humanitarianism, humanitarian action, human rights and development are challenged in influencing the power play of socio-economic dynamics, and, in engaging wider and more diversified segments of societies in the game and negotiations of policies that affect their lives.

The approach of human security provides a legible lexicon for people in terms of recognizing what this normative plane suggests for the actual practice of their lives. It allows for connecting in the dots between social policies that do not mitigate the needs but perpetuate the situation of being helplessness, vulnerabilities and in need that enforces submission. It brings interlinked issues of precarity, dispossession, displacement and subjugation into perspective, grasped in terms of the fairness, decency and impacts of employment and labour regulations, workplace, education, shelter/dwelling, public space, health, food security, integrity of ecosystems and environmental security, political security, and so forth. It sheds light on the violence and despair that is structural, pervasive and yet disguised, neglected and taken for granted as part and parcel of life as it is. It demonstrates how what happens in these fields of daily life are relevant concerning personal autonomy, control over one's own life, and thus, why engagement in public sphere is called for. In that vein, it supports a capacity for wider public debate and diverse civic engagements in different levels of public strategies and their enforcement. It provides leverage for the advocacy of human integrity and dignity amidst multiple interests and in dealing with conflicts. To that effect, rights & freedoms, free speech, right to dissent, open public debate and negotiations over public sphere acquire the potential to be embraced as indispensably crucial assets of agency in the politics that affects life, i.e., citizenship, rather than ineffective normative categories that are irrelevant of what actually life

is about. As such, the approach of human security gears up the political, transformative agency of citizenship and lays out multiple axes for civic intervention and engagement in public policies and practices that shape and affect the human condition in daily life.
It was these deliberations on the question of "humanizing" security and on the potential it provides for advocating bottom-up democratization that (Helsinki) Citizens' Assembly, Turkey, came about exploring ways to introduce human security approach into the field of civic action. In 2012, an opportunity of support[1] offered to regional thematic networks through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) of the European Union, overlapped with (h)Ca's organizational perspective for cross-border civic collaboration. Upon guidance from friends and scholars at the Civil Society and Human Security Research Unit of the London School of Economics and through consultations with individual and organizational contacts across the Balkan countries, a workplan was designed towards building a "Citizens' Network for Peace, Inter-Communal Reconciliation and Human Security in Turkey and the Balkans". With the approval of a grant by the European Commission, the partnership of six organizations has been formed.[2] This partnership supported by an expanding group of associates set out to weave a network to build knowledge and civic engagement for reforms for the improvement of human security in local, country and regional levels. In the interim, the six partners operating as focal members of the network have also jointly and separately issued out publications, in parallel to conducting research, building knowledge-based advocacy and pursuing political debate through organizing stakeholder dialogues, workshops, summer schools and conferences.[3]

(h)Ca started to issue the quarterly journal saha in September 2015 as part of this work, as a pioneering journal in the field of human security published in Turkish, to provide a platform and resource for debates and thinking on various issues of relevance in and around Turkey, that would be of interest for civic activists, scholars, professionals, journalists and policy makers. The first issue introduced the concept of human security exploring it across the changing dynamics in the fields of economy, politics, ecology, health, food, family and identity in Turkey. The second issue focused on insecurities associated with dynamics, practices and policies of international migration and refugees. The third issue followed up with precarity and threats around the context of experiences of urban space, development and transformation. While the fourth issue on education and human security is on its way, this special edition in English offers a selection of the content of these first four issues. The selected articles and interviews provide topics of discussion and debate on military tutelage and democratization, armed conflict in urban space from the angles of urbanism, as well as on policies of urbanization. Another thematic cluster focuses on Syrian refugees and the EU-Turkey deal of readmission, the legal and administrative structure of Turkey's refugee regime, social and political outcomes of the influx of Syrian migrants. A further set of interviews and essays review policy issues in social welfare, education and health.

The growing interest to the journal has been most encouraging. The resonance of the feedback tells that **saha** has so far been able to provide a link of cross-learning between knowledge and experience of what happens in the field of actual daily life, and in the field of scholarly disciplines. We owe this unique publication to the editor, writers and contributors; and we remain indebted for all the support that has allowed it to come alive, despite the many challenges and dire means.

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[1] Civil Society Facility (CSF) Programmes for Civil Society Organizations - Regional and Horizontal Programmes, of the Directorate-General for Enlargement of the European Commission, currently, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.

[2] Youth Resource Centre, Bosnia-Herzegovina; Institute for Regional and International Studies, Bulgaria; Centre for Research, Publication and Documentation, Kosovo; Association for Democracy and Prosperity, Montenegro; SeConS Development Initiative Group, Serbia.

[3] http://www.cn4hs.org

TURKEY IN THE 2000s: POLITICAL INSECURITY PERSISTS

The military's influence in the political arena has been a central issue of political struggle and debate in recent Turkish history. After the AKP established a single party rule in the early 2000s, different sectors believed that the military's strict control would be rolled back and the democratic sphere would be expanded in its place. Instead, under AKP's rule, legal and administrative practices have been established which have further restricted democratic political mechanisms. While important changes were made within the ruling bloc, the authoritarian character of the political system as a whole was not significantly altered. As a result, Turkey is still a country where citizens experience political insecurity on a daily basis. In his analysis published in the first issue of **saha** in September 2015, political scientist İsmet Akça places the ruptures and continuities of this security-centred politics within a historical context.

For citizens to engage safely in political activities within a society, their rights of expression, action and participation must be protected against the powers that control the political, economic, cultural and coercive instruments. This requires, on the one hand, the institutionalisation of the formal legal requirements of democracy –popular sovereignty, free elections, freedoms of thought, belief, expression, association and press– and, on the other (as attested by European and world history) the collective action, mobilisation and struggles of various social sectors. However, Turkey's recent political history is marked by the persistence of a type of political security which exists, albeit under different guises, not for the citizens but for the powerful.

The balance sheet of the 1980s and 1990s

The *coup d'état* of September 12, 1980 and the military regime which lasted until November 6, 1983, ushered in a new era in Turkey – not only did it unleash an unprecedented level of violence and oppression, but it also initiated a radical transformation process. The military coup was both a result of, and a response to, the capitalist accumulation crisis and hegemony crisis, which coalesced in the second half of the 1970s. The putschists and the social bloc who supported the coup held the working class, youth, intellectuals and the left responsible for the crisis prior to September 12, and their main concern was to prevent a similar politicisation in the future. Preventing such a trajectory was also deemed necessary for the transition to the neoliberal regime of capitalist accumulation, which had already been kick-started by the economic program announced on January 24, 1980. With this end in mind there was a deliberate restructuring –along an authoritarian and militarist state model– of the capital accumulation regime, social actors' relations to politics, the ties between the state and citizens, socio-political power relations, and the state's institutional architecture which embodied the latter.

The transition to neoliberal capitalism was enabled through such interventions across the world, and these resulted in restrictions on the political arena and limits being placed on the mechanisms of political democracy. In this respect, the new normal state formation, which corresponded to the latest stage of capitalism in Europe, was described as "authoritarian statism",[1] and neoliberal politics were argued to rest on a "devaluation of democracy".[2] The main characteristics of this new period were the radical decline of the institutions of political democracy, the remarkable restriction on "formal" freedoms, the strengthening of the executive and top-level public administration to the detriment of the legislative, the governing not through laws but through executive decrees, the decay of the rule of law, and the increased role of the state's coercive apparatus. The distinctive feature in Turkey, as well as in numerous Latin American countries, was that this process was initiated through coups, and the militarisation of the state.
The military regime in Turkey pursued neoliberal economic policies, and gave centre stage to a state which was deemed to be sacred *vis-a-vis* society and the individual, by passing the Constitution of 1982 and other laws. All basic political and trade union rights were restricted for the sake of ambiguous concepts such as "the perpetuity of the state", "national security", "law and order" and "public morality". The executive branch gained increased strength in relation to the

legislative and judiciary branches. Military bureaucracy was declared to be the third pillar of the executive branch, together with the government and president. The Neoliberal National Security State, at the centre of which stood the National Security Council, which was dominated by the army, narrowed the boundaries of the political arena.[3]

In the 1980s, the governments of ANAP (The Motherland Party) *de facto* preserved the state form which had been built by the military regime, despite employing a political rhetoric defending civilian rule and criticising statism. The Neoliberal National Security State established after September 12 was able to reproduce, and indeed reinforce, itself in the 1990s as a result of three major factors - the political hegemony crisis of neoliberalism, the rise of political Islam, and finally, the Kurdish question and the government's resultant civil war strategy.[4]

The 1990s were marked by a crisis of parliamentary political representation, and weak coalition governments. In reality, these were not the reasons for but the symptoms of the underlying crisis of political hegemony. It was evident that no political party was able to come up with solutions to the country's problems relating to class and identity, nor formulate hegemonic projects which could appeal to the protagonists of these problems and guarantee the consent of wider masses. The primary reason for this was the classist exclusion inherent in neoliberal economic and social policies. Both centre right and centre left political parties fully embraced the neoliberal policies originating from the IMF and World Bank, and became indistinguishable from each other in terms of class politics. Their ensuing inability to appeal to the lower classes led to a crisis of hegemony, which was aggravated further by their similar impotence to formulate political solutions to questions of identity. These parties not only succumbed to, but also became active supporters of, the army's resolve to use militarist and security terms when dealing with the Kurdish question and the question of "secularism versus religious identity".

By politicising the lacuna created by this crisis of hegemony, RP (Welfare Party), was able to win its first municipal elections in major cities such as Ankara and Istanbul in the 1994 local elections on a platform of political Islam. It then went on to win the 1995 general elections and in 1996 it entered into a coalition government with DYP (Right Path Party). RP thus gained the support of both the winners and losers of neoliberal global capitalism with its promise of a just and Islamic social, economic, political order. Although RP's political discourse and practices had an anti-democratic

and even totalitarian character, the party succeeded in responding to class-related concerns through its Islamist identity politics, and managed to formulate a line different from those of the mainstream parties regarding Islamic and Kurdish identities.[5] However, the army intervened in politics again on February 28, 1997, by means of National Security Council decrees. Its objective was to eliminate political Islam's political and economic clout, and its influence in education and the media, and to redesign the political sphere around the centre left and right parties. First RP, and then its successor FP (Virtue Party) were closed down by the Constitutional Court.[6]

As a result, the gap opened by the crisis of political hegemony (in other words, the inability to politically manage neoliberal capitalism) was filled by an army which was continuing to gain strength from the civil war against the Kurds. Borrowing from Charles Tilly, war making is state making. The militarisation of the Kurdish question and the ongoing civil war were key factors which enabled the army to reproduce its military tutelage over politics and the Neoliberal National Security State. In 1992-1993, a threshold was passed in the militarisation of the Kurdish question, and a war machine was built around a strategy of low intensity warfare –complete with formal and informal, legal and illegal connections– on top of the state of exception ("OHAL"), which had been in place since 1987. The burning and depopulation of villages, the expansion of the village guard system, its employment by the state as a strategy to distinguish friend from foe, the creation of structures such as JİTEM (The Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism Organization), the assassinations by unknown assailants, and dire human rights violations became an integral part of daily life particularly in those provinces with a large Kurdish population.[7] On the macro political level, the Kurdish question was construed as a question of security and terror, and Kurdish political parties were closed down one after the other. Although the army was the major protagonist of security-centred policies, high courts such as State Security Courts and Constitutional Court, as well as the restructured police apparatus were critical components of the Neoliberal National Security State. It must also

> The militarisation of the Kurdish question and the ongoing civil war were key factors which enabled the army to reproduce its military oversight over politics and the Neoliberal National Security State.

be emphasised that this authoritarian-militarist state form and security-centred policies were aimed not only at the Kurdish political movement, but also at emerging working class movements (particularly among public sector employees), the student movement and the radical Left.

In brief, by the 2000s the Neoliberal National Security State, at the centre of which stood the army, had brought the political arena under its control, put in place security-centred measures against the social and political opposition, and established an atmosphere of political insecurity.

The AKP era (1): Reducing military tutelage, and demilitarisation

AKP won the general elections of 2002, 2007 and 2011 with ever increasing votes and established a single party rule. As such it succeeded in resolving the crisis of hegemony. AKP created a comprehensive hegemony by means of a neoliberal, conservative, and authoritarian populist strategy.[8] Under AKP rule, despite the army's various political manoeuvers including plans for military intervention against the government, its autonomous political power was rolled back and significant reforms of demilitarisation were put in place. One factor prompting AKP to implement a process of demilitarisation was the fact that the army perceived AKP as an Islamist, hence illegitimate, political actor, although the party claimed to have severed ties with its predecessor *Milli Görüş* (National Vision). In order to establish its hegemony across the state, AKP had to bring under its control the last bastions of the Kemalist-nationalist bloc within the state – the President's office, high courts and Council of Higher Education (YÖK). Furthermore, within its populist strategy, AKP portrayed the ruling bloc as a Kemalist-nationalist bloc based on military tutelage, and conceptualised democracy to be the struggle against this ruling bloc – which mainly took the form of demilitarisation. Besides, since these descriptions had been shared not only by conservative and liberal circles, but also by certain left-wing groups since the 1990s, AKP was able to secure the support of wider sectors and to further extend its hegemony. In the post-2002 era, three factors can be considered crucial in reducing military tutelage over the political arena: the presence of a strong political actor possessing the will and strength for demilitarisation (AKP), the trajectory of the Kurdish question, and international dynamics (particularly Turkey's EU accession bid).

The post-2002 period can be divided into three sub-periods.[9] During the first sub-period (2002-2005), demilitarisation reforms were put in place to meet the requirements of the EU membership process. During this period, AKP waged a trench war of sorts and weakened military domination. The EU reform process and hopes of democratisation were kept alive, and the cessation of hostilities in the Kurdish context also helped to enable these reforms. AKP was fully aware that, as long as armed conflict continued in the context of the Kurdish question, it would not be possible to push back the army in the political arena. In this period, the following reforms of demilitarisation took place: (i) In 2001, Article 118 of the Constitution was amended to increase the number of civilian members in the National Security Council (MGK); MGK resolutions now read "These resolutions are to be evaluated by the Council of Minister" instead of "prioritised"; (ii) In 2003, civilians instead of generals started to serve as MGK's Secretary-General following amendments to the Law on National Security Council and its Secretariat-General. The authority to coordinate and monitor the implementation of MGK resolutions was transferred from MGK Secretary General to Deputy Prime Minister. MGK started to convene every two months rather than every month. MGK Secretariat-General's top-secret by-law was annulled, and

a new by-law was passed limiting the powers of the Secretariat-General; (iii) In 2004, the number of retired military officials working at the Secretariat-General was reduced, while those of civilians was increased; (iv) In 2004 and 2005, following legislative amendments, military officials were eliminated from the boards of Council of Higher Education (YÖK) and Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK).[10]

When the journals of the ex-commander of Naval Forces, Özden Örnek, were published by the magazine *Nokta* in March 2007, it was revealed that a radical wing of the military, including force commanders, viewed AKP as an Islamist threat against the republic, and had planned a military coup in 2003-2004. However, the coup plans were not carried out since the domestic and overseas support for such an intervention was thought to be very limited.[11]

The second sub-period (2005-2007) was marked by a slowdown of the EU-related reform process, and the government's attempt to grow closer to the military along a more statist-nationalist perspective towards the Kurdish question. In this respect, as elaborated below, the authoritarian amendments made to the Anti-Terror Law in 2006 were crucial. In addition, speculation that a Turkish flag was burnt in Mersin triggered attempts to lynch Kurds, and an individual - who later turned out to be a soldier - threw a bomb at a bookstore in Şemdinli, prompting people to ask whether this was a return to the 1990s. However, AKP's strategy of detente with the army only served to strengthen the latter's hand. The strategy's failure became evident when Abdullah Gül's candidacy to the presidency led to a severe political crisis from the end of 2006 until spring 2007. On April 12, 2007, the chief of general staff announced that he wanted to see a president "truly, not nominally, attached to the principles of the republic and secularism." Afterwards, the middle classes were mobilised in cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir to organise so-called republican demonstrations to defend secularism and a modern lifestyle. Then, on April 27, 2007, the general staff published a declaration on its web page which would come to be known as the e-memorandum.

The third sub-period, which starts from 2007, can be described as AKP's initiation of a direct and overt political struggle against the army to push it out of the political arena. In response to protests against Gül's candidacy and the e-memorandum of April 27, AKP called general elections which turned out to be huge success for the party. In August 2008, Gül was elected president. Afterwards, Gül employed his presidential authorities, which had been granted by the Constitution of 1982, to establish control over the Council of Higher Education. The constitution was amended in 2010 to restructure and bring the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK), and the Constitutional Court under control. During and after the 2010 referendum, the following measures were taken to further limit the military's power: (i) first in 2006, then in 2010, constitutional amendments radically narrowed the jurisdiction of the military courts; (ii) the constitutional amendments of 2010 made it possible to appeal to the Supreme Military Council's (YAŞ) decisions concerning the dismissal of military officers (with the exception of promotions, and retirement due to lack of available positions); (iii) the temporary Article 15 of the Constitution of 1982, which made it impossible to try the leaders of the 1980 coup, was annulled; (iv) the EMASYA protocol was abrogated in 2010; (v) national security classes at junior high schools were taken out of the curriculum in 2012.

In this period, the overt political struggle against the army was waged by means of lawsuits filed with the Assize Courts with Special Authority. In 2008, the government initiated probes into the police force, followed by the investigation dubbed "Ergenekon" in October 20, 2008. In February 2010, the "Balyoz" lawsuit began to investigate the namesake military coup plan of 2003. During the Ergenekon and Balyoz investigations, numerous military officers including ex-force commanders, as well as journalists, jurists, businessmen and academics were arrested and brought to court. They were accused of being a member of a terrorist organisation called Ergenekon and of attempting to overthrow the government. At the Supreme Military Council meeting of August 2010, the Prime Minister vetoed the promotion to a higher rank of eleven generals accused of plotting a coup. Likewise, at the August 2011 Supreme Military Council meeting, the AKP government turned a deaf ear to the objections of the chief of general staff and force commanders, and appointed a general staff which would steer the army away from politics.

A key factor which enabled AKP to wage an all-out political struggle against the army was its alliance with the Fethullah Gülen movement. This alliance allowed AKP to control the police and judiciary – particularly the Assize Courts with Special Authority. In this process, demilitarisation and the dismantling of the army-centred Neoliberal National Security State resulted not in democratisation, but instead the rise of a new, police-centred Neoliberal Security State.

The AKP era (2): A new neoliberal security state centred on the police and judiciary

The social insecurity created by neoliberal capitalism which started to take root across the world from the late 1970s, the reappearance of the "dangerous classes" under new guises, and the political risks of this shift for the powers that be led to radical changes in state structure and government rationality. In the preceding era, the general perspective of government was that poverty, unemployment and crime were social issues, and thus could be eradicated by the policies of a Democratic Keynesian Welfare State. Neoliberalism brought a new government perspective based on the conviction that these risk elements could not be eliminated but only managed. The responsibility was shifted away from the state and on to the shoulders of communities and individuals. The Work and Punishment State,[13] as the new state form, started to function via state-centred punishment and imprisonment policies as well as market-centred, religious sect-centred policies extending control across the routine flow of daily life. This transformation was accompanied by a transformation of the instruments of coercion. An entire mechanism of criminalisation and punishment practices, instead of eliminating crime and returning criminals to normal life, moved towards managing crime, and, where that wasn't possible, towards heavy-handed punishment practices by the state.[14] There was a shift from a post-

criminal society focused on punishing illegal conduct to a pre-criminal society centred on preventing risks. The security-centred government logic which came into effect targeted risks which had not yet materialised but could materialise in the future, identified certain population groups as suspicious, and designated them *a priori* as criminals.[15]

This new government rationality was also seen in the transformation of the police apparatus. The police was militarised in terms of organisation, equipment, etc., and police forces and police violence were employed extensively for social control purposes. Preventive policing which focused on potential criminals rose to prominence, private security firms proliferated, and new governance practices such as community-supported and market-centred policing were put in place.[16] Despite the lack of concrete evidence pointing to a rise in urban, national or global insecurity, a culture of fear and insecurity came to dominate our daily lives, creating the sense that we are under threat, at anytime, anywhere. Underlying the construction of this cultural perception was a government strategy designed to establish social control, as well as the commodification of security to become a field of capital accumulation.[17]

Following the 9/11 attacks, all these regulations crossed a threshold and started to shape the global order. In the global arena, the 1990s were marked by the human rights discourse, whereas the 2000s have been dominated by the erosion of human rights within the framework of a global state of exception. After 9/11, the war on terror became an instrument employed to bring social and political forces under control on both the global and national scales. The USA, the UK, Canada and Spain led the way by passing new anti-terror laws. Countries such as Russia, India, Egypt, Philippines and of course Turkey, "where states of exception had become the norm, adapted their states of exception to this new global framework and lost no time in becoming a part of global security policies."[18] Political crimes were rebranded as terror crimes. It was claimed that "terrorists" lacked political objectives and were thus rendered apolitical. Anyone could thus become an enemy or a terrorist – as such, certain communities were blacklisted to identify potential terrorists. Just like preventive policing, a preventive war doctrine came into force. The new security paradigm was crystallised by the words of then US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld: "Our challenge in this new century is [...] to defend our nation against the unknown, the uncertain, the unseen, and the unexpected. [...] so we can deter and defeat adversaries that have not yet emerged to challenge us."[19] The concepts of terror and terrorist were employed by the powers that be as a justification for the state of exception where all law was suspended.

An analysis of Turkey in the 2000s reveals the construction of a very similar neoliberal security state. The new neoliberal security state centred on the police and judiciary criminalising political rivals and social opponents as terrorists. It conceptualised these political and social groups as enemies rather than citizens, suspending the rule of law and installing a state of exception. A number of legislative manoeuvers were key to the establishment of this new security state: (i) Turkish Criminal Code (TCK) passed in 2005; (ii) the Criminal Procedures Law (CMK) of the same year; (iii) amendments to Anti-Terror Law (TMK) in 2006; (iv) amendments to Law of Police Powers (PVSK) in 2007.

The definitions of terror and terrorist are key elements in the new security state and government logic. The Articles 1 and 2 of TMK describe terror and terrorist as follows:

> "Terrorism is any kind of act done by one or more persons belonging to an organisation with the aim of changing the characteristics of the Republic as specified in the Constitution, its political, legal, social, secular and economic system, damaging the indivisible unity of the State with its territory and nation, endangering the existence of the Turkish State and Republic, weakening or destroying or seizing the authority of the State, eliminating fundamental rights and freedoms, or damaging the internal and external security of the State, public order or general health by means of pressure, force and violence, terror, intimidation, oppression or threat."

> "Any member of an organisation, founded to attain the aims defined in Article 1, who commits a crime in furtherance of these aims, individually or in concert with others, or any member of such an organisation, even if he does not commit such a crime, shall be deemed to be a terrorist offender. Persons who are not members of a terrorist organisation, but commit a crime in the name of the organisation, are also deemed to be terrorist offenders and shall be subject to the same punishment as members of such organisations."

Despite the lack of concrete evidence pointing to a rise in urban, national or global insecurity, a culture of fear and insecurity has come to dominate our daily lives, creating the sense that we are under threat, at anytime, anywhere.

In addition, Article 220 of TCK and Article 7 of TMK were amended in 2006 to categorise as terrorists those individuals who "engage in propaganda to uphold the terrorist organisation's purposes, without being a member of it". Article 3 of TMK describes fifty different crimes mentioned in TCK as "terror crimes" in case they are committed "within the scope of a terrorist organisation's activities." All these pieces of legislation have signaled a "transition from accusations focused on actual acts to accusations focused on purposes and individuals."[20] These amendments have made it possible for the government to describe any dissident act as a terrorist crime.

State Security Courts supposedly closed down in 2014 were instead renamed as Assize Courts with Special Authority, and were charged with prosecuting terror crimes.[21] These courts followed exceptional procedures of judgement, prosecution and investigation.[22] The Assize Courts with Special Authority

ruled on who is a terrorist and which is a terrorist organization, mainly based on the opinion of the police force. Police officers' reports became prosecutors' bills of indictment, almost unchanged.[23] This exceptional judiciary practice equated the political with terror, and during the hegemony struggle within the state, added Kemalists to a long list of enemies which already included socialists and Kurds. In the context of the tension between the Gülen sect and AKP within the ruling bloc, directors of the national intelligence agency MİT found themselves in such a position. Employed by the government as the main instrument to eliminate its political opponents, this exceptional judiciary mechanism orchestrated a series of political lawsuits such as Ergenekon, Balyoz, Internet Memorandum, September 12th, February 28th, Oda TV, Devrimci Karargâh, KCK, Hopa etc. These judiciary procedures suspended the rule of law, allowed the logic of political struggle and elimination to dominate the judiciary system, and dealt a heavy blow to the credibility of a supposed demilitarisation process.

The Police was the other main pillar of the new neoliberal security state which came to dominance in the 2000s. The restructuring of the police force –in parallel with worldwide trends– can be traced back to the military regime of September 12th. Since it was unable to establish domestic security and contain social protest during the 1970s, the police was militarised in terms of units, training, arms and equipment starting from the early 1980s. The discretionary authority of the police was expanded through legislative changes. The riot police (Çevik Kuvvet) was established in 1983 to contain and suppress social protest and became fully operational in the 1990s, intervening in protests by workers, public employees and students and leading to deaths on the May Days of 1989 and 1996. Special Forces, set up in 1983 were placed under General Directorate of Anti-Terror and Special Forces in 1987 and then shifted under the General Directorate of Special Forces in 1993. Special Forces functioned mainly as a civil war apparatus in the context of the Kurdish question.[24]
In the 2000s, the police came to replace the army at the centre of the new security state. During this period, in connection with the aforementioned exceptional judiciary practices, the police functioned as a mechanism of political control and elimination as well as social containment and repression. In order to establish social and political control, the IT infrastructure to monitor the population started being established from the late 1990s onwards. In the scope of preventive policing and pre-criminal punishment mechanisms, criminal profiles, crime maps and databases were set up to identify, monitor and control potential criminals. Mechanisms included Pol-net, fingerprint records, MOBESE and Mernis.[25] The new security policy was expressed as follows in the National Police Department's strategic plan for 2009-2013: "The purpose is to increase our capacity of deterring potential criminals before they actually commit a crime. […] That is because, crime prevention activities are more important and less costly in social, psychological and economic terms than crime investigation activities."[26]

During the 2000s, in order for the police to fulfil its social and political control function within the aforesaid framework, new legislation was passed to expand police authorities as regards weapon use, coercion, stopping people to check IDs, and wiretapping.[27]

The 2006 annex to TMK allowed police forces to use weapons when the suspect refuses to obey the call for surrender.

Amendments to PVSK in 2007 and the auxiliary Article 6 expanded the police's authority to use weapons. As such, the police officers became able to employ their weapons to apprehend a suspect, even in the absence of lethal threat to themselves or others. As a result, a total of 115 individuals were killed by police fire between 2007 and 2011.[28] The Law on Assembly and Protest Marches, and the Riot Police Regulation were also amended to grant the police vast powers against protesters. As per the said law, the police can arbitrarily declare a meeting or protest march illegal for "going beyond the purpose communicated beforehand", which is open to interpretation. The Riot Police Regulation also gave immense discretionary powers to the police since it did not place limits on the police's right to use coercion and instead used the ambiguous expression "using coercion to the degree deemed necessary", triggering further escalation of police violence. Further amendments to PVSK hugely expanded the police's right to stop people and cars to check IDs, by stating that the police officers were to decide according to their "experience" and "observations", based on "reasonable causes". Additions to Article 135 of CMK in 2005 and to Article 7 of PVSK in 2006 enabled the police to carry out wiretapping after receiving a judge's prior approval. As such the police became able to wiretap anyone's phone, and started to incriminate individuals through freely associating daily expressions with criminal offenses such as "wedding=assault, hospital=police, doctor=lawyer, let's meet at the park=let's take action, I bought a gift=the equipment is ready".[29] Article 11 of PVSK also grants the police the right to intervene against "individuals who engage in acts and behaviour which go against public morality and ethics, are shameful, and breach the social order", further expanding its discretionary power.

In all these regulations, the police were exempted from necessary limitations to prevent human rights violations, granted immense discretionary powers, and saw their capacity to monitor and control daily life, streets and social protest expand by a huge margin. The professional training of the police force is also designed to encourage severe interventions against social protest. The training programs define dissident individuals "as puppets who act on irrational and sentimental impulse, and lack rationality and personality." "Masses are violent, destructive and perverse, and are feminine in nature."[30] As such the police, just like the exceptional judiciary and punishment system, views social and political dissidents not as citizens but enemies. Among the sensitive topics which urge the police to take action, left-wing and Kurdish movements rank high, while the Islamist movement, Islamic identities and ultra-nationalism rarely make it to the list.[31] Left-wing and Kurdish activists are categorised as potential political criminals, "young, impoverished Kurds, the Roma, prostitutes and transsexuals" as potential criminal groups, metropolitan neighbourhoods with ample Kurdish immigration and urban transformation zones as potential crime scenes.[32]

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After conquering the last bastion, namely the judiciary, in its struggle of hegemony against the Kemalist bloc, and achieving a major victory in the 2011 elections, the AKP government boosted efforts to integrate neoliberalism with Islamic conservatism, and to strengthen its control on social life and urban space.[33] AKP implemented these policies within the framework of the aforementioned neoliberal security state centred on the police and judiciary. Later on, this neoliberal security state centred on the police and judiciary crossed a threshold in response to three crucial developments. The Gezi protests of 2013 were a reaction to the said policies and faced immense police violence. Afterwards, the corruption probe and investigations initiated on December 17-25, 2013, ended the alliance between the Gülen sect and AKP, and the latter swiftly moved to eliminate Gülenist cadres from the state apparatus, especially the police and judiciary. Finally, protests were staged across Turkey on October 6-7, 2014 against AKP's strategy to support radical Islamist groups in Syria and the Middle East and to weaken the Kurdish movement within the scope of its imperial aspirations, and these were violently suppressed by the police leading to the deaths of over 50 individuals.

Faced with social and political opposition to its rule, AKP responded by further reinforcing the neoliberal security state. The law dated February 15, 2014 introduced a number of technical changes in the functioning of the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors, the Academy of Justice, the Ministry of Justice and the Constitutional Court, thus strengthening the government's tutelage over the judiciary. Finally, the latest Domestic Security Package brought to parliament in November 2014 triggered public uproar, but, despite this, was approved by President Erdoğan in April 2015. The package introduced new limitations on basic rights and freedoms and more powers for the police. Under this scope, new restrictions were placed on the right to assembly and protest, individual security and rights, confidentiality of private life, and the right to live. Police had greater powers in using weapons against social protest, the list of crimes was expanded, and it became a norm to jail suspects pending trial.[34] As such, AKP government rendered non-parliamentary opposition virtually impossible - in other words, they criminalised it.

To conclude, the Neoliberal National Security State centred on the army was replaced in the 2000s, under AKP rule, by the Neoliberal Security State centred on the police and judiciary. As a result of the security-centred government strategy, albeit under a different form, we have entered a period where political insecurity has been further aggravated to take over all aspects of daily life.

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[18] Evren Balta Paker, *Küresel Güvenlik Kompleksi. Uluslararası Siyaset ve Güvenlik,* (2012): 108.

[19] Ibid, 114.

[20] Oya Aydın, "Hukuk Devleti Nerede Biter, Polis Devleti Nerede Başlar?", *Birikim* 273 (2012): 27.

[21] With the onset of the conflict between the Gülen sect and AKP, Assize Courts with Special Authority were abrogated in February 2014 to eliminate the Gülenist cadres within these courts. However, this change only remained on paper since their powers were simply shifted to the Assize Courts.

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[25] Biriz Berksoy, "Güvenlik Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı, 'Güvenlik' Eksenli Yönetim Tekniğinin Polis Teşkilatındaki Tezahürleri ve Süreklileşen 'Olağanüstü Hal': AKP'nin Polis Politikaları", *Birikim* 276 (2012): 82-86; Zeynep Gönen, "Suçla Mücadele ve Neo-liberal Türkiye'de Yoksulluğun Zaptiyesi", *Birikim* 273 (2012).

[26] Quoted in Biriz Berksoy, "Güvenlik Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı", (2012): 82.

[27] Biriz Berksoy, *Türkiye'de Ordu, Polis ve İstihbarat Teşkilatları: Yakın Dönem Gelişmeler ve Reform İhtiyaçları,* (İstanbul: TESEV Yayınları, 2013).

[28] Biriz Berksoy, *Türkiye'de Ordu, Polis ve İstihbarat Teşkilatları,* (2013): 36.

[29] Ercan Kanar, "Özel Yetkili Ağır Ceza Mahkemeleri'nce Üretilen Hukuk", in *Parçalanmış Adalet: Türkiye'de Özel Ceza Yargısı*, ed. Haluk İnanıcı, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011): 112.

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[31] Ayşen Uysal, "Polisin 'Hassas' Gündemi", *Birikim* 274 (2012b).

[32] Zeynep Gönen (2012), "Suçla Mücadele ve Neo-liberal Türkiye'de Yoksulluğun Zaptiyesi"; Biriz Berksoy, "Neoliberalizm ve Toplumsalın Yeniden Kurgulanması", (2007): 54-55.

[33] The first examples that spring to mind are discourses and regulations targeting the female body in issues such as abortion, having three children and morning-after pills; the gentrification of urban spaces like Taksim square, Emek Cinema, Atatürk Cultural Center and Haydarpaşa train station; limits on alcohol sales and consumption; and the education model dubbed 4+4+4.

[34] Ozan Erözden, "AKP'nin Neden İç Güvenlik Paketine İhtiyacı Var?", *Başlangıç,* February 27, 2015 http://baslangicdergi.org/akpnin-neden-ic-guvenlik-paketine-ihtiyaci-var/

Interview by Suna Akın

Diyarbakır: The space of war

Diyarbakır, interactions between space, politics and history, and the spatial aspects of the recent armed conflict in Turkey are some of the issues we discussed in April 2016, during the heyday of clashes between the state's security forces and the pro-PKK militias, with Mehmet Atlı – faculty member at Mardin Artuklu University, Faculty of Architecture and the author of the volume *"Hepsi Diyarbakır: Herkesin Bildiği Kimsenin Bilmediği"* [Everything is Diyarbakır: What Everyone Knows and No One Knows].

As an architect, what is your assessment of the repercussions of the long-lasting war on cities across Turkey? What is your reading of the current situation?
Mehmet Atlı: Until fairly recently any debate on war and architecture or on conflict and cities in the region, has been dominated by discussions of the depopulation of the countryside. Forced migration and evacuation of villages was part of this process. This was related to the fact that both sides of the conflict were trying to establish control in specific geographic areas – the countryside was the main theatre of the conflict.

The cities provided the social/ideological logistical support (such as the political demonstrations and marches) for the actual conflict which was taking place in the rural areas. This was the general picture. There were undoubtedly occasional uprisings and revolts in the urban centres, too – on special days or during funeral ceremonies, all we talked about was children throwing stones for instance. Another topic of discussion was the impact that clashes in rural areas were having on the cities. The depopulation and forced migration in the countryside was leading to a huge rise in the urban population. This rising population was concentrated in impoverished slum areas called *gecekondu* or *varoş* in large centres such as Diyarbakır or Kızıltepe, and for that matter, Urfa, Adana and Mersin too, and the problems were simply being reproduced in a different context.

Simultaneously, another development has marked the region since the 2000s – the PKK entered the legal arena, winning municipal elections in certain cities, and directly assumed roles in local government. As a result, the representatives of the Kurdish political movement began to appear before local communities in the role of administrators. After it came to power in 2002, the AKP started to reshape the state's policy on the Kurdish question, and finally brought forward a perspective for reconciliation, which was alternatively named the "solution process" or "the opening". It was also dubbed as the process of democratization, national unity and fraternity, etc.

Meanwhile, owing to this lull in the conflict, across the cities in this region we have observed the rise of a Kurdish middle class, which has become increasingly visible in urban spaces. There has been an increase in shopping malls and other spaces of consumption, the construction of luxurious house complexes with private security guards, or villas with swimming pools. This has been a significant development in the last decade.

If we were to pinpoint a turning point, the Kurdish question entered a new period after the general elections of June 7, 2015, or following the PKK's ensuing declarations of autonomy in various provinces, or, from another

If we look at the issue from an architectural perspective, we see that urban space itself has now become an actor in the war. This is true for both sides in the war.

perspective, after the government's decision to end the solution process and "upend the table". This time cities, towns, architecture, urbanization etc. have entered the debate in a totally different manner, because the frontline of the conflict is now directly located within urban areas with large populations. Nusaybin, Cizre and Diyarbakır, and Silvan before them, and now Yüksekova are cases in point.

Let's leave aside for the time being the political motivations of the government and the PKK, the sudden aggravation of a problem which was expected to reach a rapid resolution, and the specific policies being pursued by different political actors, and focus instead on the results of all these policies. Naturally, the former questions must also be discussed, and indeed are being discussed, but these are topics of political assessment and analysis. If we look at the issue from an architectural perspective, we see that, as I outlined earlier, urban space itself has now become an actor in the war. This is true for both sides in the war.

We also know that throughout its history Diyarbakır's old town, the walled Suriçi district, has been imprisoned in an ontological sense, due to its physical confinement. Suriçi had a medieval character – blind alleys, residents being able to jump from one rooftop to the next, passing from one backyard to the other. This medieval texture was rendered even more complex with the superimposition of other architectural styles throughout history. The walls continued to create a separate urban entity in Suriçi, which was well-defined and enclosed in itself. It is also possible to trace this through maps of the area. One could very well read the history of Diyarbakır or Nusaybin as being a history of wars and conflicts, and of the central role played by ancient walls in these historical processes. My colleagues and I have been focusing on such studies.

However, we are also now living this process first hand, as individuals of the 21st century. We are experiencing how urban reality can become engulfed in war, and can provide the tools for a military assault strategy or a resistance strategy. We have seen both sides trying to capitalize on various advantages created by the specific characteristics of the space and also to cope with the various challenges posed by it. I guess military strategists will also take up these matters one day. However, in any final analysis, the political line which declares autonomy and initiates a military build-up in Suriçi with explosives, guns and militants, always has something in common with the political line which lays siege to Suriçi by mobilizing cutting-edge equipment, soldiers, police, tanks and artillery.

One of the sides was more confident about its mass support in these areas. What is your evaluation of Suriçi or Bağlar from a political perspective?
As I mentioned, Bağlar (Diyarbakır) or Nusaybin (Mardin) were, until recently, being discussed solely in the context of forced migration, the displacement of their traditional urban populations, and the newcomers' relations with the urban space. We were discussing the day-to-day issues, employment and unemployment, problems of adaptation, or past traumas of the people living there. Some of these people were indeed highly politicized. However, during the lull in the conflict, the construction of new urban areas, and the creation of a middle class, Diyarbakır's and other cities' efforts to open up to the world and contact international bodies such as UNESCO became the main priority on the agenda. As such, the latest escalation of violence has traumatized the population of the cities, and indeed the entire region. We must underline this fact. As a result, the challenge we face now is not how the population of these areas may continue with their daily lives, but rather how they can physically survive and continue to live there. Just imagine: you are obliged to comply with decisions taken through processes which are almost totally obscure to you, or to cope with the results of these decisions. This is a problem in itself, I think – a decision is reached and I have had no say in that decision, and yet I am the one who has to live with its results. This is obviously what has been happening in the context of the Kurdish question for decades on end.

The same goes for the mentality of the government or the state, naturally. Say there is rampant crime in one part of the country, an uprising against the presence, legitimacy and main institutions of the state. Is sending in tanks, artillery and helicopters the right way to deal with this problem? Could there be another way? Or rather, is there no other way? Is there always one unique solution to a problem? We have to respond in the negative to these questions. But nevertheless, the *raison d'état* unfolds as before – if there is a problem somewhere, the state chooses to crack down on it with the most violent, coercive methods possible, in order to "drain or cleanse the marsh", so to speak.

The image of "cleansing" must be underlined here. This is an argument which comes up frequently in debates about the city, urban transformation, urbanization, architecture etc. From 19th century urbanization projects up until the current day urban transformation, states and authorities have always resorted to such arguments in order to legitimize urban policies. Arguments such as "This area is unhygienic, it is suffocating, unsanitary, backward, corrupt, lagging behind modern day values and technologies, and as such, must be transformed," have been abundant throughout history – "The area cannot reform itself, therefore it must be changed from the outside."

It's the classic motto of "for the people, despite the people". The latest events in the region have confirmed once again that this perspective remains fully intact. We have seen political actors taking action and wielding weapons – once again for the people, despite the people. We have also seen that no other opinion can be expressed or will be listened to because when weapons and bombs do the talking, there is not much space left for opinions. This goes for architectural opinions too…

Take the discourse around the protection of historical values, respect for legacy, preservation of heritage, etc… During this process, we have seen how our love and respect for history, which we have tried to prove to others through filing applications with UNESCO, remain real only on paper. Up until recently, we were dispatching folders to UNESCO describing these areas as a valuable part of world heritage which must be preserved. Today, we see those same areas being transformed into battlefronts, fortifications. Conversely it is not difficult to speculate that the government is keen on razing these areas to the ground, destroying each and every layer, erecting new structures in their stead, and exposing them to every kind of commercial initiative, manipulation and rent-seeking.

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Was that what Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu had in mind when he spoke of "cleansing" Suriçi to transform it into another Toledo?
Indeed. Yet there is also a problem of plausibility here, because in Turkey both conservative sectors, and those who define themselves as secular, pro-Atatürk and nationalist and, let us not spare ourselves, even the Left and the Kurdish movement all upheld this discourse of protection and restoration, embracing the same arguments of heritage, preservation of historical values etc., to such a degree that different ideologies are using almost identical arguments. There may be nuances on particular emphasis or focus, but in general there is a consensus on the need to respect history. We seem to think alike. However, this begs questions over the results of this discourse of protection, where it meets a dead end, what the ensuing restoration practices yield, etc.

The cases of Suriçi and Nusaybin pose these questions again, expose our ideological dilemmas, and also reveal

the dilemmas faced by different actors across the political spectrum. Let me elaborate – in Turkey when we speak of building restoration, we tend to imagine a structure which is left unprotected, unappreciated and left to decay for a long time, and is then suddenly remembered for a particular occasion. This occasion may be a wish to reach reconciliation with Armenians, for instance, or to take a new initiative in the Armenian question, as was the case in the renovation of Aghtamar Church in Van. In other cases, such as in the Tarlabaşı district of Istanbul, it was argued that the specific area had supposedly become degenerated or corrupt and had to be brought back under control to restore its "essence". Alternatively, as is happening in Suriçi today, there have been claims of cleansing an area owing to it being fraught with "crime" and "terrorism". Some pretext is fabricated to remind the public of these buildings and to emphasize their value. Then it is claimed that the current residents are not actually worthy of this rich heritage and are incapable of appreciating it. So, the argument follows, these structures must be brought under protection and brought back to life. We have all learned from somewhere that historical buildings are very valuable and must be salvaged. But most of the time, the underlying motivations for such protection revolves around commerce and rent-seeking, security concerns, or an unwillingness to come to terms with our past.

One dilemma in the discourse of protection is whether to attach a similar importance to different events or phenomena in history. For instance, you appreciate structures from the classical period of the Ottoman Empire, but not so much the buildings of the so-called Westernization period. You don't want to mention or see Byzantine artefacts, despite the historical continuity and legacy they represent, and yet you place the Seljuks high on a pedestal. From one extreme of the political spectrum to the other, each group creates a hierarchy between different historical periods and then questions and perceives buildings in the light of this hierarchy. The structures we decide to protect may in fact be the most hapless ones, since many buildings, which may otherwise grow old in a beautiful way if left untouched, are usually badly damaged by so-called protection and restoration efforts. The

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real issue here is our inability to come to terms with the accumulation of layers, the dirt which now covers these particular buildings. We strive to make everything brand new, squeaky clean, but this is actually much more damaging. You not only betray the original, but also, by peeling off the upper layers which protect the building from major damage, make it more vulnerable to the elements.

It also makes history illegible.
Certainly. Once you erase all those layers, all that is left behind is your will and style of restoration. You create your own work, your own image that is. Such problems

have always existed, and continue to exist. To boot, we are now faced with urban warfare.

I remember during the renovation work being carried out on the city walls and towers, the Ministry of Culture officials were using brand new stones. Even the sections baring historical scars left by cannon fire etc. were covered with freshly cut stone. So, such a process of eviscerating the layers had already started prior to the latest escalation of the war. Today I am struck by the latest photos coming from Suriçi, especially around the Four-Legged Minaret. All the surrounding buildings are destroyed, but the minaret itself, as well as the neighbouring Sheikh Mutahhar Mosque stands untouched. This corresponds to the "cleansing" we were just talking about. But it is the "social cleansing" aspect of the matter which probably deserves the most attention here.

Yes. For instance, I remember a debate from the 1980s and 1990s – the government wanted to depopulate the region, and the armed clashes led to this result. People fled to metropolitan areas. As a direct consequence, we ended up with contradictory situations – those sectors who were struggling for Kurdish liberation and upholding the Kurdish identity and language became increasingly assimilated into the large cities of Turkey and Europe, while the families of the pro-government militia called *korucu* remained behind, becoming the carriers of the Kurdish language. We created such contradictions. These phenomena were observed by academics, who published various studies on them. Now, the latest events are leading to the forced migration of individuals who had previously taken refuge in Suriçi and were trying to make a living there. I'm not making a statement about whether or not this was intended, but the result is indisputable. Meanwhile, the government's decree for the "urgent expropriation" of certain buildings hasn't created any of the uproar one would normally expect. This presents a great opportunity to the government – urgent expropriations create the ideal environment for planned urban transformation, starting with

The government's decree for the "urgent expropriation" of certain buildings hasn't created any of the uproar one would normally expect. This presents a great opportunity to the government – urgent expropriations create the ideal environment for planned urban transformation, starting with depopulation.

depopulation. I think this is a fair way to summarize the results of the situation.

All of this, in addition to the hypocrisy, failures, and ideological dilemmas around the issue I just mentioned of protection and restoration, make me doubt whether we really honestly want to preserve the historical legacy. I'm not aware of any other society which keeps babbling on about history and ancient culture, while inflicting the greatest damage on the very artefacts of those cultures. ISIS vandals overtly destroy an ancient site, and legitimize it with their ideological arguments, but we, claiming to be vastly different from them, end up inflicting more or less the same damage. It is a great pity. Today Toledo is on the agenda, yesterday it was UNESCO – we're under the illusion that some magic formula will resolve all our problems. On the contrary, we have to formulate our own solutions – if we are not able to coexist, we cannot hope to build cities together or protect what belongs to all of us.

In the case of Diyarbakır more specifically, there was already a disjuncture between the government's and the Kurdish movement's perspectives on and priorities regarding the urban heritage of the city. You had the central government, Ankara, on the one hand, and local government, whether you call it Qandil, Kurdish Communities Union (KCK), municipalities etc, on the other. These political actors were waging a struggle over the urban space in various ways. There were stark contrasts between the two sides on many issues – what to do with a certain stadium, how to use an abandoned public building, what name or function to assign to some avenue, or what symbolic meanings to attribute to urban space. In this sense the city was a space of struggle. It was a stalemate, in chess terms. For instance, due to the tension between these two camps, it wasn't even possible to replace the old sidewalk in the Dağkapı or Sheikh Sait Square. The Ankara bureaucracy and the local bureaucracy, or the priorities of the central government and the NGOs were always pitted against each other. The recent clashes have now escalated this conflict to a very bloody and violent level. But what we're witnessing here is simply a new phase of an ongoing conflict, and I'm worried about what direction we're heading in.

We can all see what is being done under the pretext of urban transformation in Suriçi. Let us discuss Bağlar, which is located at the heart of the city and has some very valuable real estate. Indeed, as you indicate in your book, it constitutes the very centre of Diyarbakır. What do you make of the curfew declared in Bağlar?
It was to be expected. Everyone could sense that urban transformation would come to Bağlar sooner or later, and that the current residents of Bağlar would be declared "unfit" to live in a neighbourhood which presented such attractive rent-seeking opportunities. Nevertheless, naturally we could not foresee that it would happen in such a manner. Now the government and its housing administration TOKİ have seized the opportunity. Of course, this should be considered as another dilemma in the broader context of a rolling saga – Bağlar today, Şehitlik tomorrow… Following this logic, the government may well attempt to redesign the entire country. We witness how those very sectors which used to complain of social engineering, are the same ones which are engaged in social engineering themselves. Social engineering does not happen solely through intellectual efforts. It also happens through civil engineering, which goes hand in hand with mechanical or electrical engineering. All of these are interconnected. We had previously seen the precursors of this discourse of development, or of making Turkey a global and regional leader. The so-called crazy mega projects or urban transformation schemes were the embodiments of such a discourse. Now, the same process continues around the formula of "public order". The government talks of expropriation, but what does it entail? Will they return to the public what has become private, or will the state take everything under its control instead? I fear the latter scenario is much more probable, since all our experience up until now points in that direction.

The purpose of the government's latest expropriation decree is evident. What do you think about the actors outside the state, such as local government, civil society organizations, or other groups which should have a say in this transformation? How can they participate in this process and how should the debate proceed?
First of all, we should not forget to ask ourselves how civilian these civil society organizations really are, and how much initiative political actors are actually able to take. We can say that the political arena is becoming increasingly constrained, certainly since the general election on June 7, 2015. Violence is on the rise once again, and until we somehow break through this vicious circle of violence, urban questions will continue to be determined by conflict. I don't believe that we're passing the test on questions such as how civilian the civilian actors really are or whether political actors can really start a political debate on these issues. I don't hold a sanguine outlook for the short term. What will happen in the urban arena is closely tied to macro political variables… Everything is being discussed and decided in metropolitan centres as we speak, because it is all dependent on the rising political violence across Turkey and the course of the Syrian civil war. So we come back to the main problem – remembering that the Kurdish question is also a question of space. And, in addition, that this is also the "Kurdistan question". It will probably be necessary to take up the matter through a much more radical perspective than we have been doing, now that we see how our past arguments have become null and void. We need to take a more critical look at how we fared in issues such as autonomy, self-government or participation. And in the short term, I don't have optimistic expectations.

Interview by Fırat Genç

Suriçi after the blockade and destruction

We conducted a written interview in April 2016, for the third issue of **saha**, with Nevin Soyukaya, Management Director of Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape Site, to discuss the current situation of Suriçi, Diyarbakır's old town, which has been the scene of armed conflict and curfews for several months. Soyukaya emphasizes that urban conservation efforts, which figure high on the current agenda, cannot be limited to the reconstruction of buildings, and that the demands and concerns of the local residents must also be integrated into the conservation process.

Let's start by discussing the scope of the destruction in Suriçi. How would you summarize the developments which have occurred since the summer of 2015?

Nevin Soyukaya: There is a curfew in the Cevatpaşa and Dabanoğlu neighbourhoods of Suriçi, situated in the district of Sur. The latest curfew has been ongoing for 105 days as of today [April 2016]. In the neighbourhoods of Fatihpaşa, Hasırlı, Cemal Yılmaz and Savaş, five curfews were declared between September 6-13, October 10-13, November 28-29 and December 2-10. The curfew which began on December 11 is still ongoing. During the six curfews the neighbourhoods were placed under blockade. Furthermore curfews were imposed between January 27-February 3, 2016 in the Ziya Gökalp, Süleyman Nazif, Abdaldede, Lalabey and Alipaşa neighbourhoods of the Suriçi area.

Curfews, blockades, and clashes with heavy weaponry have wreaked havoc on the urban fabric and traditional streets of Suriçi, which has urban conservation site status, not to mention a number of buildings, some of which are under protection.

In Kurşunlu Mosque, an architectural site with official protection status located in Fatihpaşa neighbourhood, armed conflict has inflicted irreparable damage to the portico columns of the outer narthex, and on the northern walls. The prayer hall was burned down, and the fire left major damage to the walls and interior decorative elements of the structure. The

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mosque's fountain and courtyard walls, which had been recently reconstructed, have been razed to the ground completely.

Sheikh Mutahhar Mosque, famous for its Four-Legged Minaret, is another structure which has been badly hit during the conflict. Two of the four pillars which buttress the minaret were struck with heavy weapons. Photographs show that, aside from the pillars, the load-bearing lintel has also been damaged. Photographs published by the media reveal how the mosque's courtyard walls were demolished to enable the passage of armoured vehicles. The stores annexed to St. Giragos Armenian Church, the largest Armenian Catholic church in the Middle East, and the adjacent Chaldean Church were also destroyed for the same purpose. These stores used to give Yenikapı Street its unique character.

Paşa Hammam, one of seven historical public baths to have survived to the present day in Suriçi, made headlines in the beginning of the conflict when its frigidarium was engulfed in flames. More recent media photographs show that a section of the frigidarium was later demolished.

Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality had started an architectural restoration project in a building, which is an excellent example of traditional civilian architecture, to be used as Mehmet Uzun Museum. Aerial photos published in the media reveal that one section of this building has been destroyed. The section which has been destroyed included a *kabaltı,* a narrow passageway allowing pedestrians to pass under a building – one of the most important and unique elements of traditional Diyarbakır street architecture. From the photographs we can see that many other examples of civilian architecture have been completely or partially demolished. Clearly this destruction has inflicted irreparable damage to the integrity of the original streets and architectural fabric of the urban conservation site.

An aerial photo taken on April 3 gives us a comprehensive view of the general destruction. The photograph shows that the army has created new roads, expanded the streets of Yenikapı and

Clearly this destruction has inflicted irreparable damage to the integrity of the original streets and architectural fabric of the urban conservation site.

***Photo:** Volkan Yılmaz Erdoğmuş*

Yıkıkkaya, turned the primary schools of Cumhuriyet, Süleyman Nazif and Mardin Kapı into military outposts, and demolished the buildings around these to turn them into large squares with the approval of the Urban Conservation Committee. They have also connected these squares to the newly created roads. Can the conflict itself account for such a well planned destruction? After it was announced that the military operations were over, heavy duty vehicles moved in to demolish buildings and started to carry the rubble outside the city walls – this work is still ongoing today. These actions are not legal and go against the Urban Conservation Zoning Plan.

The destruction of the urban space in Suriçi was accompanied by a wave of emigration. Do you think the locals will be able to return to their homes? What actions must be taken to enable this? What must be done, in your view, to avoid a complete depopulation of the area?

The clashes which followed the curfews and blockades inflicted immense damage on the Suriçi Urban Conservation Site in various ways. The armed conflict not only destroyed the architectural structures in the zone, but also upended social and private lives. Handicraft production and trade collapsed, and the families whose homes were demolished were forced to flee. Daily life in the area, which dates back thousands of years, has all but disappeared.

What is needed in the area is not only the reconstruction of architecture, but also the rehabilitation of the social-economic and cultural life. In this context, any future architectural renovation must be human-cantered to ensure that the rehabilitation work does not disrupt or modify the demographic structure in the zone. In order to ensure that this process functions in a positive manner, all activities must be carried out in coordination with local initiatives.

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However on March 21, 2016, the Council of Ministers issued a decree expropriating 82 percent of Suriçi, completely eradicating any possibility of such a human-cantered rehabilitation process. The expropriation of these houses will push their residents, who are bearers of the cultural legacy of the region, outside

the Sur area, making any human-cantered approach impossible.

Are there any initiatives to measure and recover the damage inflicted on the historical structures and civilian buildings? What actions have been taken at central and local government levels? Is it possible to talk of any coordination between different institutions?
In Suriçi, heavy guns were employed and there were huge explosions. A participatory commission must be set up to document in detail all the destruction which has taken place in the area. The commission must include officials from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, but also experts from Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality and Sur municipalities, specialists from Site Management Directorate's Monitoring and Control Department, as well as representatives from the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, ICOMOS Turkey National Committee and ICOFORT Turkey Commission. Once the scope and scale of the destruction is documented, teams of specialists created by these institutions must oversee efforts for removing the rubble as well as for the rehabilitation, restoration and conservation work. This should be done with the participation of the Site Management Directorate and other urban initiatives. Once the architectural renovation work gets under way, the houses of those Suriçi residents who had to flee during the conflict should be rebuilt. Locals must be able to return to their homes without any more suffering. All of these activities must be carried out in accordance with the Urban Conservation Zoning Plan and Site Management Plan, in conjunction with national legislation, international conventions and standards.

Currently the ongoing efforts exclude Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality, Sur municipalities and Site Management Directorate, whose participation is *sine qua non.* The Site Management Directorate sent a written message to Diyarbakır Governor's Office and Ministry of Culture and Tourism indicating that, as per national and international legislation, and since the area is a World Heritage Buffer Zone, these efforts must be carried out in a participatory manner, together with local initiatives. But we didn't receive a positive response to this request.

In the summer the walls were added to UNESCO's world heritage list. How will this process develop? What is the position of international bodies on this issue?
During the brief ceasefires between curfews, specialists from Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality's urban conservation bureau KUDEB as well as monitoring and control experts from the Site Management Directorate were able to enter the area to see the situation firsthand. They published a report based on their findings. However it hasn't been possible to carry out any similar on-site analysis since December 11, owing to the latest curfew and blockade, and the absence of a lull in the conflict. Specialists are keeping track of the destruction by storing all related media footage and images. All of the reports published thus far highlight that the rubble must be separated before being moved out, and that participation must be ensured in all the restoration and rehabilitation work. The Site Management Directorate has communicated its demands to be included in the process to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, UNESCO Turkish National Commission, ICOMOS Turkish National Commission and ICORP Turkish National Commission. But we are still waiting to receive an answer.

Photo: Volkan Yılmaz Erdoğmuş

As you know, UNESCO is a UN body and deals with nation states in issues relating to world heritage sites. In the case of damage to such an area, the concerned state must inform UNESCO's World Heritage Centre. Otherwise, UNESCO will demand that the Ministry of Culture of the state issue a report on the situation. Such a process is probably now in motion regarding Diyarbakır. UNESCO keeps track of the situation on the basis of information it receives from the state. When it deems it necessary, UNESCO may send a commission of specialists to analyse the situation firsthand on the ground and hear the arguments of state officials. We believe that UNESCO has demanded information about Diyarbakır and is currently monitoring the developments.

Can you comment on the reconstruction of Suriçi? Have any initiatives been started at a local or central level?
We understand from the media that the central government has plans for the area, but the Site Management Directorate hasn't been given any information about this, and the directorate has not been included in the ongoing efforts. The Metropolitan Municipality has reported that, despite the ongoing curfew, the central government has started to remove rubble, and a number of earth-moving trucks have been seen entering and exiting the area.

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A NEW PERIOD IN TURKISH MIGRATION POLICY: SYRIAN REFUGEES AS A FOREIGN POLICY INSTRUMENT

What are the implications of the Readmission Agreement signed between the EU and Turkey? How is the immigration of Syrians en mass affecting Turkey's migration policy? In her piece published in the second issue of **saha** in January 2016, Didem Danış, faculty member at Galatasaray University, writes that, in the face of immense suffering created by the Syrian civil war, governments in both Turkey and Europe are pursuing opportunistic policies with scant regard for human values.

Migration studies, traditionally viewed as a secondary or even superficial discipline by Turkey's social science community, has recently gained an upsurge in popularity. Key to this development has undoubtedly been the dramatic footage of refugee flight broadcast across international media, and the increasing numbers and visibility of Syrian refugees across European capitals and Turkish cities, big or small. The year 2015 witnessed increasing numbers of refugees trying to reach Greece via the Aegean Sea, with many paying the ultimate price for the exhausting journey; clashes in Europe between security forces and immigrants trying to cross national borders on foot; and attempts in numerous countries, including Turkey, to draw a direct link between immigrants and terror attacks.

The year 2015 heralded another important development for Turkey in the form of the joint action plan agreed between Turkey and EU at the end of November – this constitutes a milestone in Turkey's policy towards migrants. Unnerved by the "refugee crisis" afflicting EU's borders during the summer of 2015,[1] European politicians sought an urgent solution, which ultimately led them to reach out to their Turkish counterparts. This embracement came despite the absence of any admission talks between Turkey and EU in the past 11 years, and the continuous reiteration of many European leaders, notably Angela Merkel, of their opposition to the prospect of Turkey joining the EU.[2] As highlighted by numerous experts at the time, both parties were engaging in a game of diplomatic cat and mouse with both acting hypocritically to preserve their own interests. In return for Turkey's commitment to putting a brake on the refugee flow, the EU accepted not only the opening of new chapters in the admission talks with Turkey, but also announced that Turkish citizens might be allowed to enter the EU visa-free if Turkey were to meet 72 conditions – of particular note being the implementation of the Readmission Agreement signed in 2013.

Harshly criticized by NGOs, such as Amnesty International, who defend the rights of refugees and immigrants, this "dirty deal" is nothing new for those studying the issue. When the Readmission Agreement was first brought to the table in 2010, Migrant Solidarity Network *(Göçmen Dayanışma Ağı)* initiated a petition campaign which

> The Readmission Agreement signed between the EU and Turkey is a typical example of how refugees are being instrumentalised by states in their domestic and foreign policy manoeuvrings.

clearly outlined what the EU's earlier bribe, in the form of visa-free travel, would mean for refugees:

> "The Turkish government is trying to strike a visa-free travel deal with the EU. If a deal is reached it means business people, journalists, artists and academics will be able to travel to EU countries without a visa. In return, the EU demands that the Turkish government sign another agreement: that is, if the "Readmission Agreement" is agreed upon, all irregular migrants arrested in the EU who have entered via

> Turkey would be sent back to Turkey. In this event thousands of people would be subjected to the inhumane treatment witnessed along the Turkish-Greek border during the previous readmission agreement; they will be locked up in concentration and refoulement centres for indefinite periods of time in violation of their basic human rights."

Five years ago we ended this petition with the following: "We deem it unacceptable for one social group to enjoy visa liberalization in return for the deportation, oppression and suffering of others."[3] Today, we are witnessing the second stage of the same dirty deal. The latest plan, which was drawn up to implement the 2012 agreement, is a typical example of refugees being instrumentalised by states as part of their domestic and foreign policy manoeuvrings. Turkey is not the only state to do so – the same goes for Germany and other EU countries. Although they have accepted a very limited number of refugees to date, unnerved EU countries are doing all they can to stem new arrivals, even resorting to making saccharine promises, largely symbolic, to the Turkish government, whose authoritarian ways they had harshly criticized until recently. In turn the Turkish government, following the previous example of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, is enjoying its position of haggler, assuring European leaders – "If you accept our demands, we will stop people from crossing to the EU." In 2010, upon the invitation of Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi, Gaddafi arrived in Italy and happily posed for the cameras alongside those same European leaders who had branded him a terrorist. At the time Europe's migrant problem consisted largely of black Africans who were "flocking" to the Schengen lands via North Africa. Referring to these

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Sub-Saharan migrants, Gaddafi told Europe "Give me 4 billion euros per year, I will stop unwanted migrants and prevent Europe from turning black." The price seems to have fallen these days, but Turkish Prime Minister Davutoğlu, who enjoys espousing the rhetoric of principles and virtues, put his signature under a fairly similar deal worth 3 billion euros.

The Turkish state is fully aware that this long-discussed readmission deal risks turning Turkey into a buffer zone. A senior expert on migration, Kemal Kirişci published an article in 2007 in which he stated that Turkish officials were worried about the economic, social and political risks associated with Turkey becoming a "safe third country" or "first country of asylum".[4] Officials believed that the signing of such an agreement before the completion of Turkey's EU accession bid, would leave Turkey permanently stuck outside Europe. The EU, on the other hand, remains fearful that Turkish citizens would stream into Turkey following any visa liberalization. Ultimately however both the EU and Turkey have decided to put their mutual concerns aside in favour of the common opportunistic perspective which has come to prevail on both sides. European leaders are desperate to prevent more refugees and immigrants from entering, and striving to appease their respective constituencies, which are increasingly tilting towards anti-immigrant far-right parties across the continent, all of whom are reaping the benefits of criticizing their governments for not being tough enough on immigration. Turkey, on the other hand, after backing the wrong winner in the Syrian civil war (Let it not be forgotten that the Turkish president stated "We shall soon enter Damascus and perform the salaat at Umayyad Mosque" on September 5, 2012), is now trying to capitalise on the unexpected residue of the war – "the refugee crisis". Turkey, with its typically pragmatic approach, is trying to instrumentalise the biggest refugee crisis in its history for both domestic and foreign policy purposes.

This instrumentalisation is nothing new, and constitutes what is now a classic method in AKP's governing style. According to BBC Turkish, then Prime Minister Erdoğan stated back in 2010

> The Readmission Agreement has sounded the death toll for Turkey's EU membership dream. The EU will never now accept as a member a country which it has turned into a buffer zone at such a high cost.

that immigrants from Armenia could be deported, in retaliation to the decision by the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee and the Swedish parliament to recognize the Armenian Genocide: "There are 170,000 Armenians in my country; 70,000 of these are my citizens. We are just turning a blind eye on the rest for the time being. What should I do now? I will tell these 100,000 people to go back to their countries. I will do it. Why? Because they are not my citizens. I do not have to keep them in my country. They may not be aware, but these actions unfortunately have a negative effect on our magnanimous approach to these people." Such words demonstrate that, in this age of neoliberal governmentality in which states possess full information on those unregistered foreigners within their boundaries, they are happy to tolerate their presence when deemed necessary for an ulterior motive. These immigrants both serve the economy as a cheap pool of labour, but are also useful as a diplomatic trump card when it becomes politically expedient to use the threat of deportation.

Let us return to the deal reached with the EU in November – its most important impact will be on making it possible for Syrian refugees to settle in Turkey permanently. After the readmission agreement is implemented, all irregular foreigners arrested in Europe will be sent back to Turkey, if they are proven to have entered the EU via Turkey. For this purpose, some facilities constructed with EU funds as reception and accommodation centres have already been turned into refoulement centres.[5]

Considering that the readmission agreement signed previously with Greece only resulted in a limited number of foreigners being sent back to Turkey, the real effect of the readmission agreement with the EU will be one of deterrence. Writing in 2011 about the readmission agreement between Turkey and the EU, Ahmet İçduygu similarly argued that the most significant power of these agreements lies in their role of deterrence, rather than on reducing the numbers of irregular immigrants in the target country.[6] Within the scope of the Readmission Protocol reached with Greece, Greece wanted to send 65,300 foreigners back to Turkey between 2002-2010 for allegedly having crossed the Greek-Turkish border illegally. But Turkey accepted that only 10,124 of those had actually come from Turkey.[7]

It is clear that the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement which came into effect in 2016 will not result in all irregular immigrants in the EU being sent to Turkey. A limited number of immigrants will be sent back, not to radically reduce the current number of foreigners in the EU, but rather to send the message to potential immigrants – "We don't want you and will send you back if you try to enter." Europe, it seems, does not expect the Syrian civil war to end any time soon, and is taking measures to prevent future waves of migrants, like the one witnessed in summer 2015.

Turkey, on the other hand, by utilizing the immigrant population on its territory as a trump card during the negotiations, has secured 3 billion Euros per year for the reception and accommodation of Syrians, has received the promise of "visa-free travel to Europe" in order to appease those social groups which might otherwise oppose this decision, and has reactivated the EU accession bid which remains a long-awaited achievement in foreign policy. It would not be wrong to say that, in the eyes of Turkish officials, this triple gift package largely outweighs the costs of border patrol service to the EU.

Before ending this section it must be reiterated that the deal, which has supposedly reopened chapters in the EU accession talks, has conversely sounded the death toll for Turkey's EU membership dream. The EU will never accept as a member a country which it has turned into a buffer zone at such a high cost. We should remember the statement

made by French Prime Minister Manuel Valls following the attacks in Paris in November 2015 – "We cannot accept more refugees to Europe", confirming that the plan to settle refugees in countries neighbouring Syria must be taken seriously. The same opinion is shared by the German chancellor Angela Merkel, whose desire to create a buffer zone around the EU border prompted her to pose on gold-gilded chairs with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan immediately before the 1 November, 2015 elections in Turkey. The hypocritical policy that the EU is pursuing for its own interests, and the "successful" negotiations struck by Turkey, have allowed the Turkish side to turn the "refugee crisis" into a great "opportunity".

Evolution of Turkey's policy towards immigrants

Migration into Turkey from the last century of the Ottoman Empire up until the present day can be divided into three main periods. During the first "nationalist" period, the objective was the Turkification of the domestic population, and this led to mainly Turks from neighbouring countries being welcomed. From the end of the Cold War, a second "global" period was formed by the political and economic upheaval in the region and the impact of globalization. The last, and present, period is a "post-nationalist neo-Ottomanist" era, initiated by the arrival of Syrians and bolstered by Ottomanist, Islamist and conservative discourses.

The migration policies in the first and second period, spanning the 150 years from the mid-19th century when the Ottoman Empire started to lose territory up until the early 1990s, show a significant continuity. During this period, which can be characterized as "nationalist", the objective was to construct a new nation state to replace the collapsing empire which had harboured multiple ethnic and religious groups.[8] Demographic policy was undoubtedly an integral part of this effort. The forced migration and genocide of Armenians, the exchange of Greece's Muslim population with the Greeks in Turkey, and the emigrations (forced and voluntary) of Levantine and other non-Muslim minorities figured among the major manoeuvres to Turkify the population.

Keen on expanding and Turkifying the domestic population, the leaders of the young Turkish Republic encouraged the settlement of over 1.6 million immigrants between 1923 and 1997. A large majority of the newcomers were considered "kin" and were rapidly granted Turkish citizenship. Meanwhile, non-Muslim minorities chose to or were forced to leave Turkey, adding further momentum to the Turkification drive.[9] Thus until the last two decades, the main policy has been to encourage the arrival of "kin" groups from the old territories of the Ottoman Empire into Turkey.

This policy of rapidly granting citizenship status and permanent settlement permits to kin groups thought to have ethnic, religious and cultural bonds with the Turkish population was abandoned from the 1990s onwards. The identity of the new immigrants was the main factor which heralded the new period in the 1990s. In the previous period, immigrants were seen as *muhajir* (immigrants), kin, and people of Turkish origin, and described as "Turkey's desirable immigrants"[10] or "domestic foreigners". Those who arrived after 1990, however, hailed from a much wider region and held diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. They included people from Sub-Saharan Africa; Moldavians, Romanians, Georgians and Armenians from ex-Soviet republics; transit migrants stuck in Turkey for indefinite periods while trying to reach Europe; pensioners from Northern European countries, and many others. These new immigrants groups had weaker ethnic and cultural ties to the Turkish society and were considered by locals to be "real foreigners". Unlike the previous *muhajir* who were rapidly integrated and granted citizenship, the new immigrants held ambiguous legal status and other conditions. Turkish migration policy was no longer in favour of permanent settlement, and the immigrants themselves considered their stay to be temporary. As a result, these groups did not focus on settling down, creating a life, and seeking success in Turkey. In the context of globalization and post-nationalist imagination, the experiences of "here" were deemed important only for reaching "there". Turkey had become a place of purgatory.

Finally, due to the absence of state support and social assistance programs as well as the insufficient number of NGOs, the immigrants chose to solve their problems through the social networks they had brought along or built here. This situation, which we refer to as "*de facto* integration", required all groups to mobilize their social capital, and build their own inner solidarity and community networks.[11]

The key development in the legal arena in this period was the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which was passed in 2013 within the scope of the EU integration process. The date might give the impression that it was a direct response to Syrian immigration, but preliminary work on the law dated back to the National Action Plan for Migration and Refuge of 2005. Although the law of 2013 introduced certain improvements in the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees, it did not mark a radical change in the arbitrary and ambivalent treatment of foreigners in Turkey.[12] The geographic limitation in the 1951 Geneva Convention prevented non-European asylum-seekers from gaining refugee status in Turkey, such that even asylum-seekers registered by the state found themselves with an ambiguous and temporary status. More importantly, as shown by researchers Özge Biner and Cavidan Soykan, the arbitrary nature of the actual implementation of the law, regardless of the legal framework, resulted in severe violations of rights.[13]

The third and present period in our migration history started in March 2011, with the mass immigration of Syrians fleeing the armed conflict in their country. There are certain characteristics which differentiate Syrians from the previous groups which had sought refuge in, or migrated to, Turkey. First, they come in huge numbers. As of November 2015, there are over two million Syrian citizens in Turkey, 250,000 of whom live in camps and the rest in cities. A simple comparison with the number of newcomers in the previous waves of migrants and asylum-seekers shows that Syrian refugees represent a huge population of unprecedented size. During the republican era, the largest group to arrive in Turkey was the 800,000 *muhajir* from the Balkans between 1923 and 1945. They were welcomed with open arms, mainly because they arrived over a long period of time, and were of "Turkish

race and culture”. They also arrived at a time when the nascent republic was in need of a larger population.[14] The other major groups who sought asylum in Turkey were as follows: 384,000 people arrived from Greece during the population exchange between 1922 and 1938; 51,000 people came from Iraq fleeing the Halabja massacre of 1988; 345,000 people escaped from the ethnic assimilation policies in Bulgaria in 1989; 467,000 people fled the Saddam Hussein regime after the Gulf War in 1991; 20,000 people were forced to abandon Bosnia during the civil war of 1992-1998; 17,000 people came from Kosovo in 1999, and 10,000 from Macedonia in 2001.[15] Of these, Iraqis constituted the second most numerous group after the *muhajir,* and almost all of them returned to their country later on. Half of those who came from Bulgaria in 1989 also returned. The numbers show that Syrians form a unique group – not only do they number over two million but they have also not yet had the chance to return to Syria and are unlikely to do so any time soon.[16]

Aside from their large numbers, another factor which sets Syrians apart is the very “positive” reception policy which they were greeted with by the government, which had previously been reserved to groups of Turkish origin. Although criticized by NGOs for being temporary and ambiguous, the Turkish state’s “open door policy”, the Regulation on Temporary Protection passed in October 2014, which was still in force until a few months ago, and the decision to grant temporary residence permits to Syrians represented a more favourable refugee policy than that seen in any previous humanitarian crisis in the Middle East. This friendly policy was highly praised by foreign observers.[17]

Society’s reception of Syrians is more ambivalent, however. One sector views Syrians as a “burden” and openly refuses them. They attribute the rise in house rents and unemployment to Syrians, and underscore their ethnic and cultural differences. On the other hand, pious and conservative sectors of the society, which are more numerous, employ a discourse of assistance based on two major historical references: The first is Islamic fraternity between the “*ansar* and *muhajir*” as mentioned in the Quran,[18] the second is the neo-Ottomanist argument that “Turks have a historical responsibility toward the peoples of the Ottoman empire.” As such, Islamic charity groups uphold the concept of “Islamic fraternity”, by offering religious and linguistic education to Syrians in Quran schools, and distributing aid via the local branches of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (*mufti*’s offices). In doing so, they also prevent a social backlash against Syrian immigrants[19]

To summarize, Turkey has been gradually transformed into a country of migration with the arrival of different immigrant and asylum-seeker groups since the 1990s. Although this process was first disregarded by the authorities, things have started to change with the arrival of Syrians, and finally, with the Brussels deal signed in November. Considered to be “guests” for a long time, Syrians were granted legal status, albeit partial, through the Regulation on Temporary Protection in October 2014. The readmission agreement signed with the EU makes it possible for them to settle permanently in Turkey. Now, measures must be taken to change the widespread perception that Syrians are “guests” who will soon leave, and to provide them with work permits and access to education and healthcare to allow them to build a future here. Let us hope that this new period does not usher in new inequalities through neoliberal projects such as granting citizenship to those who buy houses in Turkey.[20]

[1] Between January 1 and November 23, 2015, 744,000 people entered Europe from Greece. The largest group among these were Syrians, who numbered 388,000, followed by Afghans, who numbered 142,000. See http://missingmigrants.iom.int/sites/default/files/Mediterranean_Update_27_November_1.jpg.

[2] When the deal was reached, French president François Hollande told journalists that "There is no reason to accelerate or decelerate Turkey's membership process." Hollande indicated that "There are no changes in the issue or its circumstances." See http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2015/11/29/crise-des-migrants-l-union-europeenne-et-la-turquie-trouvent-un-accord_4820070_3214.html.

[3] See https://bianet.org/bianet/dunya/125103-sinirsiz-bir-dunya-icin-bir-imza-siz-verin.

[4] Kemal Kirişci, "Border Management and EU-Turkish Relations: Convergence or Deadlock," *EUI-RSCAS Research Project Series* (CARIM Research Report, 2007/3): 17 and 45. Although I value the opinions of Kemal Kirişci, one of the academics who is most knowledgeable about the Readmission Agreement and Turkey-EU relations, it is impossible to agree with his argument that such an agreement creating a huge burden on Turkey would be "fair" only if it brings visa liberalization to Turkish citizens. Such a perspective completely disregards immigrants, who are an "invisible" yet very important party in this matter, and some of whom could become refugees in the future.

[5] For instance, the reception and accommodation centre in Kayseri with capacity for 750 people, whose construction began in 2012, was transformed into a refoulement centre following a decision in August 2015.

[6] Ahmet İçduygu, "The Irregular Migration Corridor between the EU and Turkey: Is it Possible to Block it with a Readmission Agreement?," *EUI-RSCAS Research Project Series* (EU-US Immigration Systems, 2011/14): 12.

[7] Ibid.,7.

[8] Social science and history studies in the last two decades have produced a very rich literature on the Turkification policies of the late Ottoman and early republican periods. See studies by Ayhan Aktar, Rifat Bali, Rıdvan Akar, Fuat Dündar and Ahmet Yıldız among others.

[9] Kemal Kirişci, "Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration Practices," *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 3 (2000): 1-22; Soner Çağaptay, "Kim Türk, Kim Vatandaş? Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Vatandaşlık Rejimi Üzerine Bir Çalışma," *Toplum ve Bilim* 98 (2003).

[10] Didem Danış and Ayşe Parla, "Nafile Soydaşlık: Irak ve Bulgaristan Türkleri Örneğinde Göçmen, Dernek, Devlet," *Toplum ve Bilim* 114 (2009): 131-158.

[11] Didem Danış, Jean-François Pérouse and Cherie Taraghi, "Integration in Limbo: Iraqi, Afghan and Maghrebi Migrants in Istanbul," in *Land of Diverse Migrations,* eds. Ahmet İçduygu and Kemal Kirişci (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009).

[12] Cavidan Soykan's paper entitled "A New Era after a New Law? A Sociological Analysis of the Turkish Asylum System in Times of Transition," presented to the international workshop *In motion: Movements, Crossings and Transfers in Turkey,* The British Institute at Ankara, Ankara, September 26-27, 2014.

[13] Soykan, "A New Era after a New Law?"; Özge Biner, "Yasanın ve Sınırın İçinde Kalabilmenin Kural(sızlığ)ı: Türkiye'de Yasallık ve Sınırdışı Edilebilirlik Arasındaki İlişkiye Dair Çıkarımlar," in *Sınır ve Sınırdışı: Türkiye'de Yabancılar, Göç ve Devlete Disiplinlerarası Bakışlar,* eds. Didem Danış and İbrahim Soysüren (İstanbul: Nota Bene Yayınları, 2014): 383-401.

[14] Sema Erder, "Balkan Göçmenleri ve Değişen Uygulamalar: İskân Kurumunun Dostları," *Türkiye'nin Ulusal ve Uluslararası Göç Politikaları, 1923-2023,* TÜBİTAK Raporu, Ahmet İçduygu, Sema Erder and Ömer Faruk Gençkaya (İstanbul, January 2014).

[15] *Türkiye ve Göç* (Ankara: Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 2015): 10-11.

[16] A quantitative analysis of migration towards Europe presents a different picture. After 15 million people had to flee their homes during World War II, the next biggest crisis to hit Europe was the arrival of 1.2 million refugees escaping from the wars in the Balkans during the 1990s. According to August 2015 data by UNHCR, in the fourth year of the Syrian conflict, there were 1.9 million Syrians in Turkey; 1.2 million in Lebanon; 630,000 in Jordan; 132,000 in Egypt and 250,000 Iraq. In addition to those people who had left the country, close to 7 million people were internally displaced within Syria.

[17] For instance, Professor Dawn Chatty, a senior researcher at University of Oxford's Refugee Studies Centre, has frequently expressed her appreciation of Turkey's approach towards Syrian refugees. But it must be kept in mind that European academics and journalists such as Chatty compare Turkey's refugee policies not with Europe but with Middle Eastern countries such as Jordan and Lebanon. See http://researchturkey.org/interview-with-professor-dawn-chatty-the-situation-of-syrian-refugees-in-the-neighbouring-countries/.

[18] The fraternity of the *ansar* and *muhajir* may be seen as a model of integration, which harks back to how Muslims of Medina welcomed their Meccan coreligionists with "fondness and friendship", and how the prophet of Islam declared the locals and immigrants "brothers" to encourage them to mingle.

[19] As of yet there are no studies on the relationship between Islamic charity organizations, *mufti*'s offices, pious and conservative philanthropists, and refugees in Turkey.

[20] At a conference in October 2015, Minister of Economy Nihat Zeybekçi suggested that the citizenship system of many countries depended on the value of houses purchased, and proposed that foreigners buying houses above a certain price should be rapidly granted citizenship. See http://www.gazetevatan.com/once-mutekabiliyet-simdi-vatandaslik--873987-ekonomi/

Interview by Ayşe Çavdar

Who are refugees, what do they teach us?

The onset of the Syrian crisis has forced Turkey to confront a serious legal challenge which it had hitherto been postponing for many years. In January 2016, we met Oktay Durukan of Refugee Rights Turkey to discuss what implications the state's legal relations with Syrian refugees may have for citizens of the Turkish Republic.

What does Refugee Rights Turkey do?
Oktay Durukan: Since March 2015, Refugee Rights Turkey is the new institutional framework for the activities which we used to carry out under the umbrella of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Turkey. For 13 years in total, we have been working to ensure that asylum-seekers have access to legal protection mechanisms in Turkey.

During the first years of our activity, there was no law or official decision-making mechanism in this field in Turkey. So we started by offering a legal support service which focused on the problems experienced by asylum-seekers during their procedures at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). We quickly realised that their problems arise from the fact that there is no proper legislative or policy framework concerning people who seek refuge and protection in Turkey – everything is managed in an arbitrary fashion, which is totally dependent on the discretionary powers of administrators. In response, over the years, we have increasingly carried out advocacy work which focuses on improving asylum-seeking legislation and policies. We've released reports and recommendation documents on critical issues, and strived to influence political actors and bureaucrats. Simultaneously we've expanded our legal support and attorney service beyond UNHCR procedures to include other problems faced by asylum-seekers in their dealings with the administration, such as the national asylum-seeking system and administrative monitoring and deportation, which fall under the authority of the National Police Department. As a result of the number of asylum seekers in Turkey rising constantly,

and the processes becoming more and more complicated, we realised that the handful of NGOs who are operating with limited means are not able to meet the huge demand for legal support in the field. Starting with this observation, we initiated capacity development activities meant to encourage lawyers' specialisation on asylum law, in order to mobilise bar associations, legal help mechanisms, and the community of jurists around this issue. We organised training programs across Turkey, and created reference guides for lawyers. All of these efforts continue today.

As such, Refugee Rights Turkey intervenes in the files of individual asylum-seekers through direct legal support through its specialised teams, and also performs a monitoring and advocacy function on a more systematic level by keeping track of policies and practices and creating pressure and influence to improve them.

Could you elaborate on the legal status of Syrians in Turkey?

For many years, there has been serious confusion in Turkey about the concepts of refugee and asylum-seeker. Let me distinguish between various legal concepts concerning asylum, because this is necessary for grasping the specific situation of Syrians. The law in Turkey which regulates this field is called the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, and it defines "refugee" as a very specific status, based on Article 1 of 1951 Refugee Convention. In brief, the 1951 Convention defines a number of responsibilities for states regarding the protection of individuals who seek asylum in other countries having been targeted, persecuted or deprived of legal protection in their own country due to factors such as ethnic / religious identity, political activity, sexual identity or sexual orientation. As such, to be considered a "refugee" in the sense of the 1951 Convention, there must exist a danger at a more individual level due to specific reasons. According to the Convention, the signatory countries agree to grant "refugee" status and a number of rights and freedoms to individuals who meet these criteria.

From a wider perspective, however, it is clear that the reasons which force people to become refugees and seek asylum in other countries after being unsafe in their own are not always targeted dangers which focus on specific individuals and profiles. For instance, in the case of a civil war like Syria, people have to flee en masse because bombs and bullets rain on everyone indiscriminately – that is, due to what we call a "state of generalised violence" and the collapse of public order. People who become refugees under such conditions may not qualify as refugees by the criteria in the 1951 Convention. But due to international human rights law and the law of war, states are also under an obligation to protect those individuals who flee wars and internal conflicts. Indeed, as per both EU asylum law and Turkey's Law on Foreigners and International Protection, refugees fleeing such a "state of generalised violence" have to be granted a type of protection known as "subsidiary protection".

On top of these limitations to the "refugee" concept of the 1951 Convention, Turkey included a geographical restriction. Turkey was among the states that participated in talks for drafting the 1951 Convention and they, alongside other countries, suggested that, "Signatory countries should be able to geographically restrict their liability for the protection of refugees. Thus countries may open their doors to only those fleeing European countries, or they may not opt for such a restriction." As such, Turkey and other countries agreed to sign the Convention and chose the geographic restriction option provided by Article 1-b.

This option of "geographical restriction", which may be explained by the context of the time at which the Convention was drafted, was later removed in 1967. But countries which signed prior to 1967, such as Turkey, were allowed to keep it. Today, Turkey is the only country to have preserved this restriction among the signatories to the 1951 Convention. As a result, the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, in line with the definition in the 1951 Convention, grants those individuals who flee a country outside Europe –outside of the European Council– for individualised persecution, and who seek refuge in Turkey "conditional refugee" status, rather than the full "refugee" status.

If we look at the status of Syrians according to these legal definitions, we see that all of them, since they are fleeing a "state of generalised violence" –in the form of civil war in Syria– to seek refuge in Turkey, meet the criteria for "subsidiary protection" defined by the said law. However, only those among them who are individually persecuted and targeted may have the "conditional refugee" status – and none of them can become full "refugees" due to the aforementioned geographical restriction. But, returning to your question, the Turkish state grants neither of these two statuses to Syrians. Faced with a massive flow of people from Syria, Turkey has created a whole new legal framework called "temporary protection". As of today, there are 2 million Syrians –including some Palestinians who arrived via Syria– registered with state authorities under the "temporary protection" scheme.

In brief, Turkey has said, "I will deal with these people fleeing en masse from Syria and arriving at my borders through a legal mechanism outside of the current individual asylum-seeking scheme. I shall directly grant everyone coming from Syria a legal status called 'temporary protection' without performing any further analysis, and allow them to stay in Turkey until things go back to normal in Syria."

This appears positive at the first glance. However, does Turkey not thereby create an exceptional state for Syrian refugees, which goes beyond the definitions in international and domestic law?

Yes and no. In fact, this concept of "temporary protection" is supposed to be a practical, ad hoc solution which states can implement when faced with masses of asylum-seekers. For instance, Article 91 of Law on Foreigners and International Protection which lays the basis for the "temporary protection" policy towards Syrians is inspired by the namesake concept in EU asylum law. For EU states, the logic goes like this – Our asylum system has an application and assessment model which can process a reasonable number of people who arrive as individuals. Individuals demand asylum, and we carry out an analysis as to whether they meet the asylum criteria or not. We grant asylum status to those individuals who, in our opinion, cannot live safely in their country of origin, due to war or persecution. According to the reasons for fleeing, this status may be "refugee" status or "subsidiary

protection" status. We reject the applications of those who fail to meet the asylum criteria. However, when there is a case of mass asylum-seeking due to, for instance, war in a neighbouring country, these procedures which were designed for a reasonable number of applicants will most probably fail to function. Furthermore, if we already know that everyone who is fleeing that country is doing so as a result of war, we don't have to conduct a separate analysis for every single person.

As a result, EU nations have decided to directly and urgently grant the legal status of "temporary protection" to individuals fleeing their country en masse, so that they can be documented and given access to a number of basic rights and services and we can gain some time to decide whether the conditions prompting this flow will improve or not. As such, yes "temporary protection" is indeed an exceptional measure implemented in cases of mass asylum-seeking. However, it is based on a comprehensible and practical reasoning. Europeans have defined and regulated this concept within the scope of their common asylum law, but until today, they have faced no such massive flow which they were unable to handle with their individual asylum assessment procedures.

Turkey was inspired by EU law in adding an article on "temporary protection" to the Law on Foreigners and International Protection. Later, when Syrian refugees started to arrive in large numbers, the government decided to implement this concept borrowed from the EU but never employed by Europeans themselves. Afterwards, the practical details of temporary protection were outlined by a separate regulation issued in October 2014, based on Article 91 of the law in question. In brief, Turkey says – Afghans, Iraqis, Iranians and other asylum-seekers will file an individual application for asylum in line with procedures outlined in the law. We may grant "conditional refuge" or "subsidiary protection" status to those who meet the criteria in the law. Refugees hailing from Syria, however, will skip this procedure – they need only make a registration, and they will immediately receive "temporary protection" in Turkey. As such, in a sense Turkey has indeed created an exceptional state for Syrian refugees.

Speaking of exceptions, we must underline that the international legal framework on the protection of refugees is in itself a regime of exception. If I may, I would like to elaborate on this issue.

Please go ahead.
The obligation of states to open their doors to individuals who flee their own country due to war and persecution, without asking them for any passport or visa, and to offer them protection, actually constitutes an exception to the concept of sovereignty and the modern state system. There exists a system of modern states, organized under the umbrella of the United Nations, in which every state is considered to be sovereign within its borders. States have partitioned all the lands on Earth and drawn up borders. Before entering a country of which I am not a citizen, I must ask for that country's permission. Therefore, everyone is supposed to remain in their country of citizenship. In this sense, borders created by the right of sovereignty oblige all of us to live in our own countries and obey the rules of our state. All states have the authority to decide on who can and who cannot cross their borders. In return, however, the same UN system and international human rights law obliges these sovereign states to protect the lives and the belongings of their citizens. This is the basic premise of the modern state system.

If my state will not, or cannot, protect me, or worse targets me directly, and I have to flee for this reason, will the state which I arrive in ask for my passport or visa? Or will it stop me at the border, saying everyone should stay where they are? Refugee law comes into effect when people have to escape their countries for insecurity – that is when the premise of "nationwide protection" fails. The community of states considers that people who are made refugees by one state are under the responsibility of all, and so obliges states to open their doors to those individuals who seek refuge, in line with the concept of "international protection." Thus, they have to offer these refugees some of the rights and guarantees which are usually enjoyed only by citizens under normal conditions. In this sense, the international refugee law constitutes a regime of exception. As a regime of exception, it harbours numerous ambiguities, and grants states, which have to protect refugees, immense leeway in interpretation and assessment. As such, the "temporary protection" scheme, which we discuss in the context of Turkey's treatment of Syrians, offers a solution to a condition which is only vaguely regulated by international refugee law – mass asylum-seeking. International refugee law and human rights law stipulates that no one should be sent back to a place where they will be persecuted, tortured or even killed. That is, you cannot stop people at the border and send them back to death. However, what should happen once they cross the border is ambiguous. For instance, the 1951 Convention has no procedural stipulations as to how asylum applications should be processed, nor on the obligations of a state in the case of mass asylum-seeking.

You mentioned the Regulation on Temporary Protection issued in 2014. I understand that Turkey's temporary protection policy technically falls within the scope of international law. However, are individuals under temporary protection really protected in Turkey? In other words, what do the words "protection" and "temporary" mean exactly?
As I said, the concept of "temporary protection" is inspired by EU law, but an analysis of the Regulation on Temporary Protection shows that Turkey has redefined this concept as it has seen fit, which is, in a sense, very different to the current EU legislation. In EU law, "temporary protection" points to, precisely, a "temporary" solution applicable in cases of mass asylum-seeking: The thinking goes – we have declared a temporary protection regime to meet these individuals' urgent legal protection and humanitarian needs. For a period of at most three years, we shall observe whether there are any improvements in the conditions which prompted these individuals to abandon their countries in the first place, whether peace has been established in the country of origin. If the conditions remain unchanged, then it is evident that refugees under temporary protection will not be able to return safely in the short term. As such, we have to come up with a permanent solution, not a "temporary" solution to their situation. In that case, according to EU refugee law, individuals are granted "refugee" or "subsidiary

protection” status according to their conditions, so that they can enjoy a wider range of rights and enter a long-term integration process.

However, the temporary protection policy defined in the Turkish regulation issued in October 2014 has no such time limitation. The Council of Ministers holds the sole authority in deciding on the beginning and end of a “temporary protection” regime in cases of mass asylum-seeking. That is, the government may choose to extend this temporary protection over many years. Let us connect this to the debate on doctrine – as I have just said, the protection of refugees, that is the obligation of one state to offer certain basic protections to the citizens of another state, is an exception in itself. The basic premise is that individuals should enjoy “nationwide protection” mechanisms in their country of citizenship. Refugee protection comes into effect as an exception, in cases where this principle fails to function. However refugee law conceptualises refuge as a “temporary solution” and ensures state protection to people who become refugees. This is a “temporary solution”, but the long-term, “permanent solution” is the individuals’ return to “nationwide protection”. That is, either the conditions in their country of origin will improve and they will go back, or else, they will settle permanently and become integrated in the country of arrival. So, once a person is granted refugee status or some other international protection, if there is no improvement in the conditions in the country of origin, measures must be taken to enable them to settle down in their new home.

This process goes as follows – say, for instance, someone takes refuge in France, Germany or Switzerland. If it is decided that they really cannot return to their own country, they are granted an international protection status. Later on, after 3, 5, 7 etc. years, that individual can apply for citizenship in their country of arrival, depending on national legislation. When they are accepted for citizenship, the basic premise of the UN state system is deemed to be reestablished. From that point on, they enjoy “nationwide protection” as a citizen of the country of arrival, and thus do not have any more need for refugee status, which is a regime of exception. European Union’s “temporary protection” scheme –never implemented up until now– is based on this idea. As such, in cases of mass asylum-seeking, temporary protection is meant to last up to three years. But if, at that point, individuals are still unable to return to their country, the states take measures to ensure their medium to long term integration so that they can restart

> A long term integration strategy is lacking in Turkey’s temporary protection policy. The security crisis in Syria doesn’t look like it will be settled in the medium or even long term. The Syrians living in Turkey today may never be able to return to their homes.

their lives in their new homes. This long term integration strategy is what lacks in Turkey’s temporary protection policy. The security crisis in Syria does not look like it will be settled in the medium or even long term. The Syrians living in Turkey today may never be able to return to their homes. In recent years, we have seen countries engulfed by civil war such as Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq remain stuck in that situation. Refugees who fled those countries are still unable to return.

I think there is a serious threat here. Syrians are told, “Today you are under temporary protection, but who knows what will happen tomorrow. Now, I’m letting you stay, but soon I may tell you to leave.”

We can discuss how this policy came about in the first place if you wish. The first large groups of Syrians started to

cross the border in late March 2011. In one weekend, a group of 250 Syrian asylum-seekers arrived at the Syrian-Turkish border in Hatay. The government issued an important statement, which basically said "We are faced with a phenomenon of asylum. These people are fleeing the conflict in Syria. It is our duty to open our borders to them. Our border shall remain open for those who will follow suit." That was the main principle of the policy which would later become official as temporary protection – "We accept that Syrians are fleeing from a war. We shall open our borders, and will not force anyone to return. We shall meet their basic humanitarian needs." In comparison to Turkey's reactions to similar situations in previous years, this decision to open the borders was a very positive first step. We must grant this. Camps were set up straight away. The government channelled considerable funds and tried to meet Syrians' basic needs. Nevertheless, in that period, there were also declarations such as "For us, 100,000 people is a psychological limit." The government simply did not expect the refugee crisis to last so long and become so entrenched. From the summer of 2012 onwards, Turkey started to take measures to limit the flow of refugees – the number of those accepted at the border gates and crossings dropped sharply, and there was a huge rise in the number of those waiting on the Syrian side of the border. After a certain point, as the situation in Syria deteriorated radically, uncontrolled, irregular crossings rose by an immense margin. But, on the other hand, the fact that the total number of Syrians in Turkey has reached its current level suggests that Turkey did not try to stop crossings fully or totally close down its borders. As a result, in Turkey there are now more than 2 million Syrian asylum-seekers scattered across the country, most of whom are registered. This is a huge population.

While the situation arrived at this point gradually, the government and senior bureaucracy did not act on the mass asylum-seeking from Syria through a general, strategic perspective. Instead they thought "What next? What else can we do in face of this changing reality?", and built their policy as they went along. First the borders were opened, which was a reflex in the right direction, but the incomers were described as

In comparison to Turkey's reactions to similar situations in previous years, the decision to open the borders was a very positive first step. We must grant this. Camps were set up right away. The government channelled considerable funds and tried to meet their basic needs.

"guests." When it was clear that more and more asylum-seekers were on the way, in October 2011, they started mentioning "temporary protection" even before the law was passed. A series of measures were taken to improve the lives of those living outside camps. Finally, the Regulation was passed on October 2014, to grant some kind of a legal status to these people, who by then numbered over two million. Now, we have started to think – what is next, how can we improve this legal status. There are many shortcomings in the current policy line and during the process, measures frequently failed to meet the requirements of the situation at hand. However, overall we must accept that, faced with such a huge flow of asylum-seekers, the government and senior bureaucracy have courageously taken a number of steps in a country which until recently did not even have a proper refugee law. As such, I think that despite all of its shortcomings, the "temporary protection" policy's flexibility and largely discretionary character should be seen not as a threat towards Syrian asylum-seekers, but rather as a sign of Turkey struggling to manage a refugee flow of hitherto unseen levels. Turkey has done what it had never done before, and opened its borders to a massive flow of asylum-seekers from a neighbouring country. Furthermore, it has allowed this population to scatter across the country.

They were not confined to the border area.

Yes, now we are talking about a population scattered across the country, which will probably never be able to return to Syria. Turkey had never experienced this before. There are concerns about the political, economic, and security aspects of this phenomenon on the one hand.

On the other, negotiations are carried out with the European Union, who doesn't want refugees and wishes to keep its distance from the whole question, in the context of transit migration via Turkey and Turkey's Syrian policy. Furthermore, domestic political conflicts are deteriorating. Under such dynamic conditions, the government has based its policy largely on political and administrative discretion in order to preserve flexibility. We mentioned that there are no time limitations in the regulation – the government may choose to keep these people for decades under the temporary protection regime, but they may also say, "Now this population has to be integrated into Turkey, the temporary protection policy is no longer sufficient", if it wishes to do so. For instance, the government may allow Syrians access to the labour market or take similar measures. For this to come about, these issues must be discussed in

the political arena, by the general public. Some people would say no, some would demand more rights. Nevertheless, no one knows what will happen tomorrow in Syria, Iraq or even Iran. In a region so full of uncertainties, it's challenging to formulate a policy based not on security and national interest but rather on human rights and refugees.

Managing uncertainty.

Exactly. While managing uncertainty, the political decision-maker will always opt for flexibility. Yet, what the refugees and we demand is the exact opposite – that flexible and uncertain areas must be regulated by concrete rights and guarantees. We have to show more solidarity with these people who have been driven from their homeland, and are struggling to survive. These individuals are risking their lives to cross the sea, precisely because they see no safe future in Turkey for themselves and their families. Refugees need a policy based not on administrative discretion, but on a rights-based, predictable perspective which should –if there is no alternative– help them rebuild their lives in Turkey and become integrated. In my view, the Regulation on Temporary Protection was an important first step in this direction, and despite its drawbacks, it met short term needs. Now more steps should be taken to further this process.

From your remarks, I gather that Turkey views the temporary character of the "temporary protection" policy as political leeway. It is utilising a method, which should serve as a temporary measure in cases of massive inflow, as an open-ended policy in the case of Syrian asylum-seekers. As such it is turning the state of exception into rule.

This is right. For refugees, this represents an in-between state. These people must see how and when they will get out of this in-betweenness, and what kind of a future they can build in Turkey if the conditions in Syria remain unchanged and if they cannot find anywhere else to go. However, for the government to promise Syrian refugees some kind of a future, for Turkish politicians to deal with the long-term integration problem of refugees and take bold steps to this end, a thorough public debate must take place first. And,

While managing uncertainty, the political decision-maker will always opt for flexibility. Yet, what the refugees, and we, demand is the exact opposite - flexible and uncertain areas must be regulated by concrete rights and guarantees.

as a result of this debate, the citizens of Turkey should demonstrate the political will to embrace these two million people.

Such a debate is already on in fact.
I think it has recently just begun. A voter in any European country knows which party defends what on immigration and refugees. The question of immigration is among the items that top the national political agenda there, even in countries with a very limited number of asylum-seekers. In Turkey, the total number of asylum-seekers and refugees probably exceeds two and a half million, if we include Iraqis, Afghans and other groups. From any perspective, this is an extraordinary situation. However, there doesn't seem to be much concern about this issue, probably because social groups think that refugees are not here to stay in the long term. In my view, it is not realistic to expect that locals will "embrace" two and a half million refugees from neighbouring countries, without reflecting upon this problem, without expressing their second thoughts and objections. Such consent needs to be actively sought and built. I think before the government formulates a more inclusive and clear-cut asylum policy, the immigration issue must be debated at length in the political arena, so that various social groups and citizens can express their opinions and start to debate among themselves. However, in a country home to two and a half million asylum-seekers, the main fault lines of politics remain more or less unchanged. Here we must note that the government, even as it has taken some very positive steps for Syrians, has chosen not to discuss the essence of the issue. Neither the ruling party nor the parties in opposition have organised a debate to discuss all the multifaceted short, medium and long term aspects of this matter. Unless society takes this matter in its hands and weighs its various aspects, it won't be plausible to expect the government to go beyond the "temporary protection" policy and formulate a long term perspective on the settlement of such a huge asylum-seeker population. A social and political debate, which will probably be conflictual and problematic, must take place. We must initiate this process in Turkey.

Turkey cannot even discuss the curfew declared by the state in four major districts in the southeast and the people killed during the operations taking place under curfew. These people are the state's own citizens. So, how can we expect this country to start discussing the situation of Syrians?
Obviously, the issue you bring up is closely related to our discussion so far. In the final instance, the question of refugees boils down to the rule of law and democracy. We've just observed that, in a country home to an unseen number of refugees, the essence and future of the refugee question is not even being taken up in the political arena, by the general public. This indicates the feebleness of political institutions, of those mechanisms which must enable the involvement of citizens in decision-making processes. In a country where citizens enjoy basic guarantees and possess essential rights and freedoms, asylum-seekers will also feel safe and comfortable. As such, we should view the protection of refugees as an integral part of Turkey's struggle for democracy and human rights. This is our point of connection. Those mechanisms which will safeguard citizens' human rights are those very same mechanisms which will protect the human rights of refugees. For this reason, our struggle is one and the same.

In a country where citizens enjoy basic guarantees and possess essential rights and freedoms, asylum-seekers will also feel safe and comfortable. As such, we should view the protection of refugees as an integral part of Turkey's struggle for democracy and human rights.

So, the questions concerning refugees also point to our failure in building mechanisms such as the rule of law and democratic participation.
For the rule of law to exist, the actions of the administration must be predictable. Citizens and non-citizens who are legally bound by the actions of the administration must be able to see which rules they are governed by. When the administration and individuals come face to face, there should exist a comprehensive legislative framework that guarantees individuals certain rights and protections in line with international norms. That is not enough in itself though. There must also be a strong judiciary control mechanism to ensure that this system functions in practice as it does in theory. There should exist lawyers and legal support actors who offer people legal support to help them access their rights which are defined in the legislation. There must be monitors in every area where human rights violations are possible. Institutional monitoring mechanisms must be installed. Returning to the right of asylum-seekers, there must be strong and competent independent monitors along the borders where crossings and arrests take place, and in administrative supervision centres where irregular immigrants are held, so as to check the practices of the administration. In their absence, rights cannot be guaranteed. If we leave the matter to the discretion of politicians and to the whims of administrators, there will be wrongdoing even if everyone is well intentioned. And in refugee policy, a wrong decision may lead to the deportation of an individual to the country she fled from. So, it is of vital importance to amend the problems in asylum procedures through legal means and to prevent violations by deterrent control mechanisms.

Could the debate on refugees turn into a debate on the content of citizenship?
Let's hope that it does. In fact, asylum-seekers come from the "outside" and hold up a mirror to us, those who are "inside". We talk about Syrian refugees, but they include Sunnis Arabs, Kurds, Christians, women, gays, etc. They try to enter into solidarity with those who are similar to themselves in Turkey. They are obliged to choose a side in the ongoing conflict and polarisation within Turkey. We have seen that some of those who criticise the government's Syrian policy target instead the refugees, of whom they have a low opinion. During the Kobanê siege, we saw how a rupture in Syria triggered a mass asylum-seeking process that made a huge crack very visible in our own debate on citizenship. The more diversity exists, the stronger the rule of law and democracy must be, which will hold together that diversity. In Turkey, we now have a society even more diverse than it used to be. So, we need more democracy, more rule of law.

Interview by Ayşe Çavdar

The opposition failed bitterly in the refugee issue

For our second issue, in January 2016, we talked with Şenay Özden from Hamisch association, a Syrian cultural house based in Istanbul, about Syrian refugees in Turkey. The issue under discussion was not how much aid they need, but rather the importance of recognizing their human rights and political identity.

Since relations between Turkey and Russia have soured, I frequently hear people on the street fret "Russia was the only country we could go to in case a war broke out in Turkey; now that option is gone, too". What lessons can Turkey draw from the Syrian case, what can it understand from these lessons?
Şenay Özden: Since 2011, the very beginning of Syrians' arrival in Turkey, neither the government nor the opposition in Turkey has succeeded in developing a meaningful approach to the issue. I lay the blame on the opposition as much as on the government, maybe even more so. After all, if AKP (Justice and Development Party) had not been in power in 2011, this country would not have opened its doors to two and a half million Syrian refugees, the borders would remain closed. Neither CHP (Republican People's Party), not MHP (Nationalist Movement Party), nor HDP (People's Democratic Party) would have done it. Nevertheless, since 2011 the government, opposition and NGOs have all failed in developing a rights-based approach to the question of Syrian refugees. For a long period, the government said "We have guests". What was it they said exactly? We are the Ansar...

"We are the Ansar, they are the Muhajirun."
Yes. Even when they did not have

recourse to such religious concepts, they perceived the Syrians as guests. What did the opposition do? Each group had its own refugees to embrace. The Kurdish movement embraced the Kurds from Kobanê, Islamists embraced the Syrian Islamists, Alevis embraced the Alawites, Turkish nationalists talked about the Turkmen. No one had a rights-based approach to the matter. I mean, no one mentioned that seeking refuge is a basic human right, and acted on this right. No one said that these people should have certain rights. This is the reason behind what you heard on the streets. At best, people think "We, too, could become refugees one day". Again, this is very far from a rights-based perspective. If the government or opposition had been trying to promote a rights-based approach to the issue since 2011, then people would not be limited to thinking "We, too, could become refugees one day". No mate – even if we never become refugees, these people are refugees now and they are entitled to basic rights. These people have fled the violence of the Syrian regime and ISIS. They fled the war and sought refuge. This is their basic human right. They are entitled to certain basic rights that Turkish citizens enjoy. Such a discourse never took root in Turkey.

Then there is the discourse of mercy...
A perspective based on mercy, which pities these people... "Oh, these poor Syrians have fled the war, let's offer our aid." The aid perspective is not based on human rights either. It creates a hierarchy between citizens on the one hand and refugees on the other. "The poor Syrian immigrants need assistance from the citizens." Humanitarian aid, all those networks etc. are naturally very important, because people do have needs. However, on the one hand, the problem does not go away just because you provide assistance, and on the other, this perspective is riddled with problems. The focus must not be on assistance but on solidarity.

What does Hamisch propose in this respect? What kind of activities has it carried out up until now? How is it different from aid organizations?
Hamisch Syrian Culture Centre is our full name. It was founded in March 2014, by people from both Syria and Turkey, and in this sense it's the first association of its kind in Turkey. We are not involved in humanitarian aid, but rather in trying to produce together. Syrians in Turkey have many associations, political groups etc. Simultaneously, there are many NGOs active in Syria, too. Their efforts may focus on schools or on women, for instance. There are also community centres with a special emphasis on children. Such groups operate via Turkey, because this is the only border they can use to enter or leave Syria. Amidst all the fighting, they carry out crucial activities to preserve civic life and organizations over there. Furthermore, numerous Syrian media outlets are also present in Turkey, such as radios and newspapers. The only thing that was absent was a space run jointly by Syrians and locals. Until Hamisch, neither the locals nor Syrians had taken such an initiative. We felt the absence of such a space and said, "Since the locals and Syrians are living together, then we must have a space where we can produce together." This is the main reason why we established Hamisch. The second reason is that we also wanted to engage in cultural production. I don't mean culture in an apolitical sense. That is, I'm not talking about a culture dissociated from political references.

It's impossible to disassociate the two, right?
Exactly. Anyone who has joined our activities would know that we are far from apolitical - on the contrary. Our major concern is to explain to people that what started in Syria in 2011 was a rebellion. In 2011, there was not a war or a civil war, but rather a popular revolt against the regime. Our concern is to explain this and to show that it was similar in this sense to other protests across the world. Syria is not on Mars or in outer space. Just as people in different parts of the world demand justice and freedom, Syrians staged a popular revolt demanding justice and freedom. We want to make sure that Syrians themselves have the chance to explain this fact, not some experts who go on TV. We, the locals, should listen to this story from Syrians themselves. These people initiated and experienced this uprising. We have to put an end to efforts to portray Syrians as poor refugees... This discourse of "poor Syrians" does not view Syrians as political actors, but rather it infantilizes them.

Our major concern is to explain to people that what started in Syria in 2011 was a rebellion. In 2011, there was not a war or civil war, but rather a popular revolt against the regime.

It does not consider them as subjects...
Such a discourse deprives them of their subjectivity and infantilizes them. Unfortunately, it is very prevalent. What we are trying to do is to emphasize that "These are people who organized an uprising". These people have a political stance, you cannot disregard that. You cannot turn them into helpless victims. "We are citizens and therefore superior, the poor refugees are needy individuals who require our assistance." Nothing could be farther from the truth. These people are not poor victims. We strive to explain this fact, and working against the discourse of assistance, try to create channels from the grassroots up.

Could you tell us about the Syrians in Turkey? Who are they? What do they do?
A Syrian friend living in Antep has said, "Syria has come here as a society." There is no prototypical Syrian. After seeing Syrian kids begging on the streets, people think that they have the right to express an opinion on Syria. No way. Syrians brought along all their class differences to Turkey. From the richest businessmen of Aleppo to the most impoverished people begging on the streets. One must see these class distinctions first. We see that those who arrive later are generally poorer. As everywhere, capital is always the first to abandon ship. The same happened in Syria.

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First came the rich...
In geographical terms, most of the immigrants hail from the north of Syria, because transportation is easier from there. For instance they're coming from regions such as Aleppo, Idlib, Deir ez-Zor, Raqqa… It is much harder for someone from Damascus to travel to Turkey because they would have to make it through countless check points without getting arrested. Impossible. Are there any Syrians from these areas? Of course there are, but far fewer numbers. Besides these, many Syrian activists, especially the youth, have come to Turkey. They are the people who were active in the Syrian uprising from the very start. They took to the streets to demand peace. They organized protests over social media. They engaged in citizen journalism. They are activists from the women's movement... Most of these civilian activists are now in Turkey, and most of them are doing everything they can to avoid going to Europe.

Why?
Because they want to be close to Syria. They know that if they were to go to Europe, everything would be over – that is, they would have accepted that everything is over. What we must do is to show our solidarity with them, knowing that they are activists. In other words, what they need is not winter coats, boots or blankets. Currently there are over two hundred NGOs active in Antep, but most of us have never even heard of them. They have their radios and newspapers in Turkey, in Arabic. They are demanding a pluralistic, democratic and secular Syria. That is what they are demanding, and that is why we need to be in touch with them. ISIS is not the only actor in Syria.

Exactly, ISIS is not even from Syria…
Yes, most of its militants are not Syrian. The world over, ISIS is the first word that springs to mind when Syria is mentioned. Yet ISIS is not the only actor in Syria. We have to see the other actors, and they are in Turkey, living amongst us.

How did Turkey react to the consecutive waves of refugees? How did the state respond?
The border remained open until May 2015. There is no official statement from Turkey as to why the border was closed, but it was closed in the run-up to the June 2015 general elections. One reason why some of these Syrian activists want to stay in Turkey is to be close to Syria. A second reason is that Syrians from Syria, Lebanon or Jordan can, or rather could, travel to Turkey visa-free. Turkey was the only country they could enter freely. These people carry out all their activities, training programs, workshops, meeting and conferences in Turkey. Numerous cineastes, artists and academics are here. For instance, they organize workshops on cinema. They cannot organize these in Lebanon, because it is now hard for a Syrian in Turkey to enter Lebanon. Or, some of these people receive training on citizen journalism. They can do that in Turkey but not in Lebanon. Precisely because they could enter Turkey. As such, it was very important for Turkey to keep its borders open to Syrians and accept them without a visa. It was very important for civic activism, but now Turkey, too, demands visas from Syrians. This is a very unfavourable development for Syrians.

Why didn't civil society play a role in this process? In Turkey there is huge prejudice against the Middle East and Arab world in general, could that be the reason for this exclusionary behaviour?
Yes. We all know how ISIS rapes women and forces them to become "sex slaves", don't we? Activists, feminists, human rights organizations in Turkey bring this issue up frequently. The Syrian regime also resorts to the same method. Let me tell you what happened to someone I know. She is a civilian activist and all she was doing was delivering medication to various provinces in Syria. She and her friends got arrested at a checkpoint. The regime's soldier told her "Either you sleep with me, or else I arrest all of you". So she had to sleep with him, otherwise all of her friends would have been arrested. This is a frequent incident at check points. Women under arrest get raped, too. Wives and mothers of male prisoners are raped during visits to the prison... The Shabiha militia rape the women in one neighbourhood and then pass to the next to do the same… Just speak to Syrians in Turkey – fear of rape is a significant reason why they fled their country. Do you see any feminist or human rights activists in Turkey bringing this up, or any pro-government or opposition media outlet publish articles on this issue? No. You would think that the Assad regime is impeccable... This is because Bashar Assad always looks sharp, his wife doesn't wear a headscarf, they appear "Western", "modern"... As if women do not suffer from any violence at the hands of the regime... Indeed, this is a sexist regime, it is crucial to recognise this fact. Unfortunately, the opposition in Turkey refuses to see the rights violations committed by the Assad regime, because the opposition in Turkey sticks to the formula that "The regime is against ISIS".

Do they mix it up with the domestic political agenda?
They basically think, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." They don't see the Syrian population, they see only ISIS, and from there they infer that the regime is the only thing that stands against ISIS. This approach is totally blind to the Syrian population. In Turkey, racism towards Arabs is prevalent – "Arabs cannot build a liberation movement. They are backward. A woman wearing a headscarf cannot defend women's rights or be a feminist." All of these prejudices represent an incredibly modernist perspective. This modernist perspective renders invisible the struggle of the Syrian people and the violence of the regime. There's one video on Youtube – it shows a village near Idlib, where women are staging a protest against Al-Nusra Front. The women all wear headscarves. This didn't make the news in Turkey, and yet we hear countless stories of the women guerrillas of Rojava. The women of Idlib are no guerrillas, they wear scarves... And there is not a single news story. No one hears about it. If our political line upholds freedoms, than we must first see beyond the boundaries within our own minds, beyond what we would like to see, so we must reach out to these people.

How do Syrian refugees cope with the political turmoil they find themselves in in Turkey?
Let me think out loud for a second. I do not keep a close watch on the pro-government media in Turkey, and am not really knowledgeable about their discourse. I have accompanied many Syrians on their way to get registered at police stations. The officers never ask "Are you Arab, Kurdish or Alawite?" Syrians have access to healthcare, there is no discrimination in this sense. I'm thinking about policies towards refugees. I don't know how the people from Kobanê fared, because unfortunately I

couldn't travel to Suruç in that period. I heard about the municipalities' activities over there, but don't know what the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) was doing. So I can't say anything about that. But, although I don't have evidence, I can presume that NGOs close to the government may have refused assistance to some individuals who declared themselves to be non-Sunni. Take the government's law on temporary protection, for instance. There is no discrimination in the legislation itself, but laws concerning Syrians are translated into Arabic and not into Kurdish. There are numerous NGOs with a rights-based perspective in Turkey that do a lot for refugees. But they also don't translate the laws into Kurdish. I am currently translating an NGO's booklet on Turkish legislation into Arabic, but I don't know whether they will also have it translated into Kurdish.

Turkey has a tense relationship with Kurds, and also with Alevis due to the government's Sunni character. They perceive the Syrian civil war accordingly. How do the Syrians, caught in between, cope with this?
In the run-up to the elections, Syrians were constantly warning each other to avoid going out on election day. They were saying "Don't go out onto the streets on election day, avoid discussing politics with the locals prior to the elections". This is very important. I'm sharing an actual fact. So, I'm thinking out loud – has anything happened to a non-Sunni Syrian friend of mine in Turkey? Have they received a different kind of treatment?

I was not talking about how the government treated them. You elaborated on that very well. I am talking about the street. How do these people share the streets with locals who accuse Syrians of stealing their jobs or causing a hike in their house rents?
This is not unique to Turkey – it happens in any country where immigrants arrive and two oppressed groups come face to face. This is not directly related to the government's or opposition's sectarianism. This is a class issue. Of course we cannot deny that class is closely related to ethnicity and sect. Here, what we must focus on is the employer who exploits all Kurdish workers, Turkish workers and Syrian workers. Instead, we see Kurdish workers, Turkish workers and Syrian workers locking horns with each other.

This is exactly what I was asking about – the reaction is channelled to the Syrian. How does the Syrian react in turn?
Migrants in Europe or Mexicans in the USA experience the same thing. Take the women's question for example. Syrian women are becoming second wives to Turkish men through religious matrimony. This is the Turkish men who are doing this, no? What do their Turkish wives say about these Syrian women? "They came along and stole our husbands. They always wear makeup and are very flirtatious. They took away our men." Both Syrian women and Turkish women suffer, at the hands of these men.

However, no one criticizes the man – everyone lays the blame on the Syrian woman. This is naturally the result of patriarchy. In this case it is the patriarchal system which oppresses women, in the previous case it is the capitalist system which oppresses workers. The Syrians who are being exploited are Kurds, Arabs and Turkmen. Sunnis, Druze and Alawites. If I return to the beginning of our conversation, all these problems are arising because of our inability to approach refugees through a rights-based perspective. We have these problems because they are denied work permits and their children are being exploited as workers.

How much does the political conflict and debate in Syria reflect upon the relations between Syrian refugees in Turkey?
In Syria, the debate over whether the opposition was right to take up arms is a crucial one, if not the most important. One camp argues "The opposition should have not have taken up arms, and should have remained civilian instead", whereas the other responds "We know this regime, they were the first to employ violence – if we had not armed ourselves, the resistance would have been over before it had started." The latter group thinks that "It was the regime's violence which obliged the opposition to take up arms, as such we had no other option and taking up arms was not our choice".

A second issue is related to the international debate – for instance, the "transition process" agreed upon by the UN Security Council. Is this "A transition with or without Assad?" A large majority reject a transition with Assad. The argument goes, "There must be elections during the transition, but how can transparency be guaranteed? How can we have confidence?" It is evident that the elections will be far from transparent as long as the Assad regime is in power. How will the four and a half million Syrian refugees cast votes? Some speculate that the regime will demand valid passports and exit documents from those refugees willing to vote. This would in effect prevent them from voting, since most Syrians who fled have no passport. Furthermore, there are millions of internally displaced people within Syria. How would they cast a vote? In short, as things stand, elections cannot be held.

Could the current political debate result in a joint political initiative?
The same old debate continues today – the political spectrum is vast. How can all these groups come together and collaborate on a common platform? It seems very unlikely now. As long as the Assad regime is in power, the wedge within Syrian society is being driven deeper. The conflict takes a more sectarian turn, and society becomes increasingly polarized.

What can we learn about our own political experience from Syrian refugees' experience in Turkey?
In Turkey, we have too many stereotypes and limits – and we perceive the world through these stereotypes and limits. As a result of this, our political scene is also polarized. My experience and contact with Syrians have helped me to overcome these limits. Certain concepts have gained a whole new meaning. One sees, for instance, that the issue cannot be reduced to "secular vs. Islamist" – Syria has destroyed all these binary oppositions. It brings diversity to categories, opens them up. I see that most of those who define themselves as left-wingers in Turkey have yet to come to terms with their inner Kemalism, and still stick to a modernist perspective. Syrian activists shatter these stereotypes, and make a very important critique of modernism. Most individuals looking from Turkey to Syria also have a very modernist perspective. This attempt to interpret everything in Syria on the basis of binary oppositions such as "Assad vs. ISIS, or ISIS/Al-Nusra" reveals how modernist our approach is. Because in doing so we disregard a whole population.

A simplistic and conformist point of view…
Very simplistic. The Syrian writer Yassin al-Haj Saleh states "In Syria we have fascists wearing ties on the one hand, and fascists with beards on the other." The former is the Assad regime, the latter is ISIS... Both are fascists. No one has to choose between these two fascisms. There is a whole population out there, which seems to be invisible to us in Turkey. When we look at Syria from Turkey, we think that we must support the Assad regime against ISIS. In order to get rid of all these pretexts, this modernist perspective, we need Syrian activists. We are living side by side with them, but not together with them.

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Neither do we live together amongst ourselves for that matter…
This is crucial. Something I hear a lot from Syrians is – "Turkish domestic politics is not our business." After all in Egypt, after the military coup by Sisi, they were deported from Egypt. They don't want to go through the same thing in Turkey. They don't want to meddle the slightest bit in Turkey's domestic affairs. They would not support AKP, but neither would they support the opposition. The latter would be harder.

Why harder?
Let me give concrete examples. At the June 2015 elections, HDP polled 13 percent. What did Selahattin Demirtaş, their co-leader, do after the elections? He gave an interview to Hezbollah's TV channel Al-Manar. What did he do next? He gave an interview to a newspaper close to Hezbollah. Hezbollah is the biggest supporter of the Syrian regime. Why did Demirtaş do this? In Turkey, the opposition accuses Syrians by saying, "They are AKP's Syrians". If this is the case, why don't you approach them and listen to their concerns? If you are in contact with Hezbollah, one of the main forces which has caused two and a half million Syrians to flee their country for Turkey, then you cannot accuse them of siding with AKP. HDP is doing just that. We know that CHP is close to Assad – they've made statements to this effect. Just Google it, or search news stories. How can Syrians share the same platform with CHP? It is impossible. There are many different left-wing

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factions in Turkey. Yet, either they are overtly pro-Assad, or they consider it a taboo to criticise Assad. There are many Syrian left-wingers in Turkey, and they can never join forces with Turkey’s left, which supports the regime that has killed Syrian people. As such, the issue is not their relation with AKP. If a leftist group in Turkey, who has not shown any solidarity with Syrians, demands that they take a stance on Turkish politics, then it has no one but itself to blame. A protest took place in Istanbul a few days ago. There had been similar demonstrations before. At the protest, they called upon Syrian asylum seekers and refugees, saying “Come and join our protest.” It appals me. Have you ever organized a demonstration against Assad in Turkey in the last 4 and a half years? No. Then how can you expect them to join in your protest? Furthermore, how can you even think of bringing refugees face to face with the Turkish police? Such a degree of political egoism is unimaginable. A Syrian writer wrote, “The world did not show solidarity with our cause, they did not raise a voice. However, Syrians are now transforming the entire world around the issue of refugees.” How right he is.

They transform every place they go...
Yes, in both positive and negative ways. We have seen how Syrians have rendered borders meaningless. The border between Turkey and Europe, or that between Turkey and Syria have all but disappeared. Within Europe, on the other hand, borders are beginning to rise higher. Once again walls are being built on the frontiers once dissolved by Schengen.

What kind of a transformation are Syrians themselves undergoing?
Syrians are reclaiming their own space, they’ve learn how to do that, they’re developing new methods. They’re continuing to stand behind their words and there’s no going back for them. In this sense, the rebellion has been a success. This is why Syrians continue to talk of it as a revolution. They’ve observed the different political experiences of different countries. They are transforming us, and the dynamics here are transforming them in turn. After the general elections on June 7, I was talking to various Syrian friends about whether there would be a coalition government in Turkey or not. They knew Turkey’s entire history of coalitions – even I don’t know it in so much detail. They explained which coalition had been established in which year, and speculated as to what could happen next in Turkey. Today, there is no country in which domestic politics remains domestic. This is what Syria has done to the world. What is going on in Turkey right now cannot remain domestic. The same goes for Europe, where fascist parties are on the rise. This is due to anti-immigrant sentiment, and fear of ISIS. Syrians have demolished countries’ borders, including Syria itself.

Interview with Meyman Serdar Morsümbül

Interview by Merve Erol

A major test for the Turkish education system: Immigrant children

Following the arrival of close to three million Syrians in Turkey, the education of immigrant children has come to the fore as a crucial social issue. Turkey's education system does not possess the flexibility to resolve such a complex and pressing issue. In September 2016, we talked with Meyman Serdar Morsümbül, who has worked as a teacher in various Istanbul districts with significant immigrant populations, about the education of previous and current generations of immigrant children.

Immigrants in Turkey had problems with education even before the arrival of around three million Syrians in the country. In a district with a large number of immigrants, such as Kumkapı, where you worked for a long period of time, how has this problem been handled?

Meyman Serdar Morsümbül: I started working at a junior high school in Kumkapı in 2009, which taught children between the ages of 6 and 14. Located close to Aksaray, Kumkapı is on one of Turkey's major migration routes. The total population of its three neighbourhoods is thought to be around 40,000 to 50,000 individuals, including migrants with or without documents. The Turkish Republic citizens living there are ethnic Armenians, Arabs, Kurds and some Turks. Armenians and Greeks have their schools as per the Lausanne Treaty. The Bezciyan Armenian School is still in service, while the Langa Greek School was open until 2010, when it had only three or four students left. But it is the Armenians from Armenia who interest us more in this context, since they're not permitted to enrol in these schools. I met numerous Armenians –fishermen, textile workers, construction workers... some who had brought their children from Armenia, some who have been here for 17-18 years, some who are married and have

children– but none of them have been granted citizenship. I'm not even talking about Afghans or Africans here. Ethnic Armenians are an officially recognised minority with their own schools in Turkey, but Armenians hailing from Armenia are not granted these rights. In the Beyazıt neighbourhoods overlooking the Marmara Sea, they have four churches, and on the ground floor of Gedikpaşa Church they've set up an educational institution. There were even families with Turkish citizenship who had migrated from Siirt, Mutki, etc. who lived there and sent their children to school there. Those children coming from Armenia also received this service, until they reached the age of 13 or 14. Of course, there is no international equivalent to the certificates they receive, no score cards, or diplomas etc. As such, some immigrants chose to return to Armenia in order to educate their children.

What about other immigrants?
As one might guess, Africans are the worst off. They started to arrive in Turkey after 1996-97, and their migration flow picked up particularly after the dissolution of Libya. Prior to that, there were immigrants from Bulgaria, who were given citizenship, education and ownership rights. The others –that is Uzbek, Kazakh, Tadjik, Turkmen, Azeri, Afghan and Chechen immigrants– were not granted any right to education. We accepted them at the schools as "guest students". This doesn't have a legal foundation, it's wholly dependent on the school director's initiative, which is completely discretionary. Since these students have been living in Turkey for some time, they learn Turkish quickly. The age of arrival is important here – if they come to Turkey at a very young age, they adapt quickly. If they arrive in their early teens and have already learned their native language or, say, Russian, they have a harder time in the Turkish education system. This is more or less true for Syrian immigrants as well. A clear example is one of my ex-students whom I ran into at İstanbul University a few days ago. I think he'd arrived from Ukraine when he was 8 or 9 years old. We couldn't give him an official score card with an original signature or stamp, but we issued him with an unofficial score card to be submitted to the embassy instead. We invited him to the exams and he was a brilliant student. He received citizenship in the second term of the eighth grade. At the high school entrance exam, TEOG, his score was only calculated for one section, and he was prevented from getting into a very good high school, even though he evidently had the capability. Nevertheless he's now attending university.

Do Africans get so lucky?
They can enrol in the same manner. Some of them settle down and establish a community, but the large majority are only in Turkey for a short or indeterminate period of time and are economically vulnerable. If an immigrant from Nigeria, Senegal or Ghana manages to get her child enrolled, she is probably well-off. There is no alternative other than classes at the church, or the formal education system in Turkey. However, a number of camps were set up during the Afghan and Chechen migrations, and some education was provided there under the umbrella of the Ministry of National Education.

Was education in the Afghan camps taught in Persian?
No, in Turkish. And that was their choice, since they wanted to settle down here. In any case, are there any teachers who can teach the Turkish education system in such languages? No. This is a crucial problem.

Yet the arrival of close to three million people from Syria to Turkey requires such training among teachers, and a new approach to education, right? Almost half of these three million people are of school age.
Certainly. In my view, the Turkish state's response to the Syrian migration in 2011 was very swift, dynamic and constructive. A one-year decree was issued, which was then extended every year. Accordingly, regardless of their age, Syrians were given the right to enrol, and the guest student scheme was expanded. Such a right had never previously been given to any documented or undocumented immigrant groups. In Turkey, there is an address-based system called e-School, and a special section was created on this for Syrians. Furthermore, you can have your child enrolled regardless of the month of the year – that is, not only in September but even in, say, April. At the moment, if I'm not mistaken, around 150,000 Syrian children are enrolled in

> There are also unregulated, makeshift schools, where the poorest are receiving an education without any supervision. The rich start living in a well-off neighbourhood, adapt, and send their children to a private school thanks to communitarian relations. The poor, on the other hand, cannot leave the camps – or else, their labour is heavily exploited in large cities and they can't access education.

primary schools and junior high schools. Their number drops at high school level, since many children have to start working.

For the immigrants before Syrians there were three education options – official schools, churches and camps. For Syrians a fourth option has appeared – a year ago, as far as I know, they had 42 schools of their own. These schools are set up by the oppositional Syrian government, communities, parties or economic groups. Foundations, municipalities and the education ministry provide assistance, but you have to find the money. You rent a building for one year, or, say, five years. I know of such cases in the Istanbul districts of Avcılar and Fatih. Thus you may establish a kindergarten, primary school, junior high or high school. One school I visited in Esenyurt had all four of these sections, and the technical equipment was state-of-the-art. All teachers are Syrians, and specialise in French, Arabic, English, maths, biology, etc. The curriculum is brought from Syria. Only the history books are revised, especially the sections about Assad. The Arabic alphabet is used. So far everything is fine, but international equivalency is a problem and there is a struggle going on regarding this issue. For instance, students who graduate from junior high aren't permitted to attend the high school entrance exam. Yet there are some students who are enrolled in, say, Yeşilköy Anadolu High School. So there is inconsistency here. As far as I know, even Syrian children who graduate from

eighth grade at a formal Turkish school don't officially have the right to pass the high school entrance exam. There are other problems as well – according to the decree issued by the government, schools with Syrian students must employ Arabic-speaking teachers; however, this is not implemented in practice. Of course, very few immigrants know of or benefit from this clause, and it all depends on the discretion of the school director. There is no supervision, and people are not provided with information. Syrians also receive education at the camps, but I have no first-hand knowledge of this.

Then there are "temporary education centres", right? What kind of an education system do they have?
Temporary education centres are set up in the camps and operate under the umbrella of the Ministry of the Family. Then there are also unregulated, makeshift schools, where the poorest receive education without any supervision. This is the most critical point, where mainly class-based relations come into the picture. The rich start living in a well-off neighbourhood, adapt, and send their children to a private school thanks to communitarian relations. The poor, on the other hand, can't leave the camps – or else, their labour is heavily exploited in large cities and they can't access education.

According to the Open Society Foundation's report titled "On the Brink of a Lost Generation", there are 1,353,000 Syrian children in Turkey. 247,000 of them attend temporary education centres and 78,000 attend public schools. In total 325,000 children are able to go to school, while 532,000 cannot. It's fair to say that a large majority of Syrian children don't have access to education in Turkey…
Yes, but a critical question here is – What kind of an education is given to those outside private schools, and how well can they adapt? How satisfactory is the education they are receiving, taking into consideration the war, their trauma, the rupture of family ties, and economic collapse? There are three aspects to the matter – first, the immigrant population's rootedness, economic situation, and ability to find work or a home; second, whether the children can attend school, which varies in connection to the first aspect; third and most importantly, whether the teachers in the Turkish education system were ready to respond to this situation. They certainly weren't initially, but nor have they adapted themselves. As a teacher, for instance, I've never undertaken any relevant training program.

The Turkish Republic is not at peace with its own citizens of Armenian, Kurdish, Arab or other ethnic origin. Its political structure and educational institutions don't take this reality into account. As is known to all, the Turkish Republic has been built on ideas of the Turkish national identity and Islam.

Language constitutes a barrier, I suppose. Then of course, these children have experienced war and maybe even lost their relatives. Furthermore, Turkish teachers' treatment of even Turkish students is rather problematic…
Yes, this is one of the issues which should really be on the public agenda. The Turkish Republic is not at peace with its own citizens of Armenian, Kurdish, Arab or other ethnic origin. Its political structure and educational institutions do not take this reality into account. As is known to all, the Turkish Republic has been built on ideas of the Turkish

national identity and Islam, though the former plays a bigger role. The Turkish state, and indeed neighbouring states, never discuss this crucial problem, let alone the experiences of immigrants from, say, Nigeria, Ghana or Syria.

Education in the mother tongue has not really figured in the public agenda…
The arrival of Syrians in such huge numbers is a factor which is forcing and cleaving cracks in this rigid structure. It should have prompted some reflections on the Turkish *raison d'état,* but we are seeing no signs of such a debate. Not only Kurds but also the Arabs of Hatay, Siirt and Batman are denied education in their mother tongue. But universities have Arab literature departments. The same goes for Armenian literature to a certain extent. Kurds, however, number around 10 to 20 million. Following the reforms initiated in 2007, masters' programs were initiated at three or four universities, in connection with the Living Languages Institute. Around 1,200 students graduated from these programs, and 50-60 of them were given work with tenure. As such, students aged between 12-14 can take Kurdish, Arabic or Laz language lessons. When you visit the e-School, you see around 21 electives including these lessons, but you can't add them. At first, there were around 21,000 applications for Kurdish, but this number fell rapidly. There are also other reasons for this. For instance, the Kurdish political movement didn't focus on these electives, since it demands education in the mother tongue or as a second language. The movement tried to establish its own schools, but it ran into serious problems.

In contrast, as far as I'm aware, Arabic electives were utilised in a much better fashion; education in Hatay is much more intensive, for instance. We don't know the percentage of Kurds, Turkmen or Arabs within the population coming from Syria. At the school in Esenyurt, for example, there were Kurdish students who were continuing their education in Arabic just as they would have done in Syria, which is another state that denies the right to education in Kurdish. But there are exceptions. The metropolitan municipalities of Diyarbakır and Mardin offer education in Kurdish to the Ezidi people, in line with the curriculum of the Turkish Ministry of National Education. Although it is little known, this education scheme is in force at the moment. But it's debatable whether it can be applied as a model across Turkey. I contacted an administrator in Esenyurt and together we wanted to collaborate with Anadolu Culture Foundation, universities such as Bilgi, and a Danish institute to establish a library with Arabic and Kurdish books. However the provincial directorate of the Ministry of National Education refused it categorically when we mentioned Kurdish and the books we had ordered were sent back.

What is the condition of Syrian students studying at state schools? How do they overcome problems of adaptation?

Take Istanbul. There are Syrians all over the city and they have the right to get enrolled in the school of their choice. Since they are more concentrated in certain districts, there may be a large number of Syrian students in specific areas. In certain places, Syrians were

given the right to use state schools' buildings. In the district of Avcılar for example, Turkish students attend classes until 3 pm, after which around 1,200 Syrian students arrive to take classes from their teachers. At this point, certain Turks come into the picture, especially those with particular religious and communitarian ties. However, in my view, teachers who graduated from Syrian universities are well qualified. At the school in Esenyurt there are female teachers without a headscarf, but in Avcılar, almost all female teachers wear a chador and niqab. In certain schools, teachers have a radical Islamist stance, which will naturally be reflected in the education they deliver to the children.

Do Turkish officials make an effort to ensure that Syrian children receive an education which is Islamist in nature?
Even if Turkish officials don't make a special effort to this end, I believe that armed groups in Syria have connections with these schools. Of course I cannot be categorical, but Turkey seems to give a green light to all this, allowing such groups to operate freely. These schools are supported by municipalities. And when you visit them, you might also see materials from UNESCO or UNICEF.

Syrian children go through fire and water, and then are able to get enrolled in a school - what is the major problem they face there, language?
Naturally, language problems come first. This goes for both children and mothers. The father works at a construction site, textile workshop etc. But the mother, especially if she is Sunni, usually stays at home and therefore has to create ties in the neighbourhood. She knows nothing about the city, and her ties with the exterior are often forged through her children and their schools. My friend in Esenyurt tells me that parents come to school events just to ask for an address - they don't want to ask anyone on the street.

The same was true for Kurdish women forced to flee their villages.
Exactly. However, Syrians and other immigrants, even though they are foreigners, don't feel as much fear. In my professional experience in Istanbul, I've seen that the Alevi and Kurdish populations are intimidated. A woman from a village in Dakar, Senegal can live in Turkey without any documents and no mastery of Turkish, and yet feel much more secure here, essentially because she has not experienced the same political atmosphere. Naturally, she too may become a victim of police harassment, robbery, or rape, and be in fear because of living in a completely alien country. But nevertheless, these immigrant communities can act much more boldly than our own Arab, Kurdish or Alevi population.

Are Syrian kids subjected to ethnic or religious discrimination at the schools?
Of course they are, but this discrimination has not yet turned to violence. A Muslim Turkish student may mistreat his Christian peers much worse in his identity as Muslim, but does not go so far in his identity as a Turk. A Kurdish Muslim may develop a racist perspective towards an Armenian or Moldovan kid for being Christian.

Borrowing from the film *On the Way to School* [İki Dil Bir Bavul], what happens when a Turkish teacher comes face to face with Syrian students who cannot speak a word of Turkish? What does she or he tend to do?
It's a huge challenge and the teacher is helpless. According to the decree in force, these students should be distributed among different classes, in groups of two. And this number can only be increased incrementally; that is, it's not possible to create a class with only

We thought that horrible things would happen, that mafia groups would kidnap all the Syrian children and there would be violence all around, but our fears have not materialised. The violence and gangs in Turkey's poorer cities are much tougher. In this sense, Syrian children have fewer problems within school classes.

Syrian students, under the direction of an Arabic-speaking teacher. Due to the language barrier, the children can't really benefit from any of the social science classes. But they excel in mathematics! Back in Syria, they received a maths education far better than ours. Even now, we still remember how the teachers from Bulgaria were hard-working, disciplined and well-trained; the same goes for Syrian teachers. Syrian students –Arabs, Kurds or Turkmen– speak at least three languages, which may be Arabic, Kurdish, French or Turkish. As such they have a great advantage with languages. Likewise, a woman coming from a village in Dakar may speak four languages. She may not be literate, but she might have received dance lessons, taken to the stage in France and be justified in making fun of my English.

They attend classes regularly in the first and second grades, but this falls rapidly in the following grades. One reason for this is, naturally, economic since children are obliged to work. As far as I can observe, family ties are very strong. There are exceptions of course, and some children engage in begging or robbery, but most of them either go to school or else sell kleenex, sell pilaf, serve tea, etc. Although it's illegal, child workers are exploited extensively.

Syrians are likewise well-educated and have a strong contact with urban life. We thought that horrible things would happen, that mafia groups would kidnap all the Syrian children and there would be violence all around, but our fears have not materialised. The violence and gangs in Turkey's poorer cities are much tougher. In this sense, Syrian children have fewer problems within the school classes. The trauma created by the civil war in Turkey is much worse. Most Syrians may have fled their country after a bombardment, but a 40-year-old citizen of Turkey may be experiencing a trauma which is not getting any better. Of course, many Syrians are coming to Turkey in order to cross into Europe, like all the other immigrants, and so consider Turkey as a temporary stop. As such their children may stop attending school a few weeks after registration. The school administrations don't make much effort to encourage Turkish citizens to continue school, so when they see Syrians leave they may even think "We have so many students less." On the other hand, there are administrators who start support classes such as folk dancing to help Syrians students adapt to Turkish.

What kind of alienation is experienced in Turkey by those children who received a certain level of education in Syria?
They attend classes regularly in the first and second grades, but this falls rapidly in the following grades. One reason for this is, naturally, economic – children are obliged to work, at a textile workshop or at a restaurant, depending on the family's line of business. As far as I can observe, family ties are very strong. There are exceptions of course, and some children engage in begging or robbery, but most of them either go to school or else sell kleenex, sell pilaf, serve tea, etc. Although it's illegal, child workers are being exploited extensively. Children and their parents work for half the wage, for peanuts. The employer can thus hire a worker for 50 or 20 liras instead of 150 liras per day! Some workers, particularly women, are not paid at all. Nevertheless Syrians have managed to adapt themselves to the economic conditions very rapidly. The job experience of Africans is much more limited, but many Syrians know how to operate a textile machine. So they can find a job for 1,200 liras, replacing a local worker paid 1,700 liras.

Against this backdrop, what are the major challenges for teachers in Turkey?
Teachers don't think "I'm now entering into contact with an individual whose mother tongue is different", let alone an individual who has experienced war trauma and breakdown. Teachers tend to think that they can simply enter the class and follow the standard procedure. Their perspective does not go beyond this – trying to teach Arabic-speaking children a certain word, concept or geometric shape. There are exceptions to this of

Teachers themselves experience serious problems. At the school where I work, almost half of a total of seventy teachers are Kurdish, but eyebrows are raised when they speak in Kurdish. Socially, the Ministry of National Education constitutes the backbone of the Turkish Republic. You may speak Kurdish at a library, or during military service for example, but when you speak Kurdish at school, it prompts a reaction.

course. And then the teachers themselves experience serious problems. At the school where I work, almost half of a total of seventy teachers are Kurdish, but eyebrows are raised when they speak in Kurdish. Socially, the Ministry of National Education constitutes the backbone of the Turkish Republic. You may speak Kurdish in a library, or during military service for example, but when you speak Kurdish at school, it prompts a reaction. The Turkish nationalist mentality is so strong in the schools. For instance during performance tests, teachers are still evaluated on the basis of their loyalty to Turkish and presumed national values.

MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS MARKET IN TURKEY

What does the Turkish state's recent interventions into migrant's work and residence status mean in the context of Turkey's migration regime? How will these interventions transform the migrant experience in terms of rights and responsibilities? In her article published in the second issue of **saha** in January 2016, Istanbul Technical University's Ayşe Akalın, who works on migration sociology, explores these questions by focusing on the migrant domestic workers market.

Of all the migrant communities, the migrant domestic workers constitute the group with whom the people of Turkey have had their oldest and closest contact. Even before the Turkmen carwash workers, Georgian hazelnut pickers or Syrian sewing machine operators arrived, migrant women doing domestic work demonstrated to Turkish citizens that the labour market included people other than Turks.

The history of female migrant domestic workers in Turkey can be roughly divided into three periods. In the first period, which started from the 1990s onward with Turkey receiving migrants, various groups who were arriving in Turkey took up domestic work. Filipino domestic workers in Turkey, for instance, can be traced back to the Gulf War of 1990. Some of the Filipinos who fled the war and tried to reach Europe stayed in Turkey, and demand for non-Turkish domestic workers gradually rose.[1] Meanwhile Bulgarian citizens, after their major migration wave in 1989 prompted the closure of the border gates, continued to arrive in Turkey in the 1990s, granted a temporary status through 90-day visas, and some of them became domestic workers.[2] The most important group in this first period were the Moldovans, whose economy had been devastated following the Russian banking crisis of 1998.[3] With the arrival of these individuals, there was a complete resurgence in full-time employment of the domestic workers known as 'caregivers' or 'live-in domestics' *(bakıcı, yatılı hizmetli)* – a forgotten form of employment since the 1950s after the disappearance of the once widespread practice of employing adopted orphans as housemaids *(evlatlık, besleme)*.[4]

The 2001 economic crisis ushered in the second period of migrant domestic work in Turkey. The crisis dealt a heavy blow to white-collar middle class families, leading to a serious contraction in demand for migrant domestic workers. Yet the crisis also functioned as a litmus test, confirming that the demand for live-in domestic workers was not simply the unexpected result of a sudden surge of immigrants, but that domestic work had already created a network, culture and codes. After the impact of the crisis was alleviated, the domestic worker market drew in new migrants from countries lying to the east of Turkey, such as Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. As such, employing migrant domestic workers became a defining characteristic of the Turkish middle classes.

In my opinion the 2010s represents the third period of the migrant domestic workers market. The main feature of this period is not necessarily new waves of migration, but rather important changes in state policies towards this field. There have been important overall changes to the management of migration in the 2010s, the most important being Law no. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection, which was passed by parliament in April 2013. Although this law mainly concerns the asylum legislation in Turkey, it also redefines the official status of foreigners in the country. Law no. 6458 marks a paradigmatic shift, in that the Turkish state has stopped pretending to regulate this area through adjustment laws passed merely for formality as was the case in the 2000s, but rather has become determined to manage it meticulously.[5]

On the other hand, the law does not really clarify the position of migrant workers – that is, the economic factors underlying migration. The key documents that reveal the state's position in this respect are the Tenth Development Plan issued by Ministry of Development for the years 2014-2018, and the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Labour for the same years. These documents clearly state that Turkey has become a migration-receiving country, and that it now has a need to employ unqualified foreign workers for development purposes. The function of Law no. 6458 is to uphold the political objectives outlined in these documents. For instance, the new law elucidates in detail the conditions for deporting migrants without legal status or granting them a residence permit, thereby drawing the limits of migrants' social participation. Indeed, the

Photo: Ayşe Akalın

exploitation of migrant workers' labour is closely related to their limited mobility in the host country.

In the new work permit scheme, abandoning your employer means giving up your legal status. In the case of the termination of her contract, a migrant domestic worker has fifteen days to find another employer to extend her permit. It's almost impossible for a worker to find another employer in such a short space of time.

Migrant domestic workers and legislation

For migrant domestic workers in particular, the key piece of legislation was the amendment to Law no. 5683 on Foreigners' Residence and Travel in Turkey on February 1, 2012. This amendment replaced the expression defining the validity period for tourist visas from "a maximum of 90 days" with "90 days within a 180-day period". The goal here was to prevent domestic workers' "shuttle migration" between Turkey and their countries of origin, which had existed since the very early days of their arrival. Before the 2012 amendment, migrants were able to leave Turkey a day before their visas expired and then return to Turkey after the expiration date to receive a fresh 90-day visa (which could be shorter or longer depending on the nationality of the migrant), and thus continued to work in Turkey legally. Although this scheme did not allow non-citizens to receive legal work permits, they nonetheless enjoyed a 'sufficiently legal' status which kept the risk of deportation at bay. However, the amendment of February 1 made it impossible for migrants to extend their visas in this manner, and practically put an end to this scheme.

Law no. 4817 on Work Permits of Foreigners, which was passed in 2003, granted migrant domestic workers the right to apply for work permits. However, as confirmed by Ministry of Labour officials, the law was only passed as a mere formality as part of the EU harmonisation process. Only a few hundred migrant workers filed applications on the basis of this law, which was never really intended to grant work rights to migrant domestic workers. According to the political mentality prevalent in the state back then, offering such rights to migrants would mean officially promoting immigration, which went against the state's policy at the time.

The amendment to the work permit legislation dated February 1, 2012, which was based on the legal foundation laid by the Law no. 4817, left migrant domestic workers with two options – they could either choose to work illegally and try to avoid police checkpoints, but risk deportation at any moment. Alternatively, they could find an

employer willing to apply for a work permit on their behalf and stick to that employer.

The new work permit scheme may best be described as a sponsorship system of sorts. The employer files an application with the Ministry of Labour for a domestic worker whose tourist visa has not expired, or who has yet to enter Turkey. Following the Ministry's approval, which takes a couple of months, the employer signs up for an account at the Social Security Institution (SGK) on behalf of the worker and then pays the monthly insurance premiums. Initially, the Ministry of Labour responded positively to most applications in order to promote legal work. Later, however, the Ministry stated that some individuals had applied for permits with motivations other than those defined in the law and some applications had been made for individuals who should not qualify to receive legal status (victims of human trafficking, for instance). As such, the ministry started to limit work permits to those migrant domestic workers who were serving individuals with proven medical needs.

According to Ministry of Labour data, the number of work permits given to migrant domestic workers was 474 in 2011, 8,861 in 2012, 14,910 in 2013, and 14,475 in the first nine months of 2014. Since the total number of migrant domestic workers in Turkey is unknown, it's not possible to conclusively state what percentage of them now have a legal work permit. But most observers suggest that migrants with work permits represent only a small minority of the total number.[6]

On the other hand, it should be noted that the work permit system has led to significant improvements in the daily lives of migrant domestic workers. First of all, migrant domestic workers come under the umbrella of SGK for the duration of the permit. The extension of the work permit after expiry depends on the regular payment of the SGK insurance premiums by the employer. If the premiums are not paid regularly, the worker loses their legal status in the next period. In other words, the work permit of migrant domestic workers is directly related to public finance. As is known, as per Law no. 5510 on Social Security and General Health Insurance, participants now need to make contributions to the health system. Bringing migrant domestic workers under SGK coverage in return for a premium allows them to benefit from the system and also obliges them to finance the system. This has been explicitly confirmed by Ministry of Labour officials, with whom I have discussed the issue of work permits for migrants.

Work permit scheme in practice

However, another crucial dimension to migrant domestic workers' legalisation is not mentioned by officials – the security issue. Across the world, migrants are first and foremost now considered to be a security problem. That is, even if the Ministry of Labour supports the legalisation of migrant workers, this must be approved by the Ministry of Interior. In other words, although the Ministry of Labour is in charge of issuing work permits for migrant workers, the swift application of the legislation has been made possible only because no institutional actor with a say in the matter has hitherto perceived a security threat. This, in turn, can be explained by two interconnected factors.

The first factor relates to the conditions determining the demand for migrant domestic workers in Turkey. Women from many different countries occupy the migrant domestic workers market and over time different national groups are constantly replacing each other – the nationality of the migrants is almost totally irrelevant in the eyes of employers. Due to the nature of the job at hand, far more important than nationality is for domestic workers to maintain only minimal contact with their family and friends back home. As such, they are able to channel all their emotional attention and care, full-time and without interruption, to the family they work for. It is thanks to "their capability as migrants to deliver live-in caregiving", that migrant domestic workers are filling Turkey's care gap,

which is widening as the local population grows older and white collar women maintain relatively high employment rates.[7] The key characteristic of migrant domestic workers is therefore not poverty, but their acceptance of live-in work.

If it wasn't for this fact, Turkey's rather high percentage of urban poor could easily have met the care demand. In the period 1950-1990, the proliferation of apartment buildings in city centres overlapped with migration from the countryside to urban areas. As a result, the so-called charladies *(gündelikçi)* from rural backgrounds had become responsible for house cleaning in urban households. But after the 1990s, as a result of factors such as the

It is thanks to "their capability as migrants to deliver live-in caregiving", that migrant domestic workers are filling Turkey's care gap. The key characteristic of migrant domestic workers is therefore not poverty, but their acceptance of live-in work.

increasing care gap due to demographic transformation, urban sprawl, and the proliferation of house chores to expand beyond the resources of charladies during a workday, new service offers appeared in domestic work. This meant the creation of conditions which boosted demand for migrant domestic workers.

In effect the legislative changes after 2010 have increased the state's control and rendered the employer more active, without changing the dynamics of the migrant domestic workers market to a considerable extent.

Overall, live-in work is beneficial for both the employer and employee. The employer can eliminate risk factors such as a day worker's noncompliance with working hours, getting stranded in traffic, or cancelling her work at the last minute for reasons such as sickness in the family. The employee, on the other hand, can readily find or change employment without concern for cost of housing, and avoids the threat of deportation by blending into the employer's middle class community. This was the situation in the market in 2012, when the state started to intervene in migrant domestic work – the majority of migrant domestic workers were given live-in jobs, and every employee had to adapt to the specific conditions of her employer. This meant that every migrant, although their overall number was considerable, worked under the responsibility of a Turkish family and that the security risk was largely eliminated. The fact that migrant domestic workers were women, away from their family, and alone in Turkey further reduced security concerns.

A second reason for the swift transition to the new legislation on migrant domestic workers' work permits was the electronic shift within the state.[8] Unlike 2003, when the first work permit legislation on foreigners was issued, by this time there now existed an electronic system which connected the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Interior and SGK, allowing a rapid security check of migrants applying for work. All work permit data is stored electronically, making it much easier to hold the employer accountable for their domestic worker. The sponsorship system is also electronic. This means that the migrant domestic worker, who is already under strict spatial discipline due to the nature of live-in work, must now submit her personal data to state supervision through an electronic system. Furthermore, through the monitoring of SGK insurance premium payments, she becomes the subject of a governance system which is run by her employer but controlled by the state.

A final important aspect of this legislation is that the new work permit scheme in effect shares many elements with the previous one. As suggested above, before work permits started being granted, migrants would arrive in Turkey as tourists, work in the country for as long as their visa permitted them to stay, and,

just before the visa expired, exit and then return to Turkey to extend their visa without hassle. However, this meant a regular interruption of the service they offered. This system, dubbed “shuttle migration”, also ensured the continuous circulation of workers in the migrant domestic workers market.

The current work permit scheme functions in a similar fashion – the work permit is first issued for a one-year period. If the employer regularly pays the SGK premiums for the domestic worker, she or he can then apply again for a second term. In this second term, the employer may demand a work permit of two years, at the end of which another application must be filed for a third term. This time, the employer may demand a three-year work permit. Law no. 6458 states that, after a total of eight years, a migrant worker with a short term residence permit is eligible to apply for a long term residence permit. However, as indicated by Ministry of Labour officials, this legislation is actually aimed at foreign investors residing in Turkey and it’s almost impossible for unqualified labourers to be granted such a long term permit. In other words, despite the new work permit scheme, the migrant domestic workers are still being employed for short periods, as was the case during the “shuttle migration” phase, and between these periods, the state intervenes during reapplication to determine whether the permit will be extended or not. In effect the legislative changes after 2010 have increased the state’s control and rendered the employer more active, without changing the dynamics of the migrant domestic workers market to a considerable extent.

This observation may seem bleak since I am emphasising the security aspect of the matter. In fact, the amendment of 2012 has led to the regulation of an area previously without regulation, and offered social insurance to migrant domestic workers. But there is still something missing in this analysis. Migrant domestic workers’ SGK insurance premiums are calculated on the basis of the minimum wage. Coming under SGK coverage means enjoying the same social rights of Turkish citizens – but with their legal status, they would need to work for 20 to 25 years to qualify for pension. As indicated before, since their temporary work permits are given for the duration of a few years, the assumption remains that they will not really exercise their rights within the Turkish social security system. And for a migrant’s overseas work period to count in the retirement system of her country of origin, there must be an agreement between the two countries to that effect. In brief, social security systems generally fail to protect migrants. As such, the real objective here is not to empower migrants by granting them social security, but rather to bring them under coverage so that they finance the system in place.

Work permit as an instrument of supervision

Finally, I would like to discuss a potential problem that the work permit scheme could lead to. Initially, the work permit application used to be filed by employers prior to the expiry of the domestic worker’s visa. Now that this system of a scheduled transition period is over, domestic workers have to apply in person to the Turkish embassy in their home country, while employers must file an application in Turkey. This brings an end to the previously balanced mechanism which had been in place up until point.

Before the new work permit scheme, during the “shuttle migration” period, a worker would arrive in Turkey and stay with friends or relatives, or at worst, at a place found by the labour broker. Meanwhile she would search for a

***Photo:** Ayşe Akalın*

Although there always was a structurally unequal relationship between the migrant domestic worker and the employer, migrants used to employ a "weapon of the weak" which strengthened their hand against the employer – to lie!

suitable employer. Although there always was a structurally unequal relationship between the migrant domestic worker and the employer, migrants used to employ a "weapon of the weak" which strengthened their hand against the employer – to lie! In the migrant domestic workers market, a lie is not a moral defect, but rather the inevitable consequence of an unequal relationship. Most employers have the nerve to seize the passport, the only identity document of the domestic worker, simply because there is no law or institution to prevent this. A migrant who accepts live-in domestic work is deemed to relinquish her right to negotiate the work hours or working conditions with the employer. And while a person in urgent need of cash or shelter may accept working under dire conditions she will certainly seize the first opportunity to work under better conditions if she can.

It was exactly at this point that the interchange of lies and "shuttle migration" came together to empower the domestic migrant worker. The worker told her employer that she had just received a call from home demanding her to return immediately to take care of a sick mother, sister or child. Naturally, such news could be genuine, since migrant domestic workers do not hail from regions with a sophisticated healthcare system or high living standards. Nevertheless, in many cases, such "urgent calls" were the only possible method for a migrant domestic worker to quickly quit her job without the prior approval of the employer. Afterwards, some of them actually went home and then returned to Turkey, whereas others immediately seized another opportunity and started working for someone else.

This method, which was employed with relative ease during the "shuttle migration" era, cannot continue unchanged under the new work permit scheme, because now abandoning your employer means giving up your legal status. In the case of the termination of her contract, a migrant domestic worker has fifteen days to find another employer to extend her permit. It's almost impossible for a worker to find an employer in such a short space of time. Once the fifteen days expire, in order to work legally, she has to go home and return to Turkey only after finding another job opportunity and applying for work permit from scratch.

Here lies the other problem associated with the new work permit scheme, as I argued above. In the previous system, workers at least had the chance to meet their employers face to face and make an assessment, and then the relative freedom to pack their things and leave in the case of harsh working conditions. But the current system binds the employee to the employer, and doesn't require the two sides to meet in person before reaching a work contract. A number of labour brokers, which don't have any legal license but nevertheless continue to operate, now include in their service package the filing of work permit applications on behalf of the employer and the promise of finding employees who will not cause any trouble to the employer. After the employer talks to a prospective employee over Skype, the labour broker promises that "She will not cause any trouble, will work as much as you want, and will never raise objections to anything." As a result, the employer can easily find a domestic worker from neighbouring countries, or even distant ones such as Sri Lanka or Indonesia. I have also come across workers from distant countries, although fewer in number. In a period when institutions of international law view human trafficking as a burning issue, Turkey's legal system incorporates many unacceptable elements of human trafficking – an irony of the state's labour "regulations" in the neoliberal era. As such, the domestic migrant work market may become the scene of numerous human rights violations in the period to come.

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Interview by Besim Bülent Bali

“What we see today is the logic of alms-giving rather than social assistance”

The period following the 2001 economic crisis in Turkey saw radical changes in social policy, alongside other areas. Reforms in the pension system, public healthcare, education and poverty reduction have had direct repercussions on the masses. This restructuring process, which has been synonymous with an erosion of workers’ rights, is frequently cited to explain the large social support enjoyed by AKP. But social assistance programs, of hitherto unknown volume and scope, paint a complicated picture. In this interview conducted in September 2015, we take up these issues with Professor Ayşe Buğra, who has been carrying out research on social policy for many years and sits on the board of Boğaziçi University’s Social Policy Forum.

Traditional philanthropy does not actually occupy an important place in Turkey. Some claim that it was very significant in Turkish history and culture, but a comparison with Europe reveals that this has never been the case.

Shall we start by defining the concept of social policy – what, in your opinion, does it refer to?

Ayşe Buğra: Naturally there are different definitions and approaches to social policy and we cannot hold up of any one of them as being definitive. For my part, I view social policy as a field which has appeared with capitalism, and has developed in parallel with capitalism. As an academic discipline it is fairly new, but as a bundle of policies it is as old as capitalism itself. I date its beginning to the 16th century – during this period a Spanish humanist penned a treatise on assistance to the poor and read it out loud in front of the city council of Bruges. He urged secular officers, those outside the clergy, to take measures against poverty and outlined what those measures could be. In my view this should be understood as one of the very first texts on social policy. Developments in the 19th century were then crucial on the road to the welfare state. In a sense, social policy can be thought of as a study into the problems of coexistence which have been created by capitalism - how can we coexist? In traditional societies, it was easier to answer this question - everyone knew their place, and lived together with those who held the same status as them, on the basis of a set of rights which were available to individuals of that same status (I do not use the word “right” in its current day meaning here). As such, there was no problem of coexistence in the modern sense of the term. But in modern capitalist societies, where social mobility is more prevalent, individuals no longer stay fixed to a certain place, and hitherto unseen problems such as unemployment appear. Social policy therefore comprises a bundle of policies designed to enable the coexistence of individuals within this context.

How can we say whether social policy exists or not in a certain epoch?

In all societies across the world, and in all periods of history, there have been, and continue to be, people who cannot make a living. As such various mechanisms have been put in place to ensure their livelihood - over time these have included family solidarity and philanthropy… Some writers also categorize these as social policy measures. What I mean by social policy, however, is mainly redistribution mechanisms implemented by political authorities in societies which are organized around a modern idea of citizenship. However, the state is not the only actor to play a role in such social policies - the family and the

market are also very important. In order to understand what kind of social policy exists in any given society we must look at the interaction between these three institutions.

Today we also have to add NGOs to these three institutions. In this neoliberal period, where there are vociferous demands for the slashing of state expenditure and reducing state interventions into society, NGOs are playing an increasingly important role in social policy. Of course, none of these actors are independent from one another. The family, state, labour market and NGOs all play a role, but they do not create fields separate from each other. Instead they operate in relation to each other, and the nature of this interaction is precisely what determines their role in the first place. It would not be correct, for instance, to say that NGOs do what the state fails to do.

So, NGOs are not substitutes?
I don't think they are. Today, I find the relationship between the family and state particularly important to reflect upon. In Turkey the state relies very much on the family. But it doesn't do this simply by abandoning those who cannot take care of themselves to the care of their families, but rather by reshaping the idea of family itself. This naturally means reshaping it according to a specific concept of what family is.

Neoliberal policies are built around a discourse which preaches that every individual should be responsible for themselves. For instance, it is being suggested that retirement services should be provided by the market, rather than by the state, and this argument is being widely accepted. A number of issues are no longer seen as a basic right, but rather as a responsibility of the individual. In this context, what direction is the concept of citizenship heading?
I do not like using the word 'neoliberal', I try not to employ it frequently. The new capitalist period we are going through has many different elements to it, one of which concerns the mode of regulation and the state-society relationship - the word neoliberal may be used in this context. However, what we are seeing now is not a simple binary of the withdrawal of the state and the expansion of the market. Rather, there is a change occurring in the relationship between state and society. Today, we see no drop in social assistance expenditure in either the major OECD countries or in late industrialisers, such as Turkey. On the contrary, social expenditure as a share of GDP is on the rise. For instance, in less developed OECD economies such as Turkey, Mexico and Korea, we have witnessed a considerable upward trend in social expenditure since the 1980s, or whatever year the data set starts. This rise is evident in Turkey – that is to say the state is playing a crucial role in social policy. While there is much talk of the market, the state's role remains very important. But how does the state play this role? In collaboration with the market, the private sector and NGOs. It also supports and complements the family. But these collaborations are changing the very meaning of the concept of citizenship. Now, we are steering further away from a rights-based approach to social policy.

Under AKP rule, this collaboration has become very visible. Even the name of the ministry in charge is the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. There is an understanding that family and social policies should go hand in hand.
When the ministry was established, they asked me what I thought, and I responded, "So there is no social policy for single people?" Such a focus on the family risks excluding a large segment of society. At our centre, Boğaziçi University's Social Policy Forum, a study was carried out among LGBTI individuals, which I consider to be very important. The study shows how familialism, which dominates social policy today, excludes this social group. The same goes for other social groups too. It is very clear what familialism means for women for example. Today, the state is not in a position of withdrawal – this is very clear in its support the family. For instance, significant social transfers are being made to the family to ensure that the elderly and disabled are cared for at home, and these transfers are being made to women. Some may argue that, since this woman would be caring for her family members anyway, it's great that she's now being paid for it! However, this policy only serves to reinforce and sustain the traditional gender-based division of labour.

Social policy is generally divided into subcategories such as social security, social rights and social assistance. I don't want to delve too much into social security, but it might be interesting to discuss social assistance, since it is considered a key factor underlying AKP's political success.
In Turkey, there was no considerable social assistance policy until the 2000s. Individuals who were unable to make a living were simply abandoned to their family or to traditional forms of philanthropy. But traditional philanthropy has never occupied a very important place in Turkey – some claim that it was very significant in Turkish history and culture, but a comparison with Europe reveals that this has never really been the case. Historically, in a society which had relatively limited urbanization and strong traditional family bonds, poverty was mainly managed through family solidarity without employing formal social assistance mechanisms. But from the 1980s onwards, the phenomena of poverty reached such a scale that it was no longer possible to cope with it solely via family solidarity or other traditional mechanisms. The Social Assistance and Solidarity Fund *(Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışmayı Teşvik Fonu)* was set up in 1986, and its establishment indicates that things were starting to change, and that business as usual was no longer an option.

But the Fund did not play a significant role until the economic crisis of 2001, and was even occasionally utilized for other purposes. Nor did it have large resources before this time. Following the 2001 crisis, under the coalition government run by Bülent Ecevit, the Fund started being employed on a much wider scale. Hasan Gemici was the minister in charge of it. I spoke with him after the crisis and it was clear that he had increased ambitions planned for the Fund - he aimed to transform the mechanism into a model of social assistance and had secured considerable funding from the World Bank for the purpose.

That funding amounted to around 500 million dollars.
Yes, it was called the social risk mitigation project. But the institutional mechanism had the potential to turn into a rights-based social assistance program. Hasan Gemici was a social democrat and so had

an idea about which direction the Fund needed to take. Later the AKP came to power and significantly expanded the Fund - it gained much larger resources and increased operations. The volume of assistance also expanded. Expenditure levels which I would have hesitated to propose back then are now in place today - government funds which are dedicated to social assistance make up a really high percentage of GDP.

However, it is also important to note how the fund is being employed. I think it is very far from a rights-based social assistance approach today. It is not possible, for instance, to say that the assistance is reliable and continuous, or based on transparent criteria. In rights-based social assistance, individuals must be able to rely on the continuity of the assistance, and must trust that the criteria are transparent. In order to ensure that the practice is based on mutual rights and responsibilities, recipient individuals must know why and under what conditions they are receiving aid, and when they can no longer receive it. Today, the Turkish case is almost the exact opposite. Most of the assistance is irregular, and it is never clear how much will be given to whom... What we are witnessing today is the logic of alms-giving rather than that of social assistance. A huge bureaucratic mechanism is already in place to assess people's needs, but social workers have only a minor role in this bureaucracy. Students, imams or practically anyone else may be in charge of needs assessment – it is just incredible. It is the equivalent of allowing a patient to be treated by someone who is not a doctor. During needs assessment, someone, a stranger, knocks on your door and takes a look around inside your home. Incredible. As a result, huge funds are being distributed in a way that is radically different from rights-based social assistance. This naturally opens the doors wide open to political abuse.

How are these funds being distributed?
Social assistance is managed by a general

The state and civil society do not operate in isolated arenas. There is always some interaction and the state actively shapes the civil society arena. In the so-called neoliberal period, the boundary between these two spaces has become very ambiguous. The collaboration between the state and NGOs is crucial for social assistance practices.

directorate under the umbrella of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. Local foundations play a critical role in the distribution of the funds. These foundations' boards of trustees are composed of representatives from local and central government, other local officials, and philanthropists from the community. There are more than nine hundred such local foundations across the country.

How did NGOs such as *Deniz Feneri* or *Kimse Yok mu?* enter this arena with such immense material resources and legal privileges? As you said, social assistance is frequently founded on Islamic references and traditional charity work. However, these organizations are very much self-enclosed, and lack transparency.

Numerous studies have been carried out into NGOs. Some of these emphasize that it is not possible for the state and civil society to operate in isolated arenas. There is always some interaction and the state actively shapes the civil society arena. In the so-called neoliberal period, the boundary between these two spaces has become very ambiguous. The collaboration between the state and NGOs is crucial for social assistance practices. It is not limited to *Deniz Feneri* or *Kimse Yok mu?* – NGOs play a role in the provision of social services, too. They work in prisons, retirement homes, etc. and are active in the provision of public services there.

When the boundaries between the state, market and civilian initiatives are increasingly blurred, as is the case today, if the public management structure is prone to corruption, shady deals appear immediately. The examples you gave are cases in point. At the Social Policy Forum, we carried out a study into the relationship between employment and poverty in eight cities. A very extensive survey was carried out, and we realized that the poor are not aware which institution provides them with assistance. For instance, they do not know whether the in-kind aid comes from an NGO - an association like Deniz Feneri, say - a central government institution, or the municipality. After all, all of these institutions more or less function along the logic of philanthropy.

Wherever the assistance may come from, citizens think that it is the government who's responsible. They say, "We have received all this aid under their rule." Of course, this field is very much prone to abuse and relations are fickle. Some NGOs have strong ties to the government, enjoy a number of advantages, and of course, return the favour somehow. However, not all state-NGO relations are like that. For instance NGOs considered to be undesirable by the state, such as *Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği* (Association for Supporting Contemporary Life) or Diyarbakır's *Sarmaşık Derneği,* face animosity from the government and find themselves in a difficult situation. As such, the civil society arena is not isolated from politics – quite the contrary in fact. For my part, I don't think it is beneficial for NGOs to assume those social policy responsibilities which should belong to the state. I believe the most important role of NGOs is advocacy. When they become engaged in service provision or aid distribution, advocacy work is ignored. Then the people also forget the importance of advocacy, and start to view NGOs as associations which distribute resources and provide social, cultural services.

How does local government operate in this area? Should municipalities be more active, should social policy be shifted from central to local government?

Municipalities have an obvious advantage in terms of establishing close contact with individuals and assessing their needs. However, if we want social policy to establish equality, then it is crucial for the funds to come from the centre. Because, when local government is in charge of both raising and distributing the funds, regional inequalities are inevitably reproduced. Furthermore, being close to individuals who benefit from assistance and knowing their needs is of course an advantage, but it could also be conducive to abuse. Local mechanisms of favouritism and exclusion could create serious problems. As such, the central government should control whether resources are distributed to interest groups close to local government, and whether minorities and vulnerable groups are excluded. In Turkey nowadays, expressions such as "NGO", "civilian initiative" or "local" are considered to denote something very positive. There is an overriding perception that the state is always bad and central government's

interventions are unacceptable, whereas everything local is favourable. We need to be a bit more discerning in this respect. Local social policy may in fact become exclusionary towards certain groups. In more conservative areas, for instance, problems related to gender issues may arise. Ethnic minorities may be excluded. The Social Policy Forum carried out research on the situation of the Roma, and we saw how badly they were treated in certain regions. They fare much better in certain cities, but suffer immense local pressure in others. In such cases, interventions from the outside may protect such vulnerable groups.

In social policy debates, there are those on the one extreme who point to Northern European countries and suggest that we should follow their example, and those on the other extreme who argue "Our society has peculiar characteristics, we need to develop a totally authentic model." As an academic who has studied this subject extensively throughout your career, what kind of social policy would you design?

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First and foremost, I believe that social assistance or poverty reduction strategies cannot be separated from various dimensions of working life. Secondly, I also believe that there should be stronger and closer bonds between social security and social assistance. As a result I would do two things. Firstly, I would analyse the taxation system. One reason underlying the current fashion of philanthropy is that tax is not collected and distributed properly. Taxation is a critical issue - the state must be able to collect taxes efficiently and distribute tax revenue equitably. Secondly, I would take a hard look at working life. We need to evaluate various dimensions and characteristics of unemployment. Female labour force participation rate is very low and must be increased. To do this, you have to take the structure of working life itself as posing a problem, not women. It is still typical to point to women as being difficult – and I must say that NGOs are not really helping matters here. Some NGOs are engaged in great advocacy work, but many NGOs limit themselves to urging women to do handicraft at home. This is not what we need. Certain measures must be taken to increase employment over the long run, and there are other things which can be done immediately and should be considered more seriously. Education is a very crucial aspect of this issue, and is key over the longer term. In Turkey, educational inequality is very visible. Free education has all but ceased to exist. Education is a part of social policy. All these components must be considered together, as a whole. Naturally, we need to analyse the specific situation in Turkey – you cannot take decisions about the Turkish education system based on the Swedish model. The solution will have

to be specific to here, but I do not mean that it should be based on religion or cultural traditions etc.

You said that certain immediate measures can be taken to increase employment. Could you elaborate on this?
The Social Policy Forum has stated countless times that most social policy measures also have an employment-inducing effect. For example, the reorganization of working life, particularly working hours, also constitutes an important social policy measure. Today, working hours are extremely long in Turkey and this must be changed. This can be achieved right now. It will immediately create vacancies for more employees and boost the employment rate. Long working hours are also connected to the very low female labour force participation rate. Women cannot participate in working life as a result of the working day being too long.
The current state of social care policies, for instance the scarcity of public kindergartens, has a similar impact. Here we see how social policy affects employment through multiple channels. The scarcity of kindergartens is a factor which bars women from participating in the labour force, and setting up a public kindergarten would also mean creating jobs for women – regular, decent jobs, which would be much more meaningful than working for 12 hours in a sweatshop. Likewise highly skilled support personnel can be trained and employed in the healthcare industry. As such, it is possible to both raise the quality of health services, and create decent jobs. Recently, CHP has included articles in its

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The reorganization of working life, especially working hours, also constitutes an important social policy measure. Today, working hours are extremely long in Turkey and this must be changed. Long working hours also lead to the very low female labour force participation rate.

program which establish a connection between social policy and employment through these demand-side perspectives. This is pleasing, of course.

Here we immediately come across a counterargument. When shorter working hours, or working less for the same salary is mentioned, some writers bring up international competitive edge, costs etc. It is argued that capital would flee to other countries. For instance during the recent debate on the minimum wage, some pundits argued that a higher minimum wage would encourage illegal employment.
I think those pundits know all too well that this problem does not really exist. Turkey is way beyond the point where it can compete on the basis of cheap labour – countless countries have a labour force much cheaper than ours. If Turkey really wants to become competitive at the international level, it has to invest in research and development and reconsider its education policies. You cannot have the competitive edge with such low quality education. Turkey produces goods and services with poorly-trained employees and very limited research and development activity. Of course it is important to boost exports, but cutting wages is not the way to go. Furthermore, domestic demand is important in a 70 million-strong country, and to keep up this demand there should be a rise in vibrant revenues.

We just talked about the minimum wage - what is your opinion on regional variations in the minimum wage?
I strongly oppose this suggestion. The minimum wage is a signal, and a signal which holds the country together. If you start arguing that wages should be lower in places where life is relatively cheaper, you would quickly start running into other problems. During labour bargaining, for instance, employers would use it as a trump card to argue, “Then I will go and invest in eastern provinces.” As such, any regional minimum wage would divide the working masses and weaken their bargaining power.

Those who argue for regional variation claim that a lower minimum wage in the east and southeast would increase female employment.
There are so many other methods which could be used to boost female participation in the labour force... But for this you first need to understand the real needs of the regions. We have completely forgotten to think in the Keynesian way, to focus on the demand side. If we were to follow this perspective, we could restart our thinking by asking what is needed in this place and what should be produced. Then we would find so many other methods to increase female employment and we wouldn’t have to resort to slashing the minimum wage in the region.

A regional minimum wage would erode the common denominators of citizenship. Workers in the western provinces would think, “The Kurds work for cheaper wages, that is why our wages stagnate.” Such reactions lay the groundwork for nationalism and racism. This should be taken into account in social policy, too. People should not be led to thinking, “I am unemployed, or I get no raise, because they work for lower wages.” Likewise, when you design social policy you should never prompt anyone to think, “Why do they get all that, while I get nothing? Why are they being given what I am entitled to?” To avoid this, you should prioritize universal policies which embrace not one social sector, but society as a whole. Of course, affirmative action may be necessary towards certain vulnerable groups. However, you should avoid arguing “This service is exclusive to women, the Roma, Kurds, etc.”, because then, these groups may suffer retaliation. You may inadvertently stigmatize or reinforce the vulnerability of the group which you are trying to protect in the first place. This is a very delicate issue.

ENROLMENT AND AVERAGE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN TURKEY

In his article published in the fourth issue of **saha** in September 2016, Hasan Tekgüç, faculty member of the Department of Economics at Kadir Has University, discusses changes in access to education in Turkey over recent decades, drawing attention to the shifts from one generation to the next. Tekgüç suggests that any convincing criticism of AKP's interventions in education, particularly regarding reforms in curriculum, must take into account the gaps in access to education.

According to data from 2014, Qatar and Kuwait had the highest per capita income in the world (at purchasing power parity) in that year. They're not the first countries that spring to mind when talking about developed countries, despite the figures. While there has never been a consensus on the definition of development, the prevalent view since the early 1990s has been that development can't be measured solely using economic categories such as GDP. Data on average income doesn't include any information on income distribution within a given country – a high per capita income may hide the fact that a small and very rich minority live in palaces while the large majority exist in abject poverty. Alternatively, wealth may come at the cost of rampant pollution of the environment, or the means of spending this income may be limited. As such, the tendency in the field of development economics since the early 1900s has shifted to calculating multi-dimensional development indices when comparing countries. What are these dimensions? As indicated by Suppa's literature survey, the many individuals who are reflecting on this issue, including philosophers and economists, or international institutions like the OECD, all agree upon a common theoretical list which includes the following – education, healthcare, income, housing, participation in social and political life, employment, environmental conditions and security.[1]

International comparison

The best known among these indices is the Human Development Index (HDI), which has been regularly updated by UNDP since 1990. This index includes only three dimensions - healthcare, education and income. The limited inclusion is explained by Amartya Sen, one of its two masterminds, as a means to allow a snapshot of the entire world. It must be based on basic data that can be gathered by even the world's most humble statistics institutes with limited means[2] – in other words, a very sophisticated statistical index which only developed countries have the capabilities to calculate would not serve the purposes of the United Nations. The three dimensions used by HDI are of equal weight.[3] The healthcare dimension only features the average life expectancy at birth; the income dimension is based on per capita GDP; the education dimension consists of two indicators. The mean years of schooling, taken from the average number of years a person aged 25 or over has spent in schools. And the expected years of schooling, which measures how many average years of schooling children under 18 would receive assuming that the enrolment rate remains unchanged.

Western European countries, Australia and New Zealand sit at the top of the resulting ranking, while African nations and Afghanistan are to be found at the bottom.[4] In the 2015 report based on data from 2014, Turkey ranks 72nd, immediately below Lebanon and Iran, and just above Sri Lanka, Mexico and Venezuela. Its ranking is lower using such multi-dimensional comparisons of development, compared to those which are based only on income – had countries been ranked solely on their GDP, Turkey would have been ranked 60th. Neither is Turkey's low ranking on the HDI ranking a result of healthcare indicators – despite all its healthcare problems, Turkey would rank 65th in a ranking based solely on average life expectancy at birth. In other words, the education dimension is what drags Turkey down in international rankings. Turkey ranks 113rd in terms of mean years of schooling for people aged 25 or over.

> What drags Turkey down in international rankings is the education dimension. Turkey ranks 113rd in terms of mean years of schooling for people aged 25 or over.

Education professionals tend to compare Turkey with Western European countries. While such comparisons indicate what

a dire state Turkey is in, they also allow education authorities to come up with pretexts such as, "They're rich countries", "There is no separatist terrorism in Germany", or "Belgians don't have the problem of sending teachers to remote, impoverished regions". It might be more illuminating to compare Turkey's education indicators with those of poorer, more rural countries which have suffered from more wars and conflict. For instance, as seen in Table 1, if the mean years of schooling for people aged 25 or older in Turkey were equal to that of Sri Lanka, which is also suffering from a protracted civil war, Turkey would rank 50th in the HDI ranking, leapfrogging Russia and Uruguay. If Turkey's educational indicators were on a par with those of Jordan, which has welcomed migrants and refugees from Palestine and Iraq over the years, and now from Syria, Turkey would rank 60th. If Turkey's educational statistics were similar to those of Iran, which has experienced the Islamic Revolution, all-out war and an American embargo, and covers a geographical area much larger than Turkey, Turkey would rank 64th.

Gender inequality is another problem that besets education in Turkey. There's a difference of almost two years between men and women in the mean years of schooling for people aged 25 and older (8.5 compared to 6.7 years). If Turkish women had attended school to the same extent as their male peers (the fact that men are able to attend schools proves that enough of them exist) Turkey would climb 10 places in the HDI ranking to 62nd place. As of 2014, there is no gender inequality in the mean years of schooling in Sri Lanka, whereas the gap is only one year in Jordan and Iran. As for the average expected years of schooling for children under 18, girls are still one year behind boys (14 versus 15.1 years) in Turkey. Meanwhile, in Iran, Sri Lanka and Jordan, girls outperform boys in this indicator, as of 2014 – as is also the case in Western countries.

If not poverty, civil war, embargo or refugees, what explains Turkey's long-term failure to invest in education? Presumably, it is simply the fact that education is not considered important in Turkey. Figure 1 shows the net enrolment rate (junior high and high school) in formal education (which is differentiated from remote education). The net enrolment rate shows the percentage of students who are of schooling age and enrolled in an educational institution.[5] Figure 1 highlights a number of things. Firstly, Turkey didn't collect regular data in this area until the 1990s as it was not deemed important. Secondly, the enrolment rate continued to rise even in the first half of the 1990s, when the civil war was at its most intense – indicating that the civil war can't be used as a pretext here. Remarkably, the junior high enrolment rate rose gradually from 25 to 56 percent between 1974 and 1997, and then jumped by another 30 percentage points between 1997 and 2001 –equivalent to the total rise in the previous 23 years– to reach 86 percent. As is known, the reason for this sudden surge in 1997 was the passing of the law which extends primary education to 8 years. Leaving aside the real motives of the lawmakers who passed this law, the jump in the junior high enrolment rate and the aforementioned comparison with impoverished countries proves that Turkey is capable of raising enough funds for education when it wants to. The resources necessary for basic education are four walls, a roof, a blackboard, chalk and a teacher – these are all available domestically and don't need to be imported. Amartya Sen makes the following observation for many underdeveloped countries – countries fight efficiently against infectious diseases, but fail to roll back problems such as hunger, since while most infectious diseases don't discriminate people on the basis of class and also threaten the children of the elite, hunger

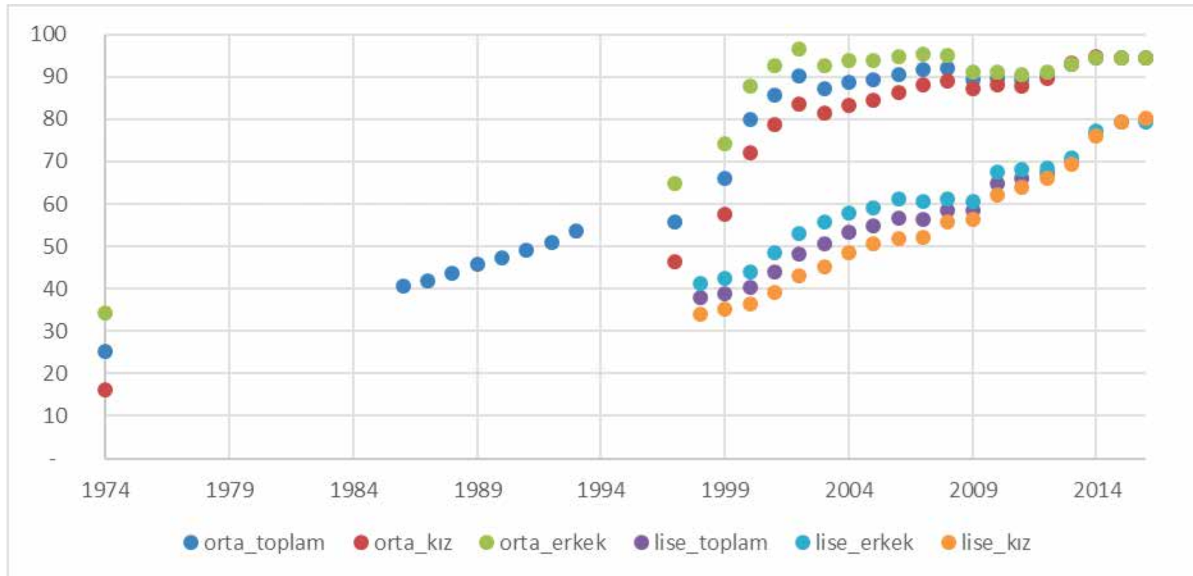
Table 1: Comparison of Selected Countries' HDI

HDI Rank	Country	LEB	GDP per capita	MYS, 25+	EYS
69	Iran	75.4	15,440	8.2	15.1
72	Turkey	75.3	18,677	7.6	14.5
73	Sri Lanka	74.9	9,779	10.8	13.7
80	Jordan	74.0	11,365	9.9	13.5

LEB: life expectancy at birth; MYS, 25+: mean years of schooling for individuals aged 25 or over; EYS: expected years of schooling for children under 18.

Source: *UNDP 2016.*

Figure 1: Net Enrolment Rate in Formal Education, Junior High and High School



Source: *Junior high school data prior to 2013 from World Bank Education Statistics[13], and junior high and high school data for 2013 and beyond from Ministry of Education's Statistical Yearbook[14]*

is not contagious.[6] Like hunger, ignorance is also not contagious. The Turkish experience shows that issues such as education are only taken up when the lack of education threatens the national elite or the international ranking is an embarrassment to the elite.

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Lastly, high school enrolment rate increased by 2 to 3 percent every year during the 2000s, with the exception of a 6 percent increase in 2010, in contrast to the sudden jump seen in junior high enrolment rate after the law which extended primary education to eight years.[7] Following the so-called 4+4+4 education law passed in 2012, the enrolment rate in formal education has continued to rise despite various concerns about the law. In the school year 2015-16, the enrolment rate was 94 percent for junior high schools and 80 percent for high schools. In a first in Turkish history, the enrolment rate of boys and girls was equal in both junior high and high school level for the year 2014-15. Nevertheless, it shouldn't be forgotten that the remaining 20 percent represents 1 million children. Most of these children are still in junior high because they were enrolled late or have to repeat a grade level. But it's not easy to estimate how many of them will continue to high school or will choose to complete high school as external students.

Comparison by gender and province over the years

Table 2 shows that the net enrolment rate varies by gender at primary, junior high and high school level (I won't elaborate on the primary school enrolment rate here owing to lack of space). Table 2 also features the median enrolment data which shows the inequality between provinces more clearly than the average data. However, since the provinces with the highest enrolment rate (Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir and Eskişehir) are much more populous than the others, the Turkish national average is always higher than the median enrolment rate. From the median enrolment rate for the year 1970, it's clear that junior high and high school education were a luxury at the time. In 50 percent of the provinces, girls' junior high enrolment rate was below 7 percent and didn't reach 25 percent in any province. The high school enrolment rate reached 10 percent at most (in Ankara). In other words, if you or your mother received high school education around the year 1970, you can be considered part of Turkey's well-educated elite. Men fared only slightly better than women. It's not possible to calculate the net enrolment rate based on data from 1980, because the Ministry of National Education's 1980 Statistical Yearbook doesn't provide the ages of the children enrolled in schools. In 1990, the junior high enrolment rate was above 51 percent among boys in half of the provinces, but it was still very low among girls. So even in 1990, it was a luxury for a girl to attend junior high or high school. The high school enrolment rate didn't attain 50 percent in any province (Ankara still ranked first). In 2000, it's possible to see the effects of the law which extended primary education to eight years. Between 1990-2000, the median enrolment rate for junior high was 50 percent among girls, and increased by 40 percent among boys. The high school enrolment rate showed a much smaller increase. In 2000, outside Ankara, Eskişehir, the Aegean region and the Marmara region, the high school enrolment among girls was still below 50 percent. Between 2000-2012 a rise similar to that seen in junior high enrolment between 1990-2000 occurred

in high school enrolment, particularly among girls. However, in the 2000s there was no legislative change comparable to the eight-year law to prompt such an increase.

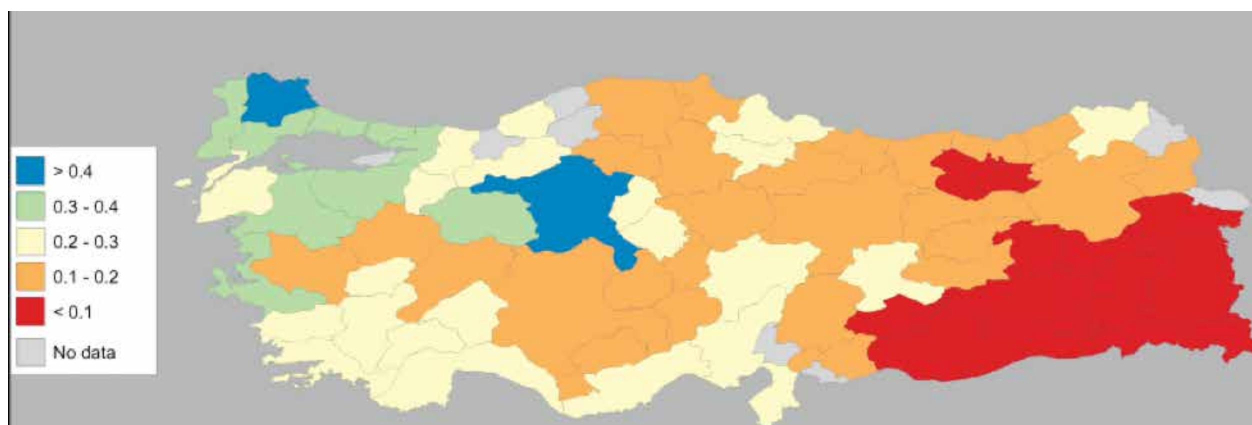
Figure 2 shows the high school enrolment rate among girls in 1990. It was still a privilege for a girl to attend high school in provinces to the east or south of Ankara in 1990 – at this time attending high school in the Turkish countryside was tantamount to joining the local well-educated elite. From another perspective, the children of those women who were of high school age in the early 1990s attended high school in the 2000s or are enrolled at high school now. To put it another way, the majority of the mothers of today's high school students don't hold a high school diploma. Although the map may give the impression that Kurdish could be a barrier before enrolment, in reality the enrolment rate increased very rapidly in the 2000s in provinces with a Kurdish majority. Furthermore, boys' enrolment rates are always higher in these provinces. The relation between education in mother tongue and learning does not necessarily exist between education in mother tongue and enrolment rate. The relationship between provinces with a Kurdish majority and enrolment rate can be explained by the neglect of this region during republican history.

Table 2: Net Enrolment Rates over the Years in Turkey

Year		P.S.	J.H.S	H.S.	P.S.	J.H.S.	H.S.
1970	No. of Provinces	67	67	67	67	67	67
	Median	0.71	0.07	0.02	0.91	0.21	0.06
	Minimum	0.19	0.01	0.00	0.47	0.05	0.02
	Maximum	0.99	0.24	0.10	1.00	0.38	0.15
1990	No. of Provinces	73	73	73	73	73	73
	Median	0.86	0.31	0.17	0.89	0.51	0.33
	Minimum	0.42	0.04	0.02	0.70	0.16	0.07
	Maximum	1.00	0.68	0.44	1.00	0.82	0.54
2000	No. of Provinces	81	81	81	81	81	81
	Median	0.89	0.81	0.32	0.94	0.90	0.44
	Minimum	0.58	0.32	0.05	0.59	0.59	0.18
	Maximum	1.00	1.03	0.60	1.00	1.00	0.70
2012	No. of Provinces	81	81	81	81	81	81
	Median	0.99	0.94	0.75	0.99	0.94	0.75
	Minimum	0.91	0.81	0.40	0.91	0.81	0.31
	Maximum	1.00	0.98	0.97	1.00	0.98	0.91

Source: *Oyvat and Tekgüç (2016).*[15]

Figure 2: Net High School Enrolment Rate among Women in Formal Education, 1990



Source: *Oyvat and Tekgüç (2016).*

Status: Education and profession[9]

If your perception of formal education in Turkey is based on reports issued by the trade union Eğitim-Sen or other groups who oppose AKP, the official data presented here may come as a surprise to you.[10] Despite what dissident media outlets suggest, girls' access to education has increased under AKP rule. But in reality this should come as no surprise. The trend in Turkey runs parallel to most developing countries – the majority of the population now live in cities, where life is expensive and it's hard to make ends meet with a single salary. Technological advancements have slashed manual jobs. Now a majority of the working population are to be found in the service industry, where most of the new jobs are being created. Employers are demanding a two- or four-year university diploma for even the most ordinary of white-collar work. Mothers are seeking well-educated girls to marry their well-educated boys. Furthermore, the social status of manual work is very low in Turkey[11] – in fact, among the 20 professions with the highest status, only mayors and non-commissioned officers

The relationship between education in mother tongue and learning does not necessarily exist between education in mother tongue and enrolment rate. The relationship between provinces with a Kurdish majority and enrolment rate needs to be explained by the neglect of this region during republican history.

> Without a thorough analysis of Turkey's relative lag in education, debates on socio-economic status, job security or precarious work would lack a foundation. In 2016, white collar employees may be working in less secure jobs than they had expected to, but it is still too early to talk of intergenerational precarity in Turkey.

don't require a four-year university degree. Among the 10 professions with the highest status, teaching is the only one where a master's degree is not necessary or very common. Almost all manual jobs rank very low – the highest-ranking manual employees are mine workers, who rank 51st. In other words, university education is a key determinant of a profession's prestige in Turkey, and profession and education, in turn, determine an individuals' status within society.

As outlined in the previous section, the majority of today's high school students' mothers don't have high school degrees. In the eyes of these mothers, therefore, their children's high school enrolment represents a jump in social status. In Turkish popular culture, teachers and nurses are considered to be members of the middle class.[12] However, as suggested by Table 2 and Figure 2, in the 1980s teachers belonged to a high-status minority. Accordingly today, only a tiny minority of white collar employees have a job which is more precarious than their parents' jobs. The mothers of a large majority of today's white collar workers hold junior high degrees, at best. If these mothers dwelled in cities, the overwhelming majority of them were housewives, and not part of the labour force; if they dwelled in the countryside, they would be working as unpaid family labourers. Housewives and unpaid family labourers led a life much more precarious than today's white collar employees. Debates on socio-economic status, job security or precarious work would lack a foundation without a thorough analysis of Turkey's relative lag in education. In 2016, white collar employees may be working in jobs less secure than they had expected, but it's still too early to talk of intergenerational precarity in Turkey.

Conclusion

Turkey lags in education considering its per capita income. In recent years, the expected years of schooling for children under 18 has approached those of other developing countries. But nevertheless, the Turkish average is still behind Iran's (15.1 compared to 14.5 years), and, unlike Iran, Turkey has yet to establish gender equality in terms of expected years of schooling, largely because of the gap in tertiary education. But the main factor which pulls Turkey down in international comparisons is the relative lack of education among those aged 25 or over. The immense gap between individuals in school age and those older than school age also has an effect on the perception of education policies. In 2016, a majority of mothers in Turkey have children with a high school diploma, a status which they themselves never had the opportunity

to attain and are never likely to attain in the future. For the majority of parents in Turkey, access to education still seems to be their main concern.

From 1997-98 onwards, the junior high enrolment rate started to rise as a result of the law extending primary schooling to 8 years. AKP's education policies didn't lead to a similar jump in high school enrolment, but nor did AKP resist society's demand for more education, which was prompted by the ongoing social transformations (urbanisation, the rise of the service industry etc.).

The rise in girls' enrolment rates in formal education under AKP rule contradicts the widespread perception among groups in opposition to AKP, a perception which is most probably a result of the discourse employed by the party's leaders. The statements made by AKP leaders against women's education or employment are perceived by dissident social groups as the party's attempt to transform society according to its Islamist ideology. In other words, dissidents perceive AKP leaders as an omnipotent force which can shape society with their discourse. Maybe it would be more accurate to consider AKP leaders and their Islamist discourse not as a proactive force that can transform society at will, but rather as a reactive, conservative force which can't resist the changes happening in society, and are unhappy with the continuous transformations to the social order that they are used to.

Maybe it would be more accurate to consider AKP leaders and their Islamist discourse not as a proactive force that can transform society at will, but rather as a reactive, conservative force which can't resist the changes happening in society, and are unhappy with the continuous transformations to the social order that they are used to.

As seen in international data, individuals are spending more time in formal education across the world. The gender gap is shrinking, and is even favouring women in many countries. Despite its lag, Turkey is following in the footsteps of other countries. Even if each country has their own, slightly different, story, the reasons for this global shift are to be found in global factors – urbanisation, technological transformation, and change in economic structures. AKP's ideology is not a force that can stand up to such a radical transformation.

[1] Nicolai Suppa, *Towards a Multidimensional Poverty Index for Germany* (OPHI Working Paper 74, OPHI, Oxford, 2015).

[2] Amartya Sen, "Capabilities, Lists, and Public Reason: Continuing the Conversation," *Feminist Economics* 10, no. 3 (2004): 77-80. The other mastermind of the index is Mahbub ul Haq.

[3] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2014: Technical Notes* (2016): 2. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14_technical_notes.pdf.

[4] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2015,* 208-211. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_human_development_report.pdf.

[5] In the calculation of the net enrolment rate, children who are over the official school age but continue their studies are not included. As such, it might be necessary to calculate a gross enrolment ratio in certain cases. The gross enrolment rate is the ratio of all children enrolled in education institutions at a certain grade level against the entire population at the age that children at that level should officially have. Due to factors such as repeating a grade level or late enrolment, the gross enrolment rate is always slightly higher than the net enrolment rate. Tertiary gross enrolment rate may also be very different among men and women, due to men's attempts to postpone military service. Since the importance of the aforementioned factors which affect gross enrolment rate will change in time, in this discussion of a 40-year period, net enrolment was focused on solely here.

[6] Amartya Sen, "The Political Economy of Targeting," in *Public Spending and The Poor,* eds. Dominique van de Walle and Kimberley Nead (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

[7] MEB, *Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri: Örgün Eğitim* (T.C. MEB Resmi İstatistik Programı, 2016).

[8] Cem Oyvat and Hasan Tekgüç, *Double Squeeze on Development: Land Inequality and Ethnic Conflict in Southeastern Turkey* (Mimeo, to be published).

[9] Lütfi Sunar, Yunus Kaya, Mustafa Otrar, Serdar Nerese, Seran Demiral, Burcu Kalpaklıoğlu Yalçın, *Türkiye Sosyo-Ekonomik Statü Endeksi* (TÜBİTAK Proje No: 113K506, 2016). In Turkey, the third determinant of status is income, as would be expected.

[10] Eğitim-Sen, *Cinsiyetçilik Raporları* (2016), http://egitimsen.org.tr/konu/kadin/kadin-raporlar/.

[11] Lütfi Sunar, et al. *Türkiye Sosyo-Ekonomik Statü Endeksi Türkiye Mesleki İtibar Skalası* (2016). http://turkeyses.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/%E2%80%9CT%C3%BCrkiye%E2%80%99de-%C3%87al%C4%B1%C5%9Fma-Ya%C5%9Fam%C4%B1-ve-Mesleklerin-%C4%B0tibar%C4%B1%E2%80%9D-Ara%C5%9Ft%C4%B1rmas%C4%B1-Tamamland%C4%B1.pdf.

[12] *Teacher.* Directed by Kartal Tibet. Istanbul: Uğur Film, 1988. https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%96%C4%9Fretmen_(film)

[13] World Bank Databank 2016. http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx

[14] Ministry of Education, "National Education Statistics: Formal Education 2015'/16", 2016.http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2016_03/30044345_meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2015_2016.pdf

[15] Oyvat and Tekgüç, *ibid.* Since enrolment rate by province was not calculated prior to the 2000s, we calculates enrolment rates by province by using the student numbers provided in the Ministry of Education's Statistical Yearbooks and the total school-age children population recorded in censuses.

Interview by Fırat Genç

The walls built by education are hard to climb

For the fourth issue of **saha** published in September 2016, we met with Çetin Çelik, a sociologist specialising in immigration and education at Koç University's Sociology Department, to discuss Turkey's primary and secondary education system. We touched upon issues ranging from vocational high schools, private high schools, the changing exam system, and parents' strategies, focusing on how the field of education reinforces social inequality.

In Turkey, the field of education has always been an arena of ideological struggle. On the other hand, there is a prevalent discourse which suggests that education will create opportunities for social mobility. Today, however, there is widespread anxiety about education and most social groups seem to be wary of the education system. What has changed? Are we witnessing a rupture?

Çetin Çelik: Throughout Turkish history, from the *imam hatip* schools to village institutes, the field of education has always been an arena of fierce struggle between different political powers. This is still the case today – I don't think much has changed in this respect. I'm not sure if a rupture is taking place. In general, I try to study the education system through a structural perspective. That is, I focus not on how a political group is trying to dominate the field, but rather on how that group is restructuring the field to ensure that it functions to its benefit. What draws my attention personally is exam schemes – the distribution of children to different school programs from an early age, and the effect of all this on social mobility.

The Ecevit government made a political intervention in the field of education by legislating the 8-year education scheme in 1997 in order to create a bulwark against *imam hatip* schools. Later, during AKP's rule, this scheme was abrogated in another political intervention. If we're looking for a rupture, maybe we should focus on the privatisation of education. Private education was not so widespread prior to AKP, and social mobility, albeit limited, was accessible to students studying at state schools. However, the recent privatisation drive, the clear-cut separation between state schools and private schools, and the vast public funds and incentives offered by the state to private schooling can lead one to talk of a rupture now. I believe as a result of these, even more radical ruptures are yet to come in the future.

Statistics show that there is a rise in the rate of schooling in Turkey in the 2000s. But you're arguing that the privatisation of education is eliminating social mobility opportunities. Should we understand from this that two contradictory dynamics have appeared during AKP's rule?

The expansion of education is a global, not national, phenomenon. In countries such as Brazil or Mexico, for instance, or developed countries such as, say, Germany, certificates have turned into an industry. In the UK there's a huge rise in the percentage of individuals who are participating in tertiary education. But one must look at how this trend is affecting social inequality and mobility – that is, we need to discuss the connection between social mobility and certificates.

Doesn't it work?

I don't think it does. It's generally accepted that the expansion of tertiary education towards the masses is a favourable cultural development. In Europe, there is ample talk of the certificate 'industry' or degree inflation, although the situation in Turkey is still far from this point. For instance, Heike Solga suggests that employees need additional certificates and degrees – not to get promoted, but merely to preserve their current position. In Turkey, we should discuss this issue through an analysis of youth employment and unemployed university graduates. Then of course, we should ponder the quality of technical education taught at schools and the current mode of production.

To give an example related to education, for instance, obligatory education has been extended to 12 years. In theory, this is very important, nothing to sniff at. However, since “open” high schools are also included within this system, in practice a large mass of people are pushed outside formal education. What would happen if this mass were to be granted certificates? What would their qualifications be? The importance of institutions depends on the market value of the degree they offer… All these issues are open to debate.

I see that there’s a general trend here. Is it possible to say that AKP has a specific strategy of education reform?
Honestly, I don’t believe there exists a significant program underlying all this. It’s not possible to detect a consistent framework here. One part of society, which holds the reins of political power, has conservative sensibilities. But they don’t seem to have the expertise or consistent ideological program to regulate the field of education. If I were to make an oversimplification here, privatisation in Turkey boils down to AKP’s introduction of a neoliberal global trend to Turkey. The same goes for increased conservatism. AKP always had conservative tendencies, but now they’ve begun to gear up their conservative policies. Are they doing this as part of a wider ideological program? I’m not so sure. Take the *imam hatip* schools for example… If you accept such a large number of students to *imam hatip* schools, you won’t succeed in raising a conservative generation – on the contrary, those students will transform the *imam hatip*. As such, I don’t believe they’re pursuing a consistent program.

A significant component of the privatisation process is the role and position of different types of schools. The main distinction on the public side is the one between regular high schools and vocational high schools. What kind of a distinction does this entail in the lives of students?
It might sound like too structuralist a discourse, but high schools are part of a bigger structure. Vocational high schools are not “bad” schools by definition. For instance if we look at the labour market organisation of the period from 1950s to 1970s, there were a large number of manual jobs, and manual labourers or semi-qualified workers could find employment in certain factories. This was in Europe and in other countries. As such, vocational high schools fulfilled a certain function. Children who graduated from these schools could join the

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labour market, albeit at its lower end. However, following the transformation of the global economy –you may call it a shift towards information technologies etc.–, industrial relations have started to change. This change has taken place mainly in developed economies, but it’s having a partial impact on Turkey, too. Vocational high schools need to adapt to the transformation in industry, in terms of educational content, curriculum, and materials. Vocational high schools have lost some of their function because the students there are still educated in the old-fashioned way, there aren’t enough materials, and teachers are not competent. For instance, there now exists IKEA-type furniture which can

easily be assembled and disassembled, and alternative furniture models are being developed. But if you go to the woodworking department of a vocational high school, you'll still see students varnishing for hours on end. In other words, the vocational high schools function like places to contain students deemed "potentially dangerous to society", keeping them from causing trouble on the streets. This is the situation on the ground.

But we're also hearing a discourse of expanding and enhancing vocational high school education. What's more, the number of their students is on the rise. So there may be plans to modernise these schools in the near future.
If vocational high schools offer students high quality education, they may be functional in filling a significant gap in the labour market. But their education quality is currently mediocre. Let me go back to my argument above, because there's a connection here. The transformation of the mode of production necessitates the transformation of vocational high schools. And just as you say, there is demand in the labour market for qualified workers. However, vocational high schools can't respond to this transformation for various reason. Their number is on the rise, you're right about that, too. So these are the questions we should be asking – What is the function of these schools? How do they operate? What purpose do they serve? And in order to respond to these questions, we need to ask which children are entering these schools, and how –that is, at which point– the structural selection mechanisms kick in.

At primary school, enrolment is based on your home address. As is well known, due to the rise of private education, there is a yawning gap between the different categories of schools, and the schools located in poorer neighbourhoods have very limited resources. The teachers are less well-educated, the schools lack resources, there are problems with infrastructure etc. Children attend these schools, and are later distributed to different types of junior high and high schools. Is it possible to say that such a system is meant to ensure the integration of children from the lower classes into the labour market? It divides the children into different groups at an early age, and thus limits the access of children from the lower classes to resources. Is this leading to concern among politicians? Not really, if you ask me. Maybe this is owing to the fact that the development model they have in mind is one which depends on cheap labour, rather than on the training of a highly qualified workforce to be integrated into the labour market.

A minister has indeed said, "A cheap workforce is what we need".
This was the exact wording – "we need workers who will work for low salaries". So Turkey's potential trajectory is being inspired by the Indonesian development model, rather than say the German model. As such, I don't see much of a contradiction here. Such a development model is not in contradiction with an education system based on selective mechanisms that constantly drags down the poor.

What mechanisms do you refer to? What keeps a vocational high school student from climbing higher in the social hierarchy?
Here, we may refer to Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Certainly, this is a rather complicated concept, it's hard to grasp and put into words. An individual's habitus determines her or his tendencies, affinities, the workings of their memory, tastes, preferences, etc. How is it shaped? It depends on our historical background, and the place we occupy in the social structure. Just like individuals, institutions also have a habitus. Vocational high schools and regular high schools have a deeply entrenched position in the field of education, in historical and structural terms. They have a certain relationship vis-a-vis each other, which may change in time. As such, they each have an "institutional habitus".

What does this institutional habitus consist of? For instance, the school's student profile is a key part of the institutional habitus, as well as to what end it educates these students, the curriculum being taught, and the teacher profile. Yet above all these, there is what we call the expressive order – the impalpable yet observable ethos, atmosphere within the school. This atmosphere penetrates the mode of conduct – you absorb it, and behave accordingly. For instance, at vocational high schools, the classical teacher-student relationship is replaced with a more masculine structure based on an ethos of master-apprentice. In this type of school, are students encouraged to be critical and demand their rights, or is it considered to be disrespectful to do this? The institutional habitus is an overarching component of this foundation.

> The system is not designed to ensure the integration of children from lower classes into the labour market. Is this leading to concern among politicians? Not really, if you ask me. Maybe this is owing to the fact that the development model they have in mind is one which depends on cheap labour, rather than on the training of a highly qualified workforce to be integrated into the labour market.

Let's briefly examine the habitus of industrial/vocational high schools in Turkey, particularly their teaching staff. Most of their teachers are male with a working class background. Another crucial aspect is where their students come from. These are students who have either never taken the TEOG [the high school entrance exam], or received the lowest grades in that exam. The curriculum is not academic – it contains nothing concerned with individual learning, critical thinking, questioning things etc. Cultural classes, such as maths, English etc. are offered only at the most basic level. Why are such subjects, which we can also refer to as academic, delivered at the most elementary level? Why is it thought that these students will never need such knowledge? For ideological reasons. If we look at the expressive order, we see an extremely masculine structure. Students are distributed to different programs based on their gender. At the vocational high schools I worked in, I never saw any female students in the metalworking or woodworking departments.

But the schools are mixed.
Yes. Boys and girls go the same classes in the first year. At the end of the ninth class, the students are divided

into different programs according to their grades, and the results of the central exam within the school. The students with the lowest grades go to woodworking, metalworking, ready wear etc. Aren't there any female students who get low grades? There are. Why aren't they sent to these programs? There is a sharp division based on gender. In other words, the schools' expressive order is masculine, and it reproduces gender roles. That's not the case in Germany where you see female students in the woodworking department as well.

Another important question to ask is – who are the students attending vocational high schools, what is their background? The large majority hail from the working class and the sub-proletarian class. They come from neighbourhoods where patriarchal and masculine values are prevalent. When they enter vocational high schools, they don't really learn anything. The habitus of these schools is like an extension of their life in the neighbourhood, within the family home. The student is not enlightened there. If we reverse the question and ask what the student learns, we can reflect further on their function. If they're not teaching anything new, and simply serving as the continuation of the student's individual or class habitus, what is the function of education there? What does it give to the students? In my view, the system simply pacifies them by keeping them within the institution for a certain period of time, during which they will learn nothing. That is, there is no skill formation, no acquisition of qualifications – the students are simply kept inside the physical space.

To ensure they don't get out of control. I think so. It is a long-term pacification process. Boys aged 14 to 18 are very hard to control once they hit the streets. For instance, in Germany, there are breakdance or graffiti courses to pacify immigrant children who are viewed as potentially dangerous. I'm not saying that this is their only function, but it's a major one.

Are things different at regular high schools?

The real problem is this – in secondary education, there are no schools left which accept students without the TEOG exam. When you require all prospective high school students to take the exam, you limit the social mobility capacity of students from the lower classes who are willing to attend regular schools. Because now they have to take an exam to get into a regular school, too. And in order to pass the TEOG, parents have to send their children to private prep schools called *dershane.*

If the vocational high schools don't teach anything new, and simply serve as the continuation of the student's individual or class habitus, what is the function of the education there? In my view, the system simply pacifies them by keeping them within the institution for a certain period of time, during which they will learn no professional skills.

Let's compare vocational high schools and regular high schools in terms of their institutional habitus – upper and upper-middle class children don't attend regular high schools, they go to private colleges instead. The TEOG scores of regular high school students are higher than those of vocational high school students. Teachers

are more motivated – regardless of what the official curriculum is, they're keen to support students who are willing to make it to university. Crucially, in general, programs within the school are not divided according to gender. Unlike vocational high schools, students also have the chance to switch between different programs or departments. You don't find the master-apprentice ethos in these high schools – instead, there's a certain degree of critical thinking and questioning. The classes and grade system legitimise social mobility through education. That is, if you pass the exams you can attend university, and go on to have a proper profession and then find work with a regular and satisfactory income etc. So, by definition, regular high schools are based on a meritocratic ideology. To what extent this works in practice is another matter, but this is their *raison d'être* – preparing students for the university exam and making sure that they go on to receive tertiary education.

As they say, if you study hard you'll succeed…

Exactly. How much it works in reality is another issue of course. But the institutional habitus is based on this principle. What kind of students do these schools educate? They accept students with higher TEOG scores, so they have a "better" student profile. Teachers give academic classes, so they are relatively more qualified. If they prepare the students for university exams (which, in my experience they do), they have far higher expectations from them compared to vocational high schools, even in poorer neighbourhoods. They organise extra study hours, teach the specifics of the university exam etc. Due to this exam training, it's also more probable that they'll establish personal relationships with their student in the future, if the conditions allow.

What effect does this have on the student? When a student who has the habitus of the working class or the sub-proletarian class enters a vocational high school, she or he reproduces that habitus of the neighbourhood or the local culture at school. Regular high schools, on the other hand, challenge the social class habitus that the children bring with them. The child is confronted with an ideology, a discourse, of meritocratic success. This may trigger a range of reactions, from regression to resistance or adaptation. Very few students can adapt, and most of those who can are girls. Some of them embrace this middle class success ideology, believe that they can make it, expend efforts, and either succeed or fail. Some of them really suffer due to the contradiction between this institutional habitus and their own habitus – they fail to adapt, drop out, or engage in conflictual relationships with the teachers. There are numerous male students who frequently have rows with female teachers, because the latter tend to have a certain kind of middle class conduct and discourse. The teachers say 'this is a school so you have to raise your hand before you talk'. This dialectical encounter opens significant wounds in the students' individual habitus, leading to antagonism. The successful students are the ones who are flexible enough to go back and forth between these two habitus. They draw a distinction between the neighbourhood and the school. They attend school and try to be successful in an atmosphere which imitates the middle class habitus.

Let me end on the following note – I would argue that both school types reproduce social inequality in different ways. Vocational high schools keep students there for 3-4 years without helping them acquire skills, and in

this way they pacify them. When they graduate, students are very pessimistic. They can't find work in the vocation they've studied, it doesn't correspond to any job in the labour market. They want to land office jobs, but they're graduates of technical departments. They end up joining the lower end of the social stratification. A number of regular high school graduates are able to move up the social ladder, but this is now harder than before. It had been easier for more of them to move upwards, but as a result of the privatisation process, the regular high schools' student profile is now poorer and more homogenous. Previously, students from the lower-middle classes would also attend these schools. Not anymore. Nowadays, even if a student embraces the meritocratic success ideology, due to high *dershane* fees, and the difficulty of entering a university, they generally slip towards the lower end of the social strata, despite the intense agonies they go through for the exam. This is what the statistics show - your socio-economic background determines your education success. There is a 60-70 percent correlation in Turkey.

Is this true in most other countries? Or is it an exceptional correlation which is unique to Turkey?
In terms of the correlation between socio-economic background and educational success, Turkey was the champion among OECD countries until about 2-3 years ago – which is the last data I've checked. Unfortunately, this is the situation in Turkey. Selective mechanisms kick in at a very early age, privatisation ensures that the well-off can send their children to different schools, and the schools' institutional habitus is shaped accordingly. How can you expect social mobility under these conditions?

Let's come to the issue of exams. One of the most ruthless mechanisms in the picture you're painting is probably the system of exams, which children start taking from a very early age. What's worse, the system is being changed frequently.
Exams existed before, but back then, even if you failed the exam, you could still enrol in a regular high school. Then we have the university exam which, as is well known, is very inegalitarian. You expect students with different resources, mother tongues, backgrounds, and cultural and social capital to take the same exam. Speaking in Bourdieu's terms, if you come from a family with high cultural or social capital, if your parents are well-educated and tend to use various abstract expressions, if there is a library at home, if you're used to thinking in the middle class frame of mind, then you're more likely to succeed in this education system based on middle class values. As such, your class background proves to be an advantage in this exam. In addition, you have the shadow education system. That is, if, as a student from a middle class household, your family sends you to study at an expensive *dershane,* or hires private tutors, then you're in a much better position to grasp the subjects more clearly, learn better and ultimately be more successful in the exam. Children without such resources are eliminated in the process. Is this ruthless? Yes, very much so.

In the past it was possible to enter high school without passing an exam, and this meant children from poor households had the chance to interact with their peers from the lower-middle classes, since the student profile of high schools was not so homogenous in those days, and also to interact with and access various resources via their teachers. In other words, relationships fostered at school had the potential to help them compensate for limitations in their family resources. As such, vertical social mobility was more possible. Now, it has been limited to a far larger degree.

Opportunities for interaction no longer exist.
Yes – we made it obligatory to pass an exam to enter high school, and then send those students who fail the exam to vocational high schools or *imam hatip*. Those who receive slightly higher scores are enrolled in Anadolu high schools, and the top scorers go to the private colleges. In the past the university exams ÖSS/ÖYS determined a student's career; now the high school entrance exam has brought this stratification forward. Students have to pass this exam right after junior high. The selection process has been accelerated. Why does this have a destructive effect? Now children don't have the chance to compensate for their lack of resources or the impoverishment of their family during their high school years. Children need to have a certain degree of maturity to be able to learn from their peers. At the end of junior high, children are only 14 years old and still dependent on their families – they're not in a position to reduce their family ties to learn more from friends and teachers. This is what the sociology of education tells us – the more you bring forward the age of selection, the greater the effect the family will have on the child's educational success.

> This is what the sociology of education tells us – the more you bring forward the age of selection, the greater impact the role of family will have on the child's educational success.

There appears to be an insurmountable wall here.
Yes, and there is no turning back. Furthermore, this mechanism of elimination is legitimised through a meritocratic discourse. It's described as intelligence, well-earned success… simultaneously the lack of success is individualised and turned into a pathology, through psychological explanations. All of this hides the huge mechanism that underlies inequality. Yet even a rudimentary analysis reveals this mechanism and the inequality intrinsic to it. So far, I haven't even discussed the language aspect, I've only concentrated on socio-economic deprivation.

How do students who experience these antagonisms make sense of their relationship with the exam?
They blame themselves, in keeping with the meritocratic ideology. Failing at the exam is an individual shortcoming – "I didn't work enough, I'm not smart, I'm not talented…" As I just mentioned, the system individualises "error" and "failure" through psychological jargon, and renders it pathological. Yet we know that this is not the case in reality. Underlying all of this is a huge mechanism which produces inequality.

This is to be expected for a student who attends a regular high school, but is it the same for a student of a vocational high school?
At vocational high schools, there are two mechanisms in place. In one of my studies, I focused on ninth grade

students, who were later sent to different departments at the tenth grade, and I kept track of them until graduation. At vocational high schools, too, students tend to blame themselves, have low self-esteem, and don't believe in their own capabilities. However, as the years pass and they near graduation there is also a definite tendency for them to get more aggressive and they start blaming the other side. But this blame is not well-targeted, or based on an objective analysis of the situation – it's an ambiguous rage towards the system. "They lied to us, they told us we could find a good job after graduating from this ready-wear department, but it isn't true." Or, "What am I going to do? I spent four years for nothing. Instead of going to school I should have started working." It's a revolt of sorts. If that revolt had taken place back in the 60s or 70s, we could have considered its destructive effects on the system as positive – they might have found work at a factory. However, due to industrial transformation, manual labourers are struggling to find secure jobs at the moment. These rebellious students have no choice but to take up low-skilled, precarious, temporary, marginalised jobs after school.

Why do I say this? In the education sociology literature, there exists a tendency to idealise such revolt. I agree that this revolt is important, but when was it ever really strong? In the 60s or 70s, in the UK or USA – back then, there were enough jobs to go around. Even when they rebelled, they could find well-paid jobs and then eventually retire. Now, however, industrial transformation and increasing precarity make this group incredibly disadvantaged and dependent. They can't become part of a secure industry. So what's next? It is up for debate.

Let's move to another issue which you study – resilience. What are the social factors which allow certain students from the same socio-economic background to become relatively more successful than their peers?

As social scientists, we try to identify specific mechanisms and grasp how inequality becomes entrenched. As such, we focus on the mechanisms underlying continuous patterns. However, despite persistent patterns, certain singularities also remain. There are still some regular high school students who make it to Boğaziçi University, for instance. Socio-economic background determines educational success to the tune of 69 percent in Turkey, but there are still some students from the lower classes who are successful at school.

Resilience comes into the picture in this context, because despite this strong correlation between socio-economic background and educational success, there are a significant number of resilient students in Turkey. 'Significant' compared to what? To other OECD countries. What does the resilience I refer to mean in this context? The capacity for positive adaptation, despite unfavourable socio-economic conditions, such as growing up in a single-parent household or an impoverished neighbourhood. These students are resilient – they're defying unfavourable conditions to become successful.

There is an entire psychology literature written about this. Resilience certainly has some psychological and cognitive aspects, but it's also related to social processes. My study's findings confirm this. I compared successful students and drop-outs living in the same disadvantaged neighbourhoods. I held in-depth interviews with the students and their mothers. The findings show that the mothers of successful students implement various strategies. First, they sever the child's ties with the neighbourhood and the streets – they don't allow them out, and take them to school every day. The mother limits the child's contact with the disadvantaged community as much as she can. In addition she creates social networks with other poor women and neighbours who think alike. They bring their children together to study in a group. In this act they're creating a buffer mechanism of sorts – although these children are living in disadvantaged communities, they're relatively less affected by it.

An analysis of the drop-outs, on the other hand, show that their parents don't employ such strategies. (Our sample consisted of students from the districts of Kuştepe, Gülbağ, Gülensu and Küçükçekmece, and a large majority of the drop-outs were Kurdish and Roma kids.) The children are on the streets all the time; these families are poorer. While Turkish fathers can occasionally find secure jobs, Kurdish fathers are always working in precarious jobs; the Roma can't even find a job and have to make a living through marginalised work such as collecting waste paper or metals. So Turkish families are poor, Kurds are poorer, but the Roma are the poorest of the lot. Looking at their social capital, Kurdish families have ties with Kurds in other Istanbul districts. Their social network is impoverished in socio-economic terms and homogenous in ethnic terms. The Roma are much more disadvantaged – their social capital, that is their network of connections, is mostly limited to the street they live in. It's certainly homogenous in ethnic terms. If they get into trouble, they can only ask for help or money from their sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts etc. Their network is so small in scope that they're not able to find resources or learn from anyone. It's thus impossible for these parents to devise strategies to shield their children from the disadvantaged community.

The resource-seeking practices of these groups confined to socio-economically disadvantaged and ethnically homogenous networks, such as their access to aid from the municipality or mukhtar's office, differ to a large extent. My field study indicated that the Roma are incredibly hopeless and Kurds are very prejudiced, while the Turks have no such negative feelings. Despite their poverty, Turkish families can ask for aid without any scruples, whereas Kurdish or Roma families can't access it. This is not owing to ignorance – their reticence is due to their collective memory forged by their position in Turkey's social history. Kurds don't trust institutions, and they make less and less effort to receive aid. Alternatively, they choose only those political institutions which may help them, convinced that the rest will deny them assistance. This is a result of the historical experience inscribed in their memories.

They know they won't get anything even if they try.

Indeed. As for the Roma, we see that they've tried countless times, but have repeatedly been humiliated and denied aid. We all know what kind of a treatment this group is subjected to in Turkish society, and the place ascribed to them in the social hierarchy. Their relations

with institutions are well known. It's very understandable for them to be so mistrustful of institutions. As a result of these social and historical processes, their social capital becomes homogenous, they develop certain attitudes in their dealings with institutions, and their children's access to resources is determined by this framework. Whereas poor Turkish families have no scruples in contacting institutions or schools, other families do, and thus fail to secure aid for their offspring.

As such, in my opinion this issue of resilience corresponds to a social process. My study shows that cognitive capabilities, intelligence etc. may be minor factors. According to my research, ethnicity turns into a form of capital when interacting with institutions. Turkish and Sunni families have an easier time contacting institutions and are not afraid to ask for aid. Say, there's a school trip and the family lack money. They don't hesitate in asking for an individual favour for their kids, thinking "Would they deny me, since I am Roma". They make demands with ease.

How about wealthier groups? It's evident that the education system is a source of concern for everyone, including wealthier individuals. It seems that these groups are abandoning the official system and establishing their separate systems. Would you agree with this statement?
Firstly, despite the degree inflation we talked of before, parents have understandable concerns about the education system. Due to the transformation of production relations, the labour market demands employees with high technical and social skills. They're right when they say, 'You're nothing if you're not educated'. However, the system grinds away at students like a fiend and is replete with all sorts of problems. How are the rich affected by it? This is an interesting issue, because sociologists generally tend to study the lower classes who are disadvantaged and poor. I myself had been studying the lower classes since my undergraduate years. Two years ago I started thinking – what about the upper strata? We designed a three-year study, which was financed by TÜBİTAK. We chose a junior high school in a particular neighbourhood, then another one within a housing project. Neighbourhood schools are attended

by lower class students while schools in housing projects have students from middle or upper-middle classes. Finally we chose a very expensive, top-notch private school. Our main research question is the following – If TEOG is the main mechanism of social reproduction, what kinds of strategies do parents employ to ensure the social mobility of their offspring? How do they prepare for TEOG? We held interviews with sixth grade students as well as their teachers and parents. We'll also repeat this in the seventh and eighth grades – which will allow us to keep track until their TEOG adventure comes to an end.

A key finding from the first interviews can be summed up with a single phrase – TEOG worries are class-related. It creates huge tension among the lower classes, whose children attend the neighbourhood school, who lose sleep over it. Even if a family is poor, they send their children to the shadow education system on borrowed money, so that their children can succeed at TEOG. There is no other way, because students have to pass the exam to enrol in high school. Additionally, you may be surprised to hear this, these parents apply immense pressure on teachers from the sixth grade onwards to give their children higher scores. The scores received from the written exams of the sixth and seventh grades are also included in the calculation of the final TEOG score; as such, the children's previous scores have an effect on the TEOG exam taken in the eighth grade. Parents have rows with teachers over the scores they assign… There is immense tension within the family. Mothers worry a lot, and children develop nervous tics. These all boil down to class-based worries, but guidance counsellors view them as psychological anxieties and fail to recognise the underlying problem.

Let's come the middle classes. At the housing complex school we analysed the students were the offspring of academics, lawyers, doctors etc. These are public schools, although the classes don't have that many students. This is another strategy – instead of paying 50-60,000 liras for private colleges, these parents move to housing projects. They rent a house for 3,000 liras per month, and send their children to the public school within the project. Since it's only parents who can afford to pay that kind of rent who can send their children there, the school automatically has a middle class, or "select" student profile. As a result, a high quality public school is created in a micro environment. A "decent" director is appointed, and "decent" teachers are recruited. Thus children get a proper education. Can an outsider attend that school? No, because the system is based on one's home address. If outsiders somehow manage to get enrolled, they are simply placed in a separate class. Parents have a high social capital. They are cognisant of the importance of education and school quality, think that the current education system is riddled with problems, but can't afford a private school. As such, they have to pursue such strategies, create a micro environment for themselves and thus prepare their

TEOG worries are class-related. TEOG creates huge tension among the lower classes, who lose sleep over it. These all boil down to class-based worries, but guidance counsellors regard them as psychological anxieties and fail to see the underlying problem.

children for TEOG in this manner. This is more of a middle-class kind of strategy.

As for the upper class school, all the parents we interviewed had at least a master's degree. Many parents had a PhD, some are CEOs, others had worked as a manager before establishing their own business. Let me make it clear - they have a very marginal relationship with TEOG. 'The TEOG exam is so inhumane, it erects a barrier before the cultural and even physical development of children. Education can't be limited to solving tests', they say. How do they avoid this horrible selective mechanism? Their main strategy is the so-called K-12 scheme – K means kindergarten, and 12 symbolises the last grade of the high school. These parents send their children to privately owned K-12 schools, which start at kindergarten level and continue until the end of high school, in order to eliminate the anxiety of TEOG. When the child is enrolled in such a school, they pass from junior high to high school without having to take an exam. As such there is no need to worry about TEOG, and the child continues to study at a high quality institution. We ran into a few parents who insisted that their children had to go to Robert College, but they were an exception. Most children simply continue their education at the high school of the same establishment without taking any exam. As for tertiary education, most parents don't want their children to study at a Turkish university. Even if they do, their children are guaranteed to succeed at the university entrance exam with the education they get. As such, TEOG is not on the agenda of this social group. So, I argue that TEOG worries are totally class-related, and this class anxiety functions in the ways I have described. As the research yields more findings, we'll have a more detailed picture of how it functions more precisely.

Interview by Ayşe Çavdar

"Urban rent-seeking has replaced shantytown populism"

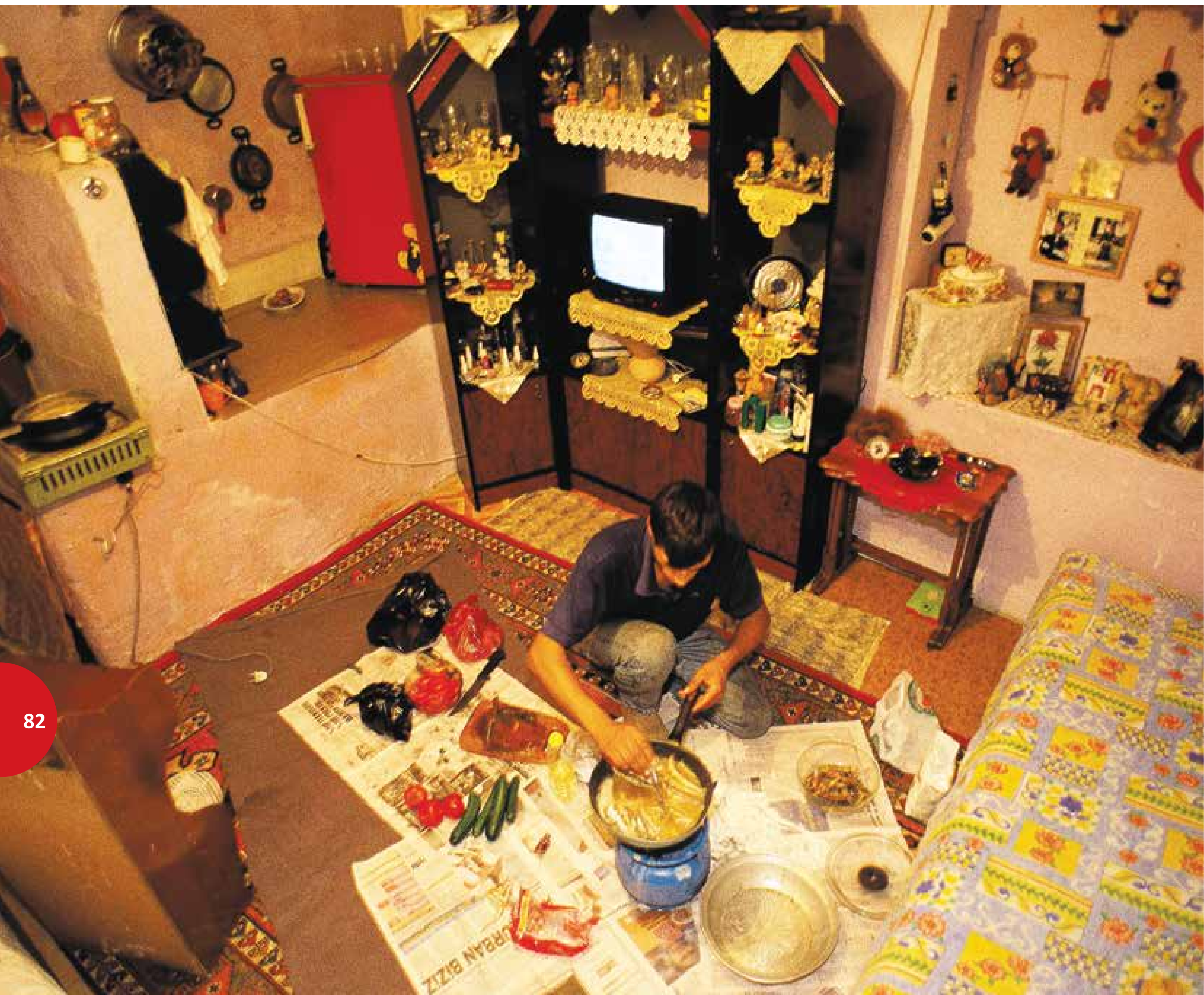
In this short interview conducted in April 2016 with Sema Erder, author of *İstanbul Bir Kervansaray (mı?)* [Istanbul as a Caravanserai (?)], we discuss the antagonism between security and safety, and how this tension is transforming certain urban spaces into a chasm.

How did the traumatic character of migration to Istanbul in the 1990s –the abrupt, obligatory, unguided migration of people who were forced to flee their villages by the army– affect the social and political aspects of the city in the coming decades? For instance, can we associate the emphasis on "security" in urban transformation propaganda, and advertisement for new housing complexes, with the trauma experienced by those immigrants and the locals who witnessed their migration to the city?
Sema Erder: This question reminds me of an article I penned during the forced migration of Kurds in the 1990s. In that piece, I had described the process as "a migration of villagers without a village." Until the 1990s, the migration to the cities had taken place at a relatively slow pace with mainly the young and male, poor peasants arriving in the cities for work and then occasionally going back to their villages. Those who finally managed to make a living in the city, which took quite a bit of time, would then gradually bring their relatives from the village. The village was, in a way, a place where you could survive with little money, without going hungry. This traffic allowed the small peasantry to survive and reduced the tensions in urban centres. In order to understand what took place in Turkish cities, one has to be aware of the peculiarities of Turkey's countryside. Compared with this initial wave of migration, the forced depopulation of villages in the 1990s yielded starkly different results. In fact, today we are experiencing the dire results of this process. The depopulation of villages resulted in the forced migration of the elderly, women and children living in the poorest region of Turkey, and abruptly severed their ties with the village. In this period, the poor who were arriving in city centres had nobody or no institution to rely on, except their relatives who had migrated before. Unfortunately, family and kinship relations had also grown very fragile by that time, and they were often incapable of carrying such a heavy burden.

In recent years, we have been witnessing the results of the dissolution of the peasantry, and the family and kinship relations which held the peasantry together. Different sectors of society are trying to come up with different solutions in the face of the dissolution of family and kinship relations. The fastest to adapt to this situation are the urban middle classes, who can easily procure the support they need from the marketplace or via various institutions. In this period of intense class differentiation and political polarisation, gated communities and building demolitions driving the poor away from the city centre may be a result of the upper middle class's search not for "security" but simply for new urban space… However, solidarity networks remain important for the poor, who continue to rely on "kin-like" relations based on ethnic and religious communities. This is a separate topic which deserves to be investigated at length.

> Gated communities and building demolitions driving the poor away from the city centre may be a result of the upper middle class's search for new urban space… However, solidarity networks remain important for the poor, who continue to rely on "kin-like" relations.

How does this fast and radical transformation of the urban space's physical structure and its social/cultural/economic networks affect our relationship of trust with the city as a whole and with other urbanites? The intensification and acceleration of vertical and horizontal mobility must be leading to a feeling of immense uncertainty and unpredictability. Is there a connection between the emphasis on the discourse of security on the one hand, and the rise of unpredictability on the other?
This is another very comprehensive question which is difficult to answer. I will try to give a short response, again based own my own research. Social engineering is not as easy as one may think. Actually, it is impossible to control all social dynamics and give them a general direction. Those who try their hands at social engineering may succeed in changing certain things or achieving certain effects, but they may very well trigger unexpected consequences. The relation between the physical environment and society is a pretty complicated one. Community or neighbourhood life, rich in informal relations of solidarity, can appear in almost any kind of physical environment. Let me give you as an example my studies



on the ghetto life which sprung in the 1980s in a Stockholm suburb developed through meticulous urban planning and state-of-the-art technology. Or, a few days ago, I saw a striking scene in the TV show "Homeland", where, in a Latin American country, the poor occupied a skyscraper under construction and formed a shantytown community in it. Likewise, in downtown Tbilisi in early 2000s, I observed how an old Soviet era hotel became home to a community of asylum-seekers. Or, the residents of Istanbul's Sulukule neighbourhood forced to abandon their neighbourhood and homes, after failing to create a community life in the new housing complexes they were sent to, have later returned to their old neighbourhood as tenants. I don't know who has moved into the housing complexes (built by the public housing administration TOKİ) that they abandoned. I presume that, in Istanbul in particular, the poor who move into the new housing complexes built with haste after razing down old neighbourhoods create their own unexpected community life around new social principles.

Many people living in those mass housing complexes are heavily indebted… If we reflect upon these neighbourhoods' distance to the city centre, the fact that their social spaces are limited to shopping malls and parks under surveillance, with a mixture of people from very different backgrounds in the same community, etc., what kind of a connection can we establish between mass housing complexes and the search for trust/security/safety? Has the shantytown's autonomous political atmosphere, mainly based on its huge voting potential, been replaced with a new relationship of dependence and loyalty?

This question is closely related to the previous one – the problem of urban transformation and TOKİ. We have yet to fully understand the mechanisms and consequences of this issue. We know that people who have been living in urban areas created by shantytown populism since the 1960s have become homeowners or "title holders in official parlance, albeit in a crooked fashion, and perceive themselves as members of

the "middle class". Due to the increased commercialisation of shantytowns, it is now harder for the poor to become homeowners in these neighbourhoods. I presume that the local actors who pioneer and support urban transformation in such areas are the first comers who now enjoy higher income levels. They want the neighbourhood to be demolished and rebuilt as a direct result of their class difference with the latecomers. So the demolitions meet the demands of the nouveau riche in these neighbourhoods, and offer business opportunities to the construction sector, which has become Turkey's "national and political" industry. As a result, these communities become increasingly homogenised in class terms and erase the unpleasant memories of their past periods of poverty. The shopping malls or parks built in these areas may in a way be symbols of their new, bourgeois lifestyle. On the other hand, it is obvious that "formal ownership rights" are the soft belly of the urban transformation schemes and TOKİ projects. An analysis of the projects in the cities shows that urban transformation schemes and TOKİ projects are feasible only in zones without complicated "ownership" problems. As a result, urban transformation has gained momentum in downtown areas without problems of land ownership. This in turn, has led to a rapid increase of population, making it very hard to live in the city centre.

Due to the abrupt abandonment of shantytown populism, the poor are no longer able to become homeowners, and those homeowners in shantytowns who view themselves as "title holders" risk losing their homes. It is evident that the urban transformation in shantytowns will require much more complicated legal procedures than in other neighbourhoods. In order to intervene in this process, one has to have

It is obvious that "formal ownership rights" constitute the soft belly of urban transformation schemes and TOKİ projects. These schemes and projects are feasible only in zones without complicated "ownership" problems.

the financial means to access in-depth legal information. Since, in our age, public institutions focus on raising funds much like private companies rather than protecting title holders or the vulnerable, it is almost impossible for the urban poor to intervene in this process as actors. It is very difficult to come up with a general analysis which covers the varying urban positions, legal situations, populations and internal power relations of different shantytowns. As such, specific cases must

be observed first-hand, and the conflicts or reconciliations based on the local balance of forces must be analysed in depth. Most probably, there are different dynamics, initiatives, and balances of forces in every neighbourhood. As a result, urban transformation projects materialise very quickly in certain districts, but not in others.

The middle class seems to have benefited from collaborating with the major urban transformation actors, and capitalised on the increased ambiguity of the ownership regime. For instance, the middle class enters into contact with TOKİ and KİPTAŞ, construction companies or banks, by buying houses from their projects, selling their houses to urban developers, or taking out long-term loans. However, urban rent-seeking cannot generate endless wealth accumulation, precisely because it multiplies and assumes the risks associated with urban transformation. In this sense, what kind of a future is in store for the middle classes who seem to have benefited from urban transformation for the moment?

In large cities such as Istanbul which draws large numbers of migrants, urban transformation entails not only the physical change of residential space, but also the redistribution of wealth based on real-estate. The calculation of wealth and its change over time is the jurisdiction of economists. It has been repeatedly emphasised that the construction sector and urban rent-seeking have become the driving engines of Turkey's political and economic life. Up until now, this issue seemed to concern only urban planners, and activists trying to safeguard the cultural heritage or the environment. Economists, on the other hand, have yet to come up with a satisfactory analysis of rent-seeking as a key element of the informal economy and clientelism, although they have produced a number of studies on the construction industry. We don't have answers to the questions concerning how urban rent is generated, its size, how it's distributed, and whether it contributes to capital accumulation

Rent-seeking is a temporary phenomenon specific to our age, just like "the youthful population" phenomenon. Government policy may turn rent-seeking into a "window of opportunity" or a "risk."

or consumption. However, my limited observations in Istanbul suggest that the social production of urban rent has largely replaced shantytown populism as a key instrument of local politics. Nowadays, not one group but vast sectors of society benefit from rent-seeking through various mechanisms; as such, it does not face significant social opposition. Almost all urban middle classes –including shantytown homeowners but not the poor– compete against each other to take a bigger share from this fleeting opportunity.

In a city such as Istanbul, home to intense social discrimination and stratification, it is not very easy to analyse how the rampant urban transformation reshapes the job market and housing market. The concept of the middle class spans a wide range – from the traditional middle classes to the well-paid *yuppies* working in the upper echelons of the global job market. As such, I cannot respond to the question of which middle classes will be affected, and in what way, by the transformation of real estate ownership through urban rent-seeking. Rent-seeking is an important result of urbanisation and constitutes a temporary phenomenon specific to our age, just like "the youthful population" phenomenon, for example. Government policy may turn rent-seeking into a "window of opportunity" or a "risk" – to take the analysis that Ferhunde Özbay has made in her discussion of Turkey's "youthful population". Since Turkey is not a society which values information and which plans its future by learning from history and the experiences of other societies, unfortunately we will have to learn the hard way the results of unbridled rent-seeking...

[1] Ferhunde Özbay, *"Gençlik, Nüfus, İktidar"* Dünden Bugüne Aile, Kent ve Nüfus (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015).

Interview by Ayşe Çavdar

In health and sickness, between security and violence: What can a citizen do?

Healthcare, much like education, is a field undergoing continuous reform. Although there are positive connotations connected to the word ‘reform’, actors in the field are inevitably disturbed to see the rules of this highly sensitive sector change at an almost daily rate. Furthermore, reforms since the 1980s have led to the marketization of healthcare. Under such conditions, it has become harder for patients to trust medicine and doctors. Simultaneously, the increasing numbers of diseases and possible treatments has led to further mistrust. In September 2015 we met with health anthropologist Ayşecan Terzioğlu to discuss the issue of trust and mistrust in healthcare, and possible methods to improve relations between the patient, doctor and state.

Doctors have been targeted since the early 1980s. Kenan Evren, former President of Turkey, declared that doctors who penned reports unveiling cases of torture were committing “high treason.” Tayyip Erdoğan is upholding the same policy, talking about “ungrateful doctors.” They continuously say “We fixed the health system, and it is doctors who are responsible for the persistence of red tape and other problems.”

Security is a problem. What basic patterns do recent security measures in healthcare display? What measures is the state trying to implement? Which areas are these security efforts focusing on?

Ayşecan Terzioğlu: The security issue in healthcare has remained unsolved for at least five years, and the state is currently carrying out research on this. In hospitals, nurses and doctors are victims of violence. There is a communication breakdown between health employees and patients, and there are various reasons underlying this problem. One major reason, which I’ve come across consistently in my observations and studies on healthcare since the 1990s, is mistrust - there is mutual mistrust between the patient on the one hand, and the doctor or nurse on the other. Patients arriving at the hospital are already very tense. They’re thinking “the doctor may shout at me or the nurse might scold me at anytime”, or “they won’t give me any important information about my disease”. If there is even the slightest problem in communication, these feelings can erupt suddenly into aggression. So in a way, fighting is a result of this lack of communication. The reasons behind this go back to the 1980s - privatisation in healthcare was implemented very rapidly and without proper planning. State hospitals and university hospitals were neglected, and became incapable of responding to society’s needs. Investments were directed towards private hospitals, private dialysis centres and private faculties of medicine. Privatisation also led many to neglect the fact that health care is a human right for all citizens, to be protected by the state. Indeed, not only citizens of the Turkish Republic but everybody living in Turkey should have the right to healthcare - the state must guarantee that everyone residing within its borders has the right to healthcare, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, gender etc. However, following rapid privatisation and marketization efforts the state reduced its role in healthcare to that of mere supervision. Another result of privatisation has been the abandonment of preventive medicine. The concept of preventing people from getting ill by broadening their awareness of illnesses has been relegated to the back burner in healthcare policy. This leads to the following risks – for instance, sexual education can inhibit the spread of sexually transmitted disease, but the medicine being sold today is not preventative and is unable to do anything before a patient contracts a disease. The state and state institutions had previously been more engaged in preventive medical

practices, but the recent transition from preventive medicine to curative medicine has rendered medicine more expensive. In contrast, preventive medicine is cheap. Now, problems which could have been easily prevented by distributing a tract, teaching people how to wash their hands, showing women how to check their breasts, providing training on breastfeeding etc. are turning into diseases which require expensive medical intervention.

Preventive medicine is labour-intensive work. Could the state have decided to stop investing in labour in this field?
Yes, it is a labour-intensive area, which necessitates education. However, it is much cheaper and much more effective than curative medicine. Compare the cost of a vaccine or a 15-minute training session with the cost of chemotherapy or an operation. Medicine is becoming an increasingly expensive commodity. Since the hasty privatisation process, only the privileged 20-25 percent of society now has access to private hospitals. They receive a kind of 'hotel service' at the hospital - this expression is also used by their doctors and nurses. They enjoy privileges such as an artificial smile or slightly more elaborate answers to their questions. But the medical hierarchy still remains strong in these institutions. I honestly don't believe AKP's arguments about health reform –I've seen hospitals such as Şişli Etfal or Marmara Eğitim Hastanesi. It's argued that people no longer have to wait in long queues and that red tape has been reduced, but my observations have lead me to believe otherwise. Many people still can't use the internet efficiently; the system in which an appointment number is received online to register patients for appointments doesn't always work – often the number which is given online does not match the numbers provided by the institution, which sometimes leads to brawls. Maybe we don't see patients lying on the floor anymore, but people are still waiting for two to three hours in queues. The law on the full-time work of public health personnel has prompted numerous professors of medicine to either retire or switch to private hospitals. So now two doctors are trying to do what five professors used to do in the past. As a result, queues persist, and overcrowding leads to tensions. People are uncertain about when their turn will come. In 2003, while studying for my thesis, I interviewed a male patient suffering from lung cancer. He told me, "There is something called SSK [Social Security Institution] psychology," adding "As soon as I walk through the door, my heartbeat accelerates - I know that someone will certainly yell at me." I worked at a hospital run by SSK for six months, and conducted various interviews and observations. They told me about a doctor who grabbed a broom and used it to push aside a patient. There were numerous cases of physical violence. Now it is the doctors and nurses who are the victims of violence - patients hold nurses and doctors responsible for problems in the system. Actually, doctors have been targeted since the early 1980s. Kenan Evren, former President of Turkey and the leader of the 1980 junta, declared that doctors who penned reports unveiling cases of torture were committing "high treason." Tayyip Erdoğan is upholding the same policy, talking about "ungrateful doctors." They continuously say "We fixed the health system, and it is doctors who are responsible for the persistence of red tape and other problems."

What is the reason for this? Does the state view doctors as some kind of a rival? Can we say that this rivalry is being played out on the body of the patient?
Most certainly! My master's thesis is on the transformation of doctors' political and social position from the

The government insists that families should have at least three children and harshly criticizes abortion, going so far as to keep track of women's menstrual cycles. Everything is kept under record. The state tries to control medicine to better control women's bodies and sexuality - that is, their reproductive capacity and behaviour.

1800s to 1990s. I looked at how doctors positioned themselves in the political arena, and how this position changed over the course of four generations. With this objective, I conducted interviews with numerous doctors and analysed their memoirs. I found that doctors and state officials intermingled with each other during certain periods – they shared the same mission and vision. The best example would be the intention to raise fit and healthy young generations during the 1920s and 1930s. During the early republican era, doctors were very effective in generating fresh energy, and were highly praised by the state. Just like the teachers depicted in the famous novel *Çalıkuşu,* doctors went to the remotest corners of the country and inspired those regions with their medical expertise. Mustafa Kemal is supposed to have said "I entrust Turkish doctors with my health," suggesting that the state and medicine were thought to have merged in a way. A similar situation was prevalent in the 1960s. Under the influence of Nusret Fişek, Minister of Health at that time, special emphasis was placed on first-level healthcare services, preventive medicine and public health. Community health clinics called *sağlık ocağı* were opened and increased in number. During this period, the state and doctors worked in harmony and cooperation. However, a dramatic change took place in the 1980s, which had already been visible in the 1970s. The Chamber of Medicine redefined itself. I interviewed people who studied at faculties of medicine during the 1970s. The fighting between the left- and right-wing militants had a significant influence on doctors. Doctors assumed a pioneering role in this fight - they told me that they had occupied the rector's office. The chambers of medicine pursued left-wing policies until the mid-1980s. The situation later changed and now the Chamber of Medicine is far from being a monolithic structure. Different lists compete against each other during general assembly meetings. There is intense internal strife for power. The collaboration between the state and doctors, as seen during the 1960s and 1970s, was no longer visible during the 1980s. From that point onwards, the state and doctors were pitted against each other, and became enemies, although this doesn't mean that there were no doctors who sided with the government. The current government has introduced a system of family medicine – it's not appreciated by doctors, because the system is changed very frequently. The government continuously tries something new – for instance, the law on full-time work of health professionals was presented to the parliament but then repealed. It was then revised and brought to the table for a second time. This situation threatens doctors' autonomy and prevents them from performing their profession. Going back to the issue of family medicine, some family physicians are pretty pleased with their situation. They work in a small community and are well-known there. They now have a clear-cut job definition. Actually, as in every social microcosm, all political currents are being reproduced within the medical community. Nevertheless, ultimately, there seems to be antagonism between the state and health professionals, partially because the state forces doctors to collaborate.

What kind of context do these factors present for the problem of security in healthcare today?

In my view, the problem of security is concentrated around two main issues: human dignity, and privacy. When I say privacy, I'm not talking only about sexuality, but rather privacy of life and body. You want to be able to define and control what you deem to be private. The policies one observes in family health centres, however, prompt one to ask: "Didn't the state withdraw from healthcare, and wasn't it supposed to only supervise it?" The government insists that families should have at least three children and harshly criticizes abortion, going so far as to keep track of women's menstrual cycles. Everything is kept under record. A number of events made the news in caricatured fashion, but those were only the tip of the iceberg. Public officials call people to say, "Your daughter is pregnant." Pregnant women are monitored over the phone. Pharmacies are also brought under control to keep track of those who buy birth control pills and pregnancy tests. The state tries to control medicine to better control women's bodies and sexuality - that is, their reproductive capacity and behaviour. It tries to employ medicine to impose the idea that a woman's foremost duty is to reproduce.

The state views the human body as an economic "investment tool"…

Cheap labour, taxation and confining women to the home. Turkey does not have the infrastructure –flexible work days, accessible kindergartens etc.– to enable women to work and raise children at the same time. Only women with enough income to afford a babysitter can enjoy such a luxury. All of these are closely related to the government's approach to healthcare. It pursues a neoliberal and neo-conservative policy in healthcare, which turns health professionals and patients against each other. Surveys indicate that violence towards health employees has multiplied, and this probably doesn't even take into account the numerous cases of verbal violence which aren't registered. Even before all this, even before the 1980s, the state's relationship with health professionals was beset with problems. The tension appeared with the arrival of modern medicine, also called the biomedical model, to this part of the world in the 19th century. The transition to Western medicine happened in a top-down fashion, and the traditional medical knowledge handed down from master to student at the *madrasa* was abandoned. Austrian and French doctors were invited to set up faculties of medicine, and much effort was expended to translate medical books into Turkish. Namık Kemal penned numerous articles on the matter. Military medical education was in German, while civilian medicine education was in French. The medical students of that period were also given courses on philosophy, and this is how ideas such as nationalism spread their roots.

Do you mean that medicine became a field and instrument of secularisation?
Exactly. Medical students became the champions of secularisation and Western modernity. Adnan Adıvar mentions such individuals and talks about "the spirit of the *tıbbiyeli,* or medical student." They conspired against Sultan Abdülhamit in dark corners, trying to hide from his secret agents, telling each other, "Let's take action, let's mobilise." As you know very well, medical students were also among the founding members of the Committee of Union and Progress. They became pioneers of modernity, thinking, "We shall not only resolve medical problems, but also the social barriers which prevent modernisation and Westernisation in the country." This was their professional maxim.

We shall modernise the country...
"We will disseminate the illumination of Western civilization," they said. There was constant talk of radiance. There is one interesting point to note here - up until a certain point, doctors were highly appreciated in villages. However, this discourse and the effort towards modernisation was disrupted in the 1980s, when there appeared to be a rupture in the relationship between the state and the doctor. Doctors became an increasingly heterogeneous category from then on. The Westernised elites who used to send their offspring to medical schools, suddenly started to despise the medical profession. The state's attitude reinforced this trend. Gradually the lower and middle classes started to perceive medicine as a social stepping stone for their children. They had thoughts such as "Our children will become a rich doctor and take care of us." People hoped to attain a higher status and social class by means of their children. This is how the doctors became an increasingly heterogeneous category. The previous breed of doctors, who believed in modernisation, started thinking "We failed." In time, this feeling of failure was expressed as "Women wearing burqas *(çarşaf)* are flocking to the cities," or "The concept of modernisation we pioneered is no longer valid." In the 1980s and 1990s, the police tried to stop female students wearing headscarves from entering the Çapa Faculty of Medicine in Istanbul, leading to immense uproar. Doctors gave up the idea of pioneering modernisation

Even before the 1980s, the state's relationship with health professionals was beset with problems. The tension first appeared with the arrival of the biomedical model to this part of the world in the 19th century. The transition to Western medicine happened in top-down fashion, and the traditional medical knowledge handed down from master to student at the madrasa was abandoned.

and started to discriminate among their patients. When interviewing health professionals, I realised how entrenched this tendency has become today. Doctors now distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' patients, or 'informed' and 'ignorant' patients. When I ask them what an 'informed' patient is, they describe it as follows - "The patient must accept the authority of the doctor, know how to ask questions in a correct fashion, should not question the doctor's knowledge, and respect the therapy etc". If you probe a bit more, you get answers such as "I mean well-educated urbanites, like us," or "This woman's son is a bank employee, and she is an informed patient." Doctors refer to criteria relating to class, status, education, political opinion and religious perspective.

Such distinctions turn healthcare into a privilege.
Naturally. The so-called 'ignorant' patients are despised even further. "Redneck, uneducated, dirty, illiterate, stupid," are some of the adjectives used to describe them. Doctors feel immense mistrust towards these patients, and make assumptions like "I'll prescribe these pills but he won't take them anyway..."

We need to look to the other side of the coin, too. Some private hospitals are becoming increasingly partisan...
You're right. The heterogenisation I talked about is one reason behind this. For instance, there are increasing numbers of religious hospitals, such as Medipol in Istanbul's Bağcılar district. Most of the nurses wear headscarves here. Professional heterogenisation has led to institutional heterogenisation. The distinction between informed and ignorant patients had been based on the criteria of modernity, now new distinctions are appearing. Institutions are starting to diverge, and this is a good thing. Monolithic structures are very problematic in such a pluralistic society. While some patients are discriminated against for wearing a headscarf, other patients patiently wait for a pious doctor who takes a break for the midday *salat.* Medicine, religion and politics are at loggerheads. Some of my students were given the right to pursue their internships at the American Hospital in Istanbul, without having to take off their headscarves. It has been very difficult for these rights to be granted from the top. Nevertheless, despite this institutional pluralism, doctors continue to distinguish between 'informed' and 'ignorant' patients.

Does the same apply for private hospitals?
Yes, but in private hospitals the distinction is now being made not between 'informed' and 'ignorant' patients, but rather between patients who are 'from us' and those who are not. The tendency to distinguish between 'informed' and 'ignorant' patients may have begun to weaken, but our students still employ it and it is taught at medical schools. So while these expressions are being questioned to some extent, they are still very much in use.

This discrimination you talk about might take on a totally different meaning in the eyes of people from the lower classes, especially in state hospitals, since they have nowhere else to go.
Certainly. Patients are all too aware of how they are being categorised. 'Informed' patients say, "The doctor smiles at me and shakes my hand, because I am an informed patient. He talks to me at length, and says 'You are an informed patient.' The others can't even ask the doctor a question properly, so naturally the doctor gets angry and yells at them." The so-called 'ignorant' patients, on the other hand, fret, "We are not stupid. We may not be well-educated, but he does not have to

shout out every instruction five times," or "He does not have to ask me twenty times at each consultation whether I really took the medication he prescribed or not." They are fully aware of being discriminated against. A woman told me a heartbreaking story. She has a greenhouse near Silivri, where she cultivates flowers with her husband. She started losing her hair, and came to the Social Security Institution hospital, which I was conducting research at, wearing the headscarf she used during work, since it was very cold, and there was snow on the ground. Wearing the headscarf she resembled a grandmother in a way... She described how the doctors treated her in a more aggressive and cold manner when she wore the headscarf, giving her orders "Go there, come here." Once the weather became more clement, she returned to the hospital without the headscarf, and suddenly the doctors treated her in a different manner, paying her compliments – "Mrs. So-and-so you look so nice today, your hair has a wonderful hue, etc." She said, "They had known me for six or seven months already." As she crossed the corridor, all the doctors and nurses were making comments on her looks. Such actions aggravate the lack of communication and mistrust between the two sides.

This may lead to sentiments of revenge.
She was smiling while she told her story, but the tone of her voice betrayed how hurt she was. She said, "Naturally, I never went to the hospital wearing my headscarf again," laughing. There are various economic and legal aspects to this issue. There are almost no sanctions against a doctor's mistakes and malpractice in Turkey. And while there are lawsuits concerning some very blatant cases, they can take decades to be resolved. For instance, one child lost his arm because he was prescribed the wrong injection. The lawsuit lasted 15 years. The doctor in question was protected by both the institution and his colleagues. In the end he was only given a small fine and reprimand.

Hospitals usually have very clever attorneys. For instance, there is an expression which I hate, but is frequently used in this context - blood money. They offer a year of complimentary treatment, or other perks, saying "Don't file a lawsuit. If the media learns about this, our prestige will be tarnished." This is particularly the case in private hospitals. There are patient complaint lines and other mechanisms in place, but they are not effective. Warnings are made, but no measures are taken...

Now hospitals are required by law to employ patient rights specialists but not much seems to have changed in practice.
There are patients rights specialists, but they don't seem to have any effect. I haven't seen any measures which are actually reducing violence and mistrust – such as a baby-friendly hospital, for instance. There are certificates for baby-friendly hospitals abroad. Hospitals are supposed to have breast-feeding rooms, but most do not. They are informed beforehand of public audits, and take precautions to pass the audit. They take many measures just for show, but it's completely hollow on the inside. I know of a number of very serious cases of malpractice, but no serious action was taken against them. Many measures remain on paper, and few are translated into actual practice.

All these issues aside, medicine itself is not deemed to be as reliable as it used to be.
The problem is not only modernisation or pluralistic modernity – respect and privacy are completely absent. Even in private hospitals, for example, the beds of chemotherapy patients are only separated by thin curtains to enable the maximum number of patients to be crammed in. Patients are examined in places resembling shower cabins, and they can hear everything that the patient next door is saying. There is only a very thin shower curtain in between them, there is no intimacy. I've heard concerning stories in this context. One day a patient with breast cancer was visiting her doctor for medical dressing and controls following an operation. Suddenly the doctor invited twenty of his students into the room, without asking her permission. She was a very sweet and decent woman and she told me, "I would have allowed them anyway, if they had asked me." They checked some of the sutures with their bare hands. "Some medical students who badly needed a shave did not look very clean to me, and yet, all of them touched my breast, one after the other," she said. What happened to privacy? And we are talking about a so-called "lucky" woman here, who is being treated in a private hospital - yet even there, there is no respect for the privacy of the patient. The situation is even worse in state hospitals. Sometimes, the doctor is examining the patient's breast for cancer, and a man passes by - the doctor doesn't always draw the curtain to ensure privacy. I'm not a religious person, but I attach immense importance to privacy. It's also very important to be able to speak to a doctor without anyone eavesdropping. The presence of a man or woman in the room would annoy me, and this has nothing to do with being religious. Religious patients may attach more importance to this. The patient deserves to be treated as a respectable human being. Some doctors speak of their patients with expressions such as "A breast came to my office today", or "Send over that lung to me." You are not an actual human being in their eyes, but a walking breast cancer at third stage. As medicine becomes privatised and turns into an object of consumption, it is seen no longer as a human right, but rather as an individual responsibility. There is a complete shift in perspective - the focus is now on buying health services in the most efficient manner possible. Protecting your health is your personal obligation, and if you fail to protect it, then you are the only one to blame. The patient is almost accused of falling ill - "You must have done something wrong to end up here", they say. In general, breast cancer is a result of genetic and environmental factors. Even in breast cancer, patients are blamed for "coming too late." There is always an accusatory tone being employed - "We would have removed only the tumour, if you had come earlier."

I think there is a similar situation in the choice between a Caesarean section and vaginal delivery.
In this case, the doctor's decision is questioned. A C-section takes less time and leads to fewer complications. Patients are asked questions such as "So, you decided to become a mother after 35?" or "What were you thinking?". They are described as "late mothers". Pregnant women in their thirties or forties are heavily stigmatised and discriminated against. The perspective is "You're the one responsible for your illness or problem." The result is the image of a health professional who is constantly shaking a finger at the patient.

The state does the same. You cannot trust the state to be on your side in your relationship with the doctor. Is it not possible to create institutions which could oversee all these processes?
Actually, there are a number of very pleasing developments in this regard. But it is not the state, but the population which is taking the initiative here. I've been working with cancer patients, who become very isolated in the hospital and in their community as a result of the illness. People say things like "What a pity! How many months do you have left?", or conversely, try to comfort them saying things like "It's like a bad flu, it will go away soon." These women are abandoned by their husbands and lovers. One woman described her plight as "Loneliness without limits," and sometimes this loneliness can be even more destructive than the cancer itself. Over time, women have created groups to receive chemotherapy together or to visit the oncology psychologist together. This phenomenon dates back to the 1990s, and is becoming more widespread. These patient groups constitute some kind of a "biological citizenship", and they sometimes also set up formal associations. But it's not always very formal, and they often get organised via Facebook and Twitter. Some patients set up groups within hospitals. They are very flexible, they organise picnics. Then what happens? Say, for instance, there might be an attorney among the group, and they share the mistreatment they've suffered with her - they try to support one another. Victims understand each other's suffering better than anyone else. They say things like "Only we can grasp each other's problems. I've heard of a doctor who treats her patients decently." Or attorneys consult the others about certain problems. They gradually build solidarity. Otherwise, the burden of the illness would be much worse. These patient groups become a safe haven for each other.

We are back to autonomy again. So, patients must create an autonomous space to feel secure.
They don't accept doctors or psychologists to their group. In the past, doctors and psychologists set up patient associations, but these functioned in a completely different manner. The doctor does the talking, and gives instructions to the patient: "Tell your doctor about this, but not that," etc. However these more recent groups have been set up by patients, and doctors are invited only as a simple actor: "Give us information and we will ask you a few questions, but you cannot tell us what to do." Patients and their relatives have full control – it's a very pleasing development. There's a very Foucauldian side to the issue of respect. Foucault himself mentions it. Without him, it would not be possible to understand the power dynamics in the field of healthcare. The relation between information and power is very visible here. In Turkey, doctors and nurses are still supportive of strict medicalisation - they assume "My perspective on illness, health and life is the correct one because I studied at the faculty of medicine, or the school of nursing." They see the patient much like a *tabula rasa.* They feel no respect for the patient's perspectives on illness, body and health, and want to ban those perspectives which do not comply with modern medicine from the hospital. But the treatment in the hospital is often ineffective or insufficient. And as a result, patients opt for alternative medicine. I discuss these issues with the patients in interviews. But they even think twice before sharing it with me - "I had this neighbour you know, I myself didn't find it rational at first, but she insisted on me seeing *hodja*". They do not share this information with the doctor for fear of being reprimanded. Nurses constitute a buffer zone in many cases, since they are closer to the patients in socio-economic terms. Plus, most of them are women. They manage both the doctor and the patient. So patients may ask the nurses "I drink nettle tea every evening, should I tell the doctor this?" for instance. They try their luck with the nurse first. If they get a negative reaction, they don't share it with the doctor. If the nurse replies, "You should tell the doctor, it may have an effect on the chemotherapy," etc., patients share it with doctor too. Some patients think that, due to the distinction between 'informed' and 'ignorant' patients, they will be appreciated more by the doctor if they use more medical jargon. Inspired by Durkheim, Parsons talks about the 'sick role'. There are still doctors who believe in this in Turkey - they think they should act like parents. Patients try to make do somehow, and this often includes trying to use medical terminology. But medical anthropologists suggest that patients should try to interpret the illness in their own words and create their own narrative about the illness - they should talk with professionals who listen to them without prejudice, and thus can take the first psychological step towards healing. Much has been said about this topic since Susan Sontag. It is important for the patient to formulate her own metaphors, such as "There is an elephant on my chest", to initiate the psychological healing process.

The profession is striving to regain its status. This is what doctors are trying to do. This also involves standing against what the state is doing. For that reason, whenever I visit the Ministry of Health, there is a demonstration in front of it – against violence, the law on full time work, or some other piece of legislation.

Healthcare should become more humane, you are saying.
The patient should not be subjected to too many medical metaphors and concepts. She must be able to formulate her own narrative in the face of medical discourse. Instead, many patients blame themselves, saying "I was too late in seeking medical help, I'm overweight, and I didn't take good care of myself," etc. This is closely related to the perception of the body. For instance most tumours are filled with pus. Patients say "I was cleaned after the tumour was removed." When they express things with their own metaphors, patients are liberated from what is imposed upon them by medicine. Jargon leads to mistrust. Patients aren't told about the reasons and results of their illness.

This is why patients feel lost in hospital corridors, I presume...
Yes, they can't be sure of anything. A doctor may suggest a certain treatment. But owing to mistrust, the patient may seek out a second or third doctor. One suggests chemo, the other radiotherapy, and the third one says that an operation is necessary. Whom to trust? Of course patients look online to make sense of it all, and check a few websites. Actually, I see immense helplessness in their eyes.

They don't know where to seek help. Preventive healthcare education is no longer provided to patients in Turkey. For instance, there was a patient at the dermatology clinic who was suffering from chronic itchy skin. Purely by chance, an oncologist who happened to pass by saw his wounds in the dermatology ward and asked him "What are you doing here, you must go to the oncology department." It turned out the man had lung cancer. If that doctor had not seen him by chance, he would have died.

So some problems arise from too much specialisation.

Of course! The dermatologist cannot consider any other possibility. He prescribes some pomade and passes to the next patient.

These debates about medication further damage the trust between patients, doctors and the state, don't they? When I look at the changes in the lists of medication I get the impression that the state has decided to forgo those citizens who don't have the potential to create added value in economic terms.

Pharmaceuticals and tests are among the major problem areas. We see fierce capitalistic relations here, even if pharmaceutical companies and doctors occasionally try to amend it. Even with only the slightest health problem, pediatricians prescribe an antibiotic, and if that doesn't work, they prescribe another one. People turn into guinea pigs. The same goes for medical tests. A doctor is only seen to give a tangible performance if they prescribe medication and tests. As such, healthcare turns into a completely mechanical and bureaucratic consumption of health services. Patients try to do what the doctor tells them to do, even if they have limited resources themselves. You know how AKP brags, saying things like "We've increased the number of consultations at hospitals, as well as the total number of drugs consumed by patients." In reality, this is nothing to boast of - we should be worried. People are being urged to take more medication, which inevitably have side effects and leads to more mistrust. Why does a patient visit, say, four different doctors for their illness? It indicates a lack of trust in the doctors. She may then disregard them all, or try to take some kind of an average! All of this fuels mistrust. I've heard so many anecdotes about this. There is so much ambiguity. And economic and social reasons continue to reinforce this mistrust. For instance, patients talk to their acquaintance to try to find out whether they know of any good doctors, or to overcome various inhumane aspects of the system. They think, "a doctor who I'm acquainted with will take better care of me." Even this is enough to show how big the mistrust problem is. Pharmaceutical companies are a problem in their own right. I worked as a research supervisor at a pharma company – they are horrible, the worst possible form of capitalism. They only want to sell more medication. Sometimes they engage in social responsibility projects, too, but they don't dedicate any funds to, for instance, autism or psychological problems. Their sole concern is to promote their drugs. The Turkish market is under their complete control. All the medical materials come from abroad. Even those drugs previously produced domestically are imported - they had been very expensive and difficult to come across anyway. The regulation will change soon. Breast cancer is one of the most frequent cancer types among women, and even the medication for such a widespread illness becomes unavailable for months on end. Then what happens? People find cheaper substitutes over the internet. But these also have side effects. The companies don't want to sell drugs cheaply. Most pharmacies have more or less turned into cosmetic stores, where you can find a beach ball but not the most basic antibiotics for children. The system has reached such an absurd stage. Problems concerning medication sum up the healthcare systems' overall problem. You can read about it everywhere - medication is not readily available. There are many hospitals, but there are also many herb shops. I've made observations in these stores - since many patients go to these shops, they now employ medical students, some of whom even wear white coats. They take a look at the prescription, find the herbs in question, prepare a mixture, and then say, "All right madam, come back tomorrow please, they need to be distilled." Doctors get furious about such alternative treatments. However the popularity of these herb shops is only a reflection of people's lack of trust in medicine. People abandon chemotherapy and opt for some herb instead, thinking, "At least this one doesn't make me feel so bad."

The World Health Organization says that alternative treatments must be integrated into institutional medicine. The doctors must ask patients whether they'll choose to go to a bonesetter or an orthopedist. Herbalists must be trained, just like midwives are trained. Of course, Turkish doctors will have none of it – they say "We are not so modern yet".

What is the best way forward?

The infrastructure must be improved and protective medical practice must be given priority again. Medical education must include social science classes. Some universities have started to do this in fact. We should stop thinking, "Medicine is the only correct approach to healthcare and all alternative methods must be scrapped." When medical students study some sociology, psychology, philosophy and medical ethics, they see that things are not so simple. If first-level medical practice, such as family medicine, is implemented correctly, patients would be properly informed about reproductive health or sexuality for instance. Maybe doctors and nurses should start focusing on patients' fears and desires. Medicine promises us a utopia, implying "You will live until you are a hundred years old, go bungee-jumping at 80." However, it also leads to a dystopia, as new illnesses come up every day - diseases which kill thousand of people in one strike. In certain regions people live only to their 40s or 50s due to chronic illnesses. Now, we also have the debate around smart medication - reducing the number of pharmaceuticals. Smart medication is supposed to prevent you from taking too many pills. New legislation is being passed, health laws are being revisited. They're trying to make malpractice more visible. It is mostly social scientists working on these issues, since medicine has many social aspects. Patients' associations are organising demonstrations to bring these issues onto the agenda. For instance, they're staging protests demanding stem cell research. *Öğrenci Hemşireler Derneği* (Student Nurses Association) has been established. Such associations are being created because the older ones are too modernist. One group in the Chamber of Medicine is a case in point. They say "We want to carry out different kinds of studies." For instance doctors and medical students go to Suruç, Kobane.

This would have been unimaginable 20 to 30 years ago. I am proud of medical students. They hail from every corner of Anatolia, Istanbul, Thrace, the western coast of the Black Sea, the southeast, etc. The same is true in our faculty of medicine -students organise training programs in shopping malls, or distribute tracts, etc.

This adds to the legitimacy of the medical profession.

The sociology of professions talks about how a profession is sometimes redefined from within. The profession is striving to regain its status. That is what these doctors are trying to do. This also involves standing against what the state is doing. For that reason, whenever I visit the Ministry of Health, there is a demonstration in front of it – against violence, the law on full time work of health professionals, or some other piece of legislation. The state bans various things in a top-down fashion, for instance smoking… Instead of explaining the risks of smoking, offering psychological support and convincing the population, the state bans smoking in various locations and encourages people to take medication instead. The same goes for the law on full time work. When the government passed the law without any consultation, many professors at the Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Medicine resigned or retired, which made life harder for citizens from the lower and middle classes. The government passed the law like a sultan issuing a fatwa, in top-down fashion and without explaining the reasons. Neo-Ottomanist, neoliberal, neo-con policies are reshaping healthcare. Medical professionals no longer talk of patients' rights, human health, patient privacy etc. A huge chasm has opened up between doctors and patients. "You have a tumour in your arm, I will remove it and dress the wound. That's that." Doctors don't ask, "Who are you, what happened, do you have any questions?" The patient is instead reduced to the illness.

The patient is no longer a subject, right? The patient is seen as a passive robot – particularly in state hospitals. And the doctors are like the workers in a Fordist factory, who wait for the jar on the assembly line and screw the lid on top. Likewise, doctors treat patients in 5 or 10 minutes, and shout "Next! Next!"

Then maybe we should call this not mistrust but fear?

Patients aren't even free to ask "What will happen, will I get well?" They're only given five minutes at a state hospital. The doctor goes, "You have this problem, and I prescribe you this medication." An experienced doctor says, "Once the patient comes into my room, I only have seconds. Based on their clothes, based on the information in their file -education etc.-, I decide whether I should speak in a formal or informal manner. We only need ten seconds for this." Younger doctors, however, say "Yes, we know every detail about the patient, but don't know how to communicate with them." Patient communication is their biggest challenge at first. "Seasoned" doctors claim that they can understand from the first glance whether the patient is 'informed' or 'ignorant'. The reification here is horrible. The question "What kind of a patient is this?" is answered according to socio-economic criteria. Tests are carried out and the course of treatment is outlined. However, no one asks the patients whether they'll be able to do what they're asked. Many times, patients refrain from asking doctors the questions they have, because the patient knows all too well that the doctor doesn't have any time. Even in private hospitals, patients can only ask a few questions. Doctors are obliged to take care of as many patients as they can. Due to this hasty treatment, patients don't trust doctors.

This also leads to increases in healthcare expenditure, doesn't it?

Yes. Say, the patient goes to a doctor at a hospital, and then goes to the doctor's private practice office. Then, the patient visits a second doctor, and asks her acquaintance whether they know of any other doctors in the field. How can we fix this? First-level healthcare services and preventive medicine must be enhanced. Not by issuing *fatwas,* but in an efficient manner, and by informing the population. People respond well to such positive policies. TV ads which inspire fear or pity are not effective. However, the state chooses to instill fear among the citizens in order to change their behavior. I don't believe that such a policy can resolve the problems at hand in the short or long term. Flexible organizations may overcome the patients' isolation; in this sense,

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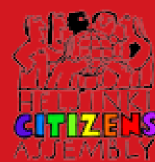
patients' associations have been very effective. They have changed the social perception of cancer, and the policies towards cancer. In the past the state did not cover breast reconstruction surgery, arguing "You are 60 years old, your sex life is over anyway." Patients' relatives and patients' associations came together to collect thousands of signatures to defend patients' bodily integrity – "This is not only about sex, we don't want to lack any organs." They didn't want to have to worry, "Will my silicon burst or fall while I am swimming, etc." Now, the state covers a large portion of the surgery. Major protests and many negotiations took place. Patients are able to change things; the picture is not so bleak. But patients have to organise to achieve this. Breast cancer associations set an example – now we have *Otizmli Anneleri Derneği* (Association of Mothers of Autistic Children) for instance. Many other patients' relatives demand their rights, too, and they know that they can achieve something through organising. *Pozitif Yaşam* (Positive Living) is another example. Although I've been involved in this issue for such a long time, I realised how stereotypical my thinking was when I met these people. Two or three years ago, I was checking out the *Pozitif Yaşam* web site, which includes a forum for HIV positive patients. The topics they discussed were so diverse. For instance – "I fast during Ramadan, but have to take my medication. What should I do?" Well, the widespread and ridiculous belief is that "Most HIV positive people in Turkey are LGBT individuals, and they are marginal, therefore they cannot be pious." So, it's great to challenge the prejudices of the population. It's very crucial that patients are starting to change health policies, although this has yet to affect the medical profession.



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