

MIGRATION FROM RURAL ANATOLIA TO METROPOLITAN CITIES

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Introduction

Migration from rural areas to cities is a major factor in Turkish urbanization. Turkey underwent radical transformation as a result of mass rural-to-urban migration starting in the late 1940s. In 1927, 24% of the population lived in urban areas;¹ today it is reversed: 74% of the population live in urban areas (website worldometers 2018). Between 1945 and 1950, the number of rural-to-urban migrants was 214,000; increasing four times, it reached 904,000 between 1950 and 1955; it doubled between 1965 and 1970, reaching 1,939,000; and between 1980 and 1985, it increased 1.5 times, reaching 2,582,000 (DİE 1995). In this chapter, I explore migration from rural regions of Anatolia to metropolitan cities, with a focus on the transformative effects on Turkish society shaped by the specific ways that migrants responded to it. I ask how rural-to-urban migration transformed cities and villages alike.

I identify three causes of rural-to-urban migration in Turkey, namely, the restructuring of the world economy in the aftermath of World War II, capitalism expanding to the so-called Third World countries in the bipolar world system in the late 1940s/early 1950s; the restructuring of the world economy in the aftermath of the oil crises in the 1970s, that is, the introduction of neoliberal policies; and the transformation in southeastern Anatolia by development projects such as the Atatürk Dam in the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP: Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi), along with the peak of the repressive policies against the ‘Kurdish problem’, that is, forced migration from the southeastern countryside in the 1990s. In the sections that follow, I first provide background information on rural-to-urban migration in Turkey, discussing the conditions that paved the path for peasants to move out of their villages to cities in large numbers. I then move to explore the spatial, sociocultural and socioeconomic transformations caused by migration that come in forms and features specific to the Turkish case. While doing so, I frame the discussion by the materialization of informality in the cities as migrants built their houses without state authorization and participated in the informal market, followed by the support mechanisms of migrants that characterize the sociospatial transformations in Turkish cities, namely, chain migration, spatial clustering of migrants with their relatives and those from their villages, the invention of *hemsehrilik* in the urban context to refer to those people from the same place of origin, and the continuing relationship with the villages. I suggest that preserving

ties with the village and with the people from the village acted to keep migrants outside the influences of modernity in the city. The last section delves into whether and in what ways these mechanisms of support are challenged by the advent of neoliberalism.

Rural-to-urban migration: when, why, and how?

As capitalist modernization came to transform rural Anatolia through the mechanization of agriculture, it triggered mass migration from villages to metropolitan cities (Gürel 2011; Tekeli 2008). The Marshall Plan, which was initiated by the United States in the aftermath of World War II and was embedded in the discourse of helping war-torn Europe to recover its economy, worked toward the commercial transformation of agriculture in Turkey. Envisioned as the agricultural storehouse of Europe, and with its geographically strategic position, regarded as the outpost of the capitalist Western bloc against the perceived threats from the communist Soviet bloc, Turkey was included in the Marshall Plan in 1948, with priority given to economic productivity and a road network that would carry agricultural products to the markets, which would also be needed for the military role of Turkey in NATO (Schipper 2007). The commercialization of agriculture entailed far-reaching outcomes when villages went into a process of restructuring, with variations among them due to size, geographic location, and land ownership (Kıray 1999). As new technology was introduced to increase productivity for the integration of the agricultural sector into the markets, such as tractors with subsidized credits,² along with new types of crops and chemical fertilizers, and technical infrastructure, such as irrigation systems, was underway,³ the traditional agricultural sector was disrupted. Village societies entered into a process of transformation guided by the logics of the market economy, displacing people. It gained momentum at the end of the 1950s when the mechanized cultivation reached its limits (Gürel 2011).⁴ The displaced population was mainly small landowners and sharecroppers. Sharecroppers gradually became agricultural laborers in some cases,⁵ and among those who were given small parcels of state-owned commons land, there were those who migrated to cities (Keyder 1983). Families of small land ownership, which was consolidated in the 1950s (Keyder 1983), responded to this by sending their young single men to metropolitan cities where industrial production had started. The young men were followed by other family members once some connections in the city were made. Thus, on the highways originally built by the Marshall Plan to connect villages to commercial markets, came peasants in large numbers to cities, which slowed down only at the end of the 1970s (Keyder 1983).

Istanbul, the center of industrial development, was the main destination. Soon it came to be known as the city whose streets were paved with gold (*taşı toprağı altın*), implying for the incoming migrants the quick way of becoming rich. Ankara as the capital city of modern Turkey under construction, and Izmir as the commercial port city, were other places of attraction for migrants. Those from the Black Sea made the first wave of migration: in the mountainous geography of the region, they started moving to Istanbul as early as the mid-1940s, their numbers increasing as the result of developments in the highway system. Those from southeastern Anatolia were the last to join the migration waves: the remnants of the feudal system and its poor infrastructural connection to the rest of the country delayed the outflow.

Informality in the city

This move of surplus labor produced by the mechanization of agriculture could have some positive outcomes in terms of supporting emergent industrialization in cities. In the model of capital accumulation of the time in which import-substituting industrialization (ISI) was

pursued by the state based on the import of expensive foreign technology, cheap labor was needed, which could be provided by the flocks of migrants from the countryside. Moreover, in the hegemony of the modernization paradigm worldwide that was built upon the idea that countries would develop by the spread of modern (Western) mindsets from cities to the rest of the society (Kasarda and Crenshaw 1991), rural-to-urban migration could help transform the society under the modernizing effects of cities. In this perspective, migrants were expected to adapt to urban life, leaving behind their traditional values and ways of living, which included fatalism and religiosity (Perlman 1974). Yet, given the rates of urbanization exceeding the rates of industrialization, these expectations proved to be unrealistic (Kasarda and Crenshaw 1991). The terms rapid urbanization, irregular urbanization, overurbanization, and pseudo urbanization were coined to differentiate Third World urbanization from the Western experience of urbanization in the nineteenth century, the former being discredited for deviating from the model set by the latter. Informality came to define the megacities of the Third World, and megacities came to define the Third World, for which the term ‘urban primacy’ was used, in which a single city dominates other cities in terms of both size and investments (Kasarda and Crenshaw 1991). These cities were stigmatized as problem sites of overcrowding, crime, poverty, pollution, and inadequate services and infrastructure. For poor migrants flowing to cities from the countryside, under the condition of a lack of affordable housing, informal housing that remained outside of the formal housing market in terms of legal conventions and regulations came to be their only means of accommodation. Calling it squatter housing, Third World states pronounced their engagement with informal housing only temporarily, which proved to be wrong. Under the lower levels of industrialization that failed to absorb migrants into formal economy, informal economy that was not part of the regulated economic enterprises expanded in the cities of the Third World (Moser 1978; Portes, Castells, and Benton 1989). Stigmatization followed: informal housing and informal economy, both signifying lack of regulation, were easily associated with illegality. And despite their large numbers, migrants living in informal housing and working in informal economy were defined as marginal (Perlman 1974).

In the Turkish case, *gece-kondu*, which literally means ‘landed in the night’, emerged in the city as a new housing type; it was perceived as a foreign element in the project of modernizing cities and reacted negatively to by the state and urban elite alike. The term *gecekondu* signifies the anxiety people felt while building their houses – in a hasty manner and in the dark, making sure that their building activities were kept out of the attention of the state authorities. In the early stages of *gecekondu* formation, the general practice was to build one room first, putting a roof on top with a Turkish flag to give the impression that the house was inhabited. This practice was a tactic of survival by taking advantage of the law in which a court order was needed to demolish an inhabited house. Delaying the demolition would give the builders time to improve the construction, making it more difficult for authorities to tear it down.

In the ISI regime, the state’s priority was to promote national industrialization, neglecting its duty to provide affordable housing to economically weak families. In the face of inadequate housing in the cities, *gecekondus* mushroomed, and this was not without problems. The rural image of the *gecekondu*, along with its unplanned growth, was perceived as a big problem. This was especially so in the case of Ankara, which was envisioned by the state elite as the newly designed modern capital city of modern Turkey. The urban elite was uncomfortable both with the unplanned development of ‘their’ city and the ruralization of its population (Yörükhan 1968). The rural Other soon came to be associated with *gecekondu* dwellers (Erman 2001). In the 1940s, the governor and the mayor of Ankara (the two offices were represented by the same man, Nevzat Tandoğan) would not allow those with a peasant appearance into the city.

Another problem was the violation of private property, which is the cornerstone of capitalism. Yet, the land ownership in Turkey made it less important in this period. The availability of vast tracks of land that the Turkish state inherited from the Ottoman Empire⁶ that was outside private ownership in the Ottoman land system (Keyder 2000), and the expropriation of the property of non-Muslim foundations (*vakıf*) by the Turkish state (Kezer 2015) created conditions that eased the construction of *gecekondu*. Populist politics is another factor that engendered the mushrooming of *gecekondu*. Populist politics is another factor that engendered the mushrooming of *gecekondu* (Erman 2011). In clientelist relations, *gecekondu* dwellers bargained with politicians, exchanging their votes for services to their *gecekondu* neighborhood, and for the legalization of their land ownership via the allocation of title deeds. More importantly, the indispensable role of the labor power provided by migrants for the industrialization of the urban economy backed by the state brought tolerance both by the state and industrialists. As they established in the years to come, *gecekondu*s developed into low-density neighborhoods with basic services and infrastructure (Şenyapılı 1982). Having obtained titles distributed by populist governments, early migrants started building apartment houses on their *gecekondu* plots, which continued to be informal/illegal due to their lack of construction permit (Balaban 2011). This deepened the fear of the urban elite that Turkish cities were being ruralized, obstructing the modernization of society. It also meant the reproduction of conservative/religious beliefs and ways of life in the urban context that opposed the secular tenets of the Republic. Moreover, *gecekondu* development bought a kind of urbanization that diverted from the ideal of the planned cities of the West. On the other hand, enabling poor migrants to produce their own spaces on the peripheries of the cities gave them the chance to survive in the city (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001).

To sum up, the paradigm of the ruralization of the city built upon its spatial visibility via the *gecekondu*, and its cultural production via the everyday practices of *gecekondu* dwellers dominated the era of national developmentalism. It made invisible the contributions of many *gecekondu* dwellers to economy as a cheap and unorganized labor force in industry and as working in the expanding informal sector.

Despite the stigma of the *gecekondu* and rural migrants, migration from villages continued. Under the unequal distribution of employment opportunities, as well as health and educational services favoring big cities over Anatolian towns and villages, not only people from villages but also from small towns carried the propensity to move. The regional inequalities further initiated outflow from eastern and central Anatolia to western Turkey. Another factor that played a role in the continuing flow of peasants to cities was the controversy regarding land reform, whose implementation was on the agenda of governments several times yet was never put into effect (Parvin and Hic 1984).

As pioneers – mostly young men – made their presence in the city, they built shanties in and around the city at geographically undesirable sites, preferably close to the jobs available to them.

As they established their lives in the city, family members and relatives moved later to join them. This served the interests of both villagers moving to the city and those already in the city: while the former group gained access to services and opportunities such as health and education via their people already established in the city, the latter, with the power brought by numbers, increased their ability to build their informal lives in the city that included invading land for *gecekondu* construction in the informal land market that had become increasingly competitive over the years (Seufert 1997). As a result, chain migration came to characterize the Turkish case.

As seen above, rural-to-urban migration proved not to be the solution to the problem of economic underdevelopment when the growing number of migrants in a few metropolitan cities was not congruent with the slow pace of industrialization. In the section below, I discuss

the support mechanisms formed by migrants in a context that lacked affordable housing, a dynamic job market, and adequate state provision of infrastructural facilities and social services needed by migrants in their new lives in the city.

Migrants' support mechanisms

Chain migration and the social embeddedness of rural migrants in the web of people from the same place of origin form the basis of their support mechanisms in the city. In chain migration that characterizes rural-to-urban migration in Turkey, family members follow their pioneers to the city as do families from the same village follow those who have migrated earlier. This facilitates the clustering of migrants from the same place of origin in the same spaces in the city and the continuing relations with the people from their hometown, creating multiple dependencies and mutual support in the network of migrants. In this context, the term *hemsehrî*⁷ (colocal) is coined, which refers to people from the same place of origin. It rests on the boundary between us versus them, drawn in flexible ways to respond to their interests and needs in the city (Ayata 1990/91). Through the *hemsehrî* networks, migrants rely on their people to have access to housing, jobs, and other resources that they need, whose provisions are not aided by state agencies. This has identity-related outcomes. It reinforces original identities as migrants rely on the people from the same place of origin to meet their needs and to entertain themselves. In the competitive environment of the city where migrants encounter the Other – the ethnic and the sectarian Other as well as the modern urbanite as the Other – these identities are sharpened, and even politicized (Seufert 1997). Despite its positive contributions to the survival of migrants economically, socially, and psychologically, remaining inside the migrant community can be problematic, for instance, holding back those who want to connect with established urbanites in their everyday lives (Erman 1998). Moreover, the center-left parties condemn the *hemsehrî* identity, arguing that belonging to the city should replace belonging to the place of origin (Schüler 1999).

Another survival mechanism is the continuing relationship with the village, which supports migrants in multiple ways: they compensate for their economic disadvantages by bringing food and other stuff from their villages; and they do not feel alienated in the urban life in which they occupy lower ranks in the urban hierarchy. Shown in the political economy perspective, the continuing relationship of migrants with their villages as a source of economic provision functions to keep wages low in the city; and the income transfer between rural and urban areas produces a class of semi-proletariat peasant workers lacking the consciousness of workers dependent on their wages for their livelihood (Gürel 2011). Furthermore, the networking of villagers with migrants in the city, and also with immigrants in Europe, keeps small farm holders going, thus preventing big capitalist holdings from replacing them (Keyder 1983; Gürel 2011). Accordingly, we can interpret the continuing relationship of migrants with their villages not only from the perspective of migrants but also from a wider perspective that takes into account the peasant family extending to the city and to Europe through its members. As Öztürk, Jongerden, and Hilton suggest (2018), it is the strategy of peasant families to survive by sending out some of their members to the cities in Turkey or to Europe, creating complex networks of dependencies. Goods, capital, and investments flow in both ways: rural-to-urban migrants in Turkey and immigrants in Europe may buy houses in their villages⁸ or turn the already existing ones into vacation homes; they may invest their labor in harvesting the family agricultural land, getting shares in return; and villagers may take advantage of the city's resources through their family members living in the city, visiting it, for instance, for reasons of health and children's education. Here it is important to recognize that these relations do not always work smoothly: there

may be conflicts of interest between those members of the family living in the village and those living in the city or in Europe, leading to disputes and even violent fights.

The strong bonding with the village and with the people from the village living in the city has resulted in migrants' organizing themselves around hometown associations. The number of hometown organizations multiplied in the 1990s, with village associations making up the majority (Tourmarkine and Hersant 2005; Pérouse 2005). Hometown associations organize fundraising events such as dinner parties and picnics, and by bringing together people from the village and those in the city, they function as a bridge between the village and the city. Yet, putting the village at the center, these organizations reproduce the urban elite's stigma of peasants in the city. Such networking, which often has a spatial dimension, also reproduces ethnic and/or sectarian identities: when Kurds and Alevis as minority groups create their own networks of solidarity, oftentimes clustering spatially and socializing with their own people, their ethnic and/or sectarian identities are reinforced (Seufert 1997). Thus, far from dissolving ethnic and religious identities foreseen by modernization theorists, living in the city may reinforce them, disrupting the idea of citizens as individuals in modern thinking (Erman 1998).

The popularity of hometown associations outnumbering other types of organizations today should not allow us to ignore labor associations. In the identity politics that has superseded class politics in the shift to postmodernism in the neoliberal era, hometown associations have a better chance of recognition. On the other hand, in the 1960s and 1970s that witnessed the spread of a leftist ideology worldwide, the unionization rate was high; in Turkey, it exceeded one million by 1971 (Dinler 2012). Those rural migrants and their grown-up children employed in factories were often members of labor unions. This turned into a polarized movement as left-wing workers organized themselves around the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK; Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, founded in 1967) and right-wing workers around the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İş; Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, founded in 1952).⁹ DISK was active in organizing strikes, defending the rights of the workers who belonged to the unions affiliated with DISK (about 500,000). Moreover, leftist activists initiated the liberated zones project in the late 1970s; the children of rural migrants among them, they moved into gecekondu areas for the ideological training and collective mobilization of gecekondu dwellers (Erman 2020). In their goal of a radical transformation of society, which they believed would end the exploitation of the working class, they approached rural migrants as the urban poor exploited by the capitalist system and as potential revolutionaries. Yet, as Avcı (2014) argues, gecekondu people were, by and large, regarded by different political factions of the time as nonideological, lacking any agency to act on their own. Nonetheless, by constructing them based on their potential to resist the exploitative division of labor in society, leftist mobilization contested the view of rural migrants as peasants in the city.

The neoliberal policies adopted by successive governments following the military coup of September 12, 1980, opened a new era. This was part of the global shift from a Keynesian economic model to a neoliberal one following the economic crisis triggered by the oil crisis in the 1970s; the declining profitability of mass production industries was regarded by right-wing parties as the crisis of Keynesian welfarism. Below, I discuss the effects of neoliberalization on both the city and the village.

The neoliberal regime

In this section, I focus on the neoliberal regime instituted in the 1980s onward and discuss the changes that challenge or support the characteristics of migration specific to Turkey, discussed

above. I explore the transformative effects of neoliberal policies on rural migrants in the city and rural migration to the city. I aim to reveal the consequences of the changing economic regime regarding migrants and migration. In doing so, I pay attention to how changes in economic policies affect migrants in spatial, sociocultural, and socioeconomic terms. I make two major points: in the process of the commodification of urban land, the transformation of *gecekondu*s into apartment houses, on the one hand, created a new class of *nouveau riche* among rural migrants, and on the other hand, it produced new poverty; and the transformations in the agricultural sector initiated another big wave of migration to cities, which had detrimental effects for the displaced villagers.

The 1980s signified a radical shift in economic policies in the world when the Keynesian economic model of welfarism was abandoned for the neoliberal global economy; and in Turkey, the inward-oriented, state-led industrialization was abandoned for export-led growth in an open market economy (Önder 2007). The austerity policies of the post-military Özal government, along with the policy shift from the promotion of state economic enterprises (SEEs) to the promotion of the private sector, created serious disadvantages for migrants as layoffs increased and labor unions lost their power (Öniş 1991). Şenyapılı (1998) argues that the Özal government introduced a policy of the transformation of *gecekondu*s into apartment buildings to bribe *gecekondu* owners, who were becoming increasingly disadvantaged under the new economic policies. After several amnesty laws, *gecekondu* owners whose houses were in advantageous locations became entitled to significant shares from the rent appropriated in the process of apartment houses replacing *gecekondu*s; it moved them up economically fast.¹⁰ When the newly gained prosperity was not accompanied by cultural change in the family, it deepened the hegemonic view of rural migrants as peasants in the city. A rural migrant man, now the owner of several apartments in a luxurious building, sitting cross-legged at the block entrance with prayer beads in his hand, came to occupy the social imaginary of society: he was the *nouveau riche* deficient in culture, the undeserving Other (Erman 2001). When *gecekondu* owners gained the chance for apartment ownership, it caused complaints in different sections of society: in the words of an urbanite, “Once they built their *gecekondu*s in one night, and now they are becoming millionaires in one day” (Erman 2001: 994); and in the words of a public employer, who was a rural migrant himself, “I feel like I am punished for not violating the law. Some of my friends who built *gecekondu*s now own several apartments, and despite my hard work all my life, I am still a tenant” (personal conversation with the photocopy man working in my department, 8 May 2003). It seems that the neoliberal policies that benefited the wealthy, bringing fast profits, would meet objections when they brought economic advantages to the poor.

Neoliberal policies had sweeping effects on cities during the rule of the Development and Justice Party (AKP; Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi); privatization and securitization of urban space, and more important for this chapter, the commodification of peripheral land became the defining features of neoliberal urban policies in the 2000s. The construction sector boomed during the AKP government, acting as the engine of economic development (Karatepe 2016). As suggested by several scholars (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010; Karaman 2008; Bartu-Candan and Kolluoğlu 2008), the AKP has been the major actor exploiting city spaces for its profit-oriented projects. Today the term ‘urban transformation’ (*kentsel dönüşüm*) has become the buzzword associated with radical transformations in cities via rent-seeking projects, including the transformation of *gecekondu* areas. Different from the earlier phase of *gecekondu* transformation in which small-scale private developers were the main actors (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001), the new phase under AKP rule is characterized by the intervention of the state at a mass scale in *gecekondu* settlements via urban transformation projects (UTPs) carried out by partnerships

that municipalities form with Mass Housing Administration (TOKİ – Toplu Konut İdaresi), the state's housing development agency. In the war declared against the *gecekondu* using the discourse of crime and violence on the one hand, and the discourse that *gecekondus*, by their supposedly ugly and disorderly sight, are threatening the proper image of the city on the other hand (Erman 2016a), the government is determined to 'clean up' cities from their 'tumours' (Karaman 2008; Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010). UTPs act as neoliberal market-making tools (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010: 54) enabling the state to appropriate rent in the commodification of the *gecekondu* land, which it shares with big capital (Ünsal and Kuyucu 2010). In this process, the government has succeeded in developing its own circle of contractors: contractors enter via TOKİ's bidding processes into a relationship of loyalty with the AKP, making donations to Islamic foundations and AKP-run municipalities, among others (Karaman 2013a). The Islamic charity has been part of the political rationality governing poor rural migrants whose *gecekondu* land is commodified via UTPs (Karaman 2013a). Moreover, as social support networks embedded in *gecekondu* areas are disrupted by UTPs, Sunni *tarikats* (Islamic orders banned by the Turkish state) increasingly replace them (Erman 2019), bringing new exclusions to Alevis (Erman 2016b).

Islam has been a significant part of the lives of rural-to-urban migrants more than ever under the rule of the AKP. Some *gecekondu* districts are transformed in the entanglement of rent-seeking interests with Islamic tenets (Akçaoğlu 2018; Tuğal 2009). Tuğal (2009), based on his field study in the district of Sultanbeyli in Istanbul, argues that rural migrants who came to the district with the hope of finding cheap land and housing were Islamized under the influence of Islamist activists in the district who recognize the importance of the place of origin of migrants in their lives (*hemsehrilik*). In their aim of building consent for their Islamist project, they empower the migrant subjectivity against the stigma attributed to their rurality by the secular establishment, succeeding in absorbing (Sunni) rural migrants into Islamism (Tuğal 2009). Moreover, Tuğal argues that neoliberalism has absorbed radical Islam as Islamists internalized the project of neoliberalism, naturalizing the integration of Islam with a neoliberal economy, and thus turning into supporters of moderate Islam.

The transformation of *gecekondu* areas by the neoliberal urban coalition (Erman 2011) has brought disadvantages to many rural migrants living in *gecekondus*: coercive marketization (Karaman 2013b), top-down formalization (Erman 2016a), and incorporation into the mortgage system as a market-disciplinary tool (Karaman 2013b) are some concepts used to address the challenges brought to their lives by *gecekondu* transformation. More importantly, displacement is always a threat for those who cannot afford the terms of relocation in TOKİ housing estates built in urban transformation projects. Especially tenants who are excluded from the projects are at risk of displacement. In sum, new opportunities and new challenges have arisen for *gecekondu* residents as cities are restructured by a neoliberal logic, which have both cultural and economic aspects. When *gecekondu* areas are transformed into apartment estates via UTPs, their residents cannot maintain the way of life that they had in the *gecekondu* (Erman 2019); in the dialectical relationship between people and space, they transform their new housing environment and are transformed by it (Erman 2016b). And under the new expenses of apartment living and mortgage payments to attain the ownership of the apartments into which they were relocated, they experience financial problems. This forces family members to seek paid work, which is challenged by traditional values that dictate keeping women at home (Erman and Hatiboğlu 2017). In the process, neoliberal subjectivities are produced; rural migrants of humble background becoming desiring subjects for more and better; and as they become more and more integrated into consumption, they are stuck in debt (Erman and Hatiboğlu 2017; Erman and Kara 2018). Under the challenges of their new housing and new lives, it is yet to

be determined what the outcome will be: the ‘best’ scenario would be lower-middle-class families living in apartment complexes, which veils the new conditions of poverty it created in its process of transformation, and the worst scenario would be impoverished families living in ghetto-like housing estates as residents relocated from the *gecekondu* cannot afford the cost of maintaining their lives and buildings.

Neoliberal policies have also transformed villages in Turkey (Keyder and Yenal 2011; Coban 2013; Önal 2013). The marketization of agriculture and the scaling down of the market protection mechanisms of the state that include the shrinking of agricultural subsidies, have pushed small- and medium-sized households to abandon their enterprises (Aydın 2010). Market reforms were instituted in the 1980s, but they were not applied until the 2000s; when the country faced a severe economic crisis in 2000–2001, a World Bank-inspired model was put into practice (Güven 2009). Accordingly, a new wave of migration to cities has been taking place since the 2000s. Similar to the first wave of migration, the new migrants adopt the strategy of keeping their ties with their villages; some members of the families (usually young men) are sent to the city, while others hold onto their land, transcending the rural-urban divide (Öztürk, Jongerden, and Hilton 2018). But, different from the first wave of migration, they move to a city whose peripheral land is already occupied by the early-comers, and under the neoliberal urban policies, to a city whose spaces are in the process of commodification (Yükseker 2009). As a result, they rent apartments in buildings built by the early migrants (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001; Balaban 2011). The village is their refuge; like the first wave of migrants, they often receive material and psychological support from their family members in the village and send remittances to their families back in the village.

The Southeastern Anatolian Project (GAP) that targets the economic development of the region is another factor that has created outmigration, if only temporarily. Mostly young men travel to metropolitan cities for temporary work. Seasonal agricultural laborers,¹⁰ who include women and children, furthermore, move to different regions of the country during harvest times. Their poverty, deepened by their ethnicity, creates the conditions for their multiple victimization (Çınar 2014).

In the section that follows, I focus on the issue of Kurdish ethnicity as a factor that disadvantages migrants from southeastern Anatolia in deeper ways than ordinary rural-to-urban migrants.

Political repression

In this section, I move my attention to migration as a result of political repression. I focus on Kurdish people displaced by violent confrontations in the southeastern part of Turkey between the Turkish Armed Forces and the Kurdish guerrillas. My purpose is to demonstrate a case that Erder (1998) calls *köysüz ‘köylü’ göçü* (migration of villagers without village), in which the ties of migrants with their villages are cut off.

Political causes complicate migration induced by shifts in political economy. As a result of the political conflict between Turkish security forces and Kurdish PKK militants and the strategy of the military to evacuate villages to cut off the logistics to PKK insurgency (Ayata and Yüksek 2005), forced outmigration of villagers in Kurdish-populated eastern and southeastern Anatolia in the 1990s came onto the agenda. It spurred migration as displaced families moved to the cities in the region as well as to western Anatolia, seeking livelihood. Some became seasonal agricultural workers when the cities in their region could not absorb them economically. Those who made it to Istanbul suffered from poverty and exclusion (Keyder 2005). Today, they rent or occupy rooms in deteriorated houses in inner-city slum neighborhoods, for instance

Tarlabaşı, Süleymaniye, and Eminönü. These are the sites of UTPs, making their poor residents vulnerable to displacement. The Tarlabaşı UTP is particularly important in the commitment of the public–private partnership in the project to ‘clean’ the neighborhood from its ‘undesirable’ population before they open it to the consumption of the wealthy attracted to Tarlabaşı for its historic houses and its convenient location close to the city center (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010; Ünsal and Kuyucu 2010). Along with other vulnerable populations, the Kurdish families displaced from their villages are now facing a second displacement, this time from their homes in the city (Yılmaz 2008).

The new migrants from southeastern Anatolia suffer from poverty, unemployment, and a lack of access to health and educational services in the cities (Ayata and Yüksek 2005). In their multiple exclusion, they are candidates to become Turkey’s underclass (Yılmaz 2008). They are disadvantaged not only by the conditions in the city but also by their lack of relationship with the village (Erder 1998). Cut off from the support of the village, they try to survive by their meager means in the city, mostly employed informally in the most undesirable sectors, collecting recycling garbage, working in construction sites, selling stuffed mussels in the street without official permits, all rendering them vulnerable to the police. Their economic disadvantages are coupled with social troubles when they are stigmatized as terrorists and separatists (Saraçoğlu 2009). Accordingly, the most problematic occurrence in migration is the case of the forced migration of Kurdish people, in which the problems created by urban neoliberalism and political repression intertwine. The favorable conditions of the earlier period of migration in which rural-to-urban migrants were able to build their houses and create their communities on the peripheries of cities, and preserved their relationship with their villages that secured support in multiple ways, do not exist now for Kurdish migrants. They have been superseded by disadvantages in the neoliberal era under the increasing commodification of urban land, coupled with the political measures that forced villagers in eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey to migrate to cities, creating multiple victimizations.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed rural-to-urban migration in Turkey, with a focus on the features that characterize migration in the Turkish case, such as chain migration, migrant communities and networks, and hometown associations. Through these mechanisms, migrants maintain their lives in ways that reproduce old identities and ways of life in the new context. Such ties, furthermore, create the conditions to sustain small-scale farming in the villages, which would disappear under neoliberal policies. I extend this chapter to discuss the changes and challenges to the survival mechanisms by neoliberal policies in a globalizing world, which are coupling with Islamism in the Turkish context, as well as by political repression at the national level. Overall, I suggest that this type of migration shaped Turkish society’s encounter with Western modernity, challenging radical transformations toward individuality and urbanity, as well as the complete commercialization of the agricultural sector. Today, as urban spaces are transformed by neoliberal policies through the processes of commodification, informality in housing is lost; gecekondu neighborhoods are increasingly incorporated into property markets via urban transformation projects, making some gecekondu owners better-off and pulling others into poverty. In this shift from the model of import-substituting industrialization to the neoliberal model that restructures cities and villages alike with an economic logic and produces new subjectivities embedded in consumption and competition, coupled with the rise of Islamism, migrants and their communities face new challenges. We need new theoretical frameworks and analytical tools to make sense of the new migrant subjectivities and the emergent mechanisms in which

the support networks and hometown relations of earlier times are reworked or completely lost, and exclusionary practices based on class, ethnicity, and religion are increasingly carried out.

Notes

- 1 In the Ottoman Empire, the non-Muslim population was particularly dense in urban areas. Of these, the Armenians were subjected to forced migration in 1915, and the Greeks were exchanged with the Turks living in Greece after the Turkish Republic was established. Accordingly, the urban population was considerably lessened.
- 2 “After the 1954 import-substitution drive, joint venture firms were established for domestic manufacture of tractors” (Parvin and Hic 1984: 219).
- 3 See Gürel (2011) for detailed information on the outcomes of the Marshall Plan.
- 4 Some villages with fertile land and close to railways were already commercialized, producing specialized grains such as cotton and tobacco for European industry (Akşit 1967, 1993).
- 5 In the villages of Adana, as a result of mechanization, the big landowner lowered the shares of peasants working on his land from one-third to one-eighth of the agricultural product, eventually replacing shares by pays of very small amount (Kıray 2000).
- 6 In the Ottoman land system in which the sultan was the owner of public land, much of the land existed outside private ownership (Parvin and Hic 1984).
- 7 The term *hemsehri* is used in a flexible way to connect oneself to those defined as coming from the same place of origin. See Güneş-Ayata (1990/91) for a study that investigated how the Kurds from eastern Anatolia defined who their *hemsehri* was; in this schema, their villagers were located at the center, and those from eastern Anatolia at the periphery. Those from western Anatolia were not included into their category of the *hemsehri*.
- 8 This trend has recently shown some variations as some immigrants prefer towns over villages to build their houses that they use in the summer.
- 9 Another union was HAK-İŞ, which was “founded upon Islamist ideologies during the radical polarization of the 1970s” (Alemdar 2009). In 1970, the Confederation of Nationalist Workers’ Unions (MISK) was founded, yet its success remained limited (Dinler 2012).
- 10 The transformation of *gecekondu*s was selective, and the amount of rent appropriated differed based on location, contractors preferring those *gecekondu*s closer to the city center.

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