

PRESENTATION OF URBAN VIOLENCE IN THE TURKISH MEDIA AFTER  
THE 1990S

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September 2001

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To My Family

## ABSTRACT

### PRESENTATION OF URBAN VIOLENCE IN THE TURKISH MEDIA AFTER THE 1990S

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This thesis analyses how urban violence is represented in the Turkish media. The media coverage of the “*varoş* people” and the representation of the reasons of urban violence attributed to the *varoş* population are considered. Rural-to-urban migration, social polarisation depended on ethnic diversities, relative economic deprivation, and rivalry for the public space is discussed based on the media representation of particular urban outbreaks after the 1990s.

Keywords: Urban violence, Social polarisation, *Varoş/ Gecekonu*, Economic deprivation, Media representation, 1990s Turkey.

## ÖZET

### 1990'LARDAN SONRA KENTSEL ŞİDDETİN TÜRK BASININDA TEMSİLİ

Dolanay, Züleyha Sezen

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Bu çalışma, 1990lardan sonra kentsel şiddetin basında nasıl temsil edildiğini incelemiştir. “Varoş insanı”nın medya tarafından ele alınışı ve kentsel şiddetin basında ortaya konan sebepleri vurgulanmıştır. Kırsal kesimden kente göç, etnik kökene, görelî ekonomik yoksunluğa ve kamu alanı üzerindeki rekabete dayanan toplumsal kutuplaşma 1990lardan sonra ortaya çıkan ve basına yansıyan sokak olayları göz önüne alınarak tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kentsel şiddet, Toplumsal kutuplaşma, Varoş/Gecekondu, Görelî ekonomik yoksunluk, Medya temsili, 1990lar Türkiye'si.

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## INTRODUCTION

Ever since the establishment of human societies, violence has always existed and will keep continue with the humanity, and it will attract the interest of social scientists.

Violence comprises a wide range in that there is domestic violence, juvenile delinquency, violence against women, political violence, racial violence, street violence, vandalism and so on. The consequences of violence may be either immediate or long term, direct or indirect, people being killed or property being destroyed or both. The reasons of urban violence extend from anti-globalisation outbreaks, economic problems and ethnic conflicts to the outbreaks of homosexuals. These impacts influence conditions of urban living. The economy is affected as production is disrupted, tourism falls of, and people migrate from violent areas and so on. Social activities decline if people are afraid to go out. Public administration is curtailed as terrorists and rioters attack government offices and civil servants. Most importantly, the ability of the government to enforce its rule over the population is affected for two reasons. First, attacks on the security forces make 'normal policing' impossible, if police cannot enter certain areas or if they must take extreme precautions. Second, the population may be so disaffected and alienated from the government that they refuse to cooperate with it. The consequent breakdown in law-and-order might result in an increase in ordinary (non-political) crime (Hewitt, 1993 in Wilson, 1987).

Violent attacks seem to be overlooked on the urban pattern, and the only solution appealing to the authorities is to oppress the coexistent strife at the immediate period. The up-to-time cessations do not make sense in the long run. With the extensive modernisation ventures throughout the world, the question of urban conditions, the

social polarisation and extending ethnic diversity encounters are among the most popular topics in the academic discourses.

As much as it is expected that the modernisation and urbanisation will go hand in hand, the aftereffects of it cannot be disregarded as well. Although in the academic discourses, many arguments exist in that the urbanisation process is not considered to be the initial impetus of violence and chaos within the urban conjunctures, it is inevitable to disregard the effects of the metropolises in assessing the violence issue. The particularities of urban life enhance the extents and dimensions of social structuring. Nowadays, there is an increasing focus on violence. However, the emphasis has changed after the 1980s. The ethnic based local disputes have outweighed worldwide wars. I will consider the Turkish case in relation to the tendencies that relatively not well-to-do gecekondü people are prone to violence

Especially after the 1990s with the globalising world, both developing and developed urban areas have been facing dilemmas and chaotic incidents in the form of mass street movements and vandalism. Those incidents are fundamentally based on ethnic and religious diversities, and social polarisation because of socio-economic deprivations. Turkey has to endure such a period.

Throughout my thesis, which involves in four chapters, I am going to dwell on the media representation of urban violence after the 1990s. I analyse it within the Turkish context by specifying the stigmatised conditions of the gecekondü people, and the possible reasons of violence depending on the derivations that are explicitly or implicitly put forward by the Turkish media. I have made literature review and content analysis by looking into newspapers and magazines. According to my viewpoint, the

columnists tend to represent the causes of urban violence extending from economic reasons to ethnic dimensions. However, the reasons why the peripheral regions in the city, namely gecekondu settlements (literally meaning landed by night), or with their new-fashioned name after the 1990s, *varoş* settlements, are seen as the core of violence within the urban context deserve attention. As a matter of fact, the impetus of such “de facto” trait, *varoş* has to be analysed immensely in order to illuminate the grounds of such negative attribution to the people living in gecekondu settlements especially after the 1990s. I prefer using the term gecekondu instead of *varoş*. Conventional gecekondu is safer to indicate these people when compared to the recent term *varoş*, which depicts the gecekondu population in relation to violence. Unless the newspaper and magazine articles use the term *varoş* specifically and in some particular conditions, I generally prefer using gecekondu to indicate these particular districts.

In the first chapter, the definitions of violence are explored in order to illuminate the concepts of violence that I have used to explain the grounds and extents of actions that take place in city. Additionally, in the same chapter, the impact of city and the neoliberal economic conditions in the 1990s are studied since I would like to analyse the dimensions of neo-liberal policies and especially the impacts of privatisation. There is a probability that neo-liberal economic policies have increased the movements on the urban pattern.

In the second chapter, I focus on the migration process in Third World cities. The incentives that cause the masses to move to large cities are analysed within the Third World context in the first part and within the Turkish context in the second part. The extents and drives that mobilise masses in the Third World context are analysed to

assess a comparative viewpoint. It is also necessary to grasp the conditions of migrant groups before and after moving to the big cities.

The third chapter deals with the media coverage of *gecekondu* and *varoş* particularly and their relationship to violence. The first use of the term *varoş* is presumably derived from the media, and then it becomes the concern of academic circles. The term carries a negative attribute to indicate a violence-prone group. Especially after the 1990s, a new agenda occupies the academic discourses, which is the renaming of *gecekondus* as *varoş*. As a matter of fact, *varoş* is a Hungarian term to indicate the outskirts of the cities, however, it has been transferred to Turkish to indicate the *gecekondu* people who are relatively deprived, educationally ignorant, and culturally rural. In other words, it is “the Other” to urbanites (Erman, 2001). The media representation of the urban outbreaks and their relationships to the *gecekondu* people is significant to concern about. The most striking trait fixed on them is that they are prone to violence. By and large, this stigma has been bothering the so-called *varoş* population, the “original urbanites”, the governmental institutions, and the political parties in some ways. Ethnicity, religiosity, economic deprivation and social polarisation due to income inequality are the key points in analysing the *gecekondu* people and the assumption of their tendency toward violence based on the media representation of the events and the *gecekondu* people.

In the conclusion chapter, I restate the points that I have discussed throughout the thesis. The media influence of the image of the relationship between *gecekondu* people and urban violence has various aspects extending from positive approaches to negative approaches.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF VIOLENCE**

### **1.1 Definitions of Violence**

The conceptualisation of violence should be explored in order to illuminate the reasons and extents of this social phenomenon. Social cohesion (Durkheim, 1893 in Simpson, 1975) does not come about automatically and cannot be taken for granted; it requires continuous attention and concern. And social conflict is another face of society as real as social cohesion. Violence can be unequivocally defined as the most direct and severe form of physical power. It is force in action. Whether it is used by the state, by private groups or by persons, its use is a contribution of bargaining by other means (Nieburg, 1969.) The distinctions among capability, threat and demonstration are widely used to differentiate force and violence. Force is about capability and threat of action, whereas violence is about demonstration of force tending toward counter-demonstration and upsurge, or toward settlement. The force in action, namely, demonstrative actions, take place occasionally to reveal themselves in order to gain efficacy as an instrument of social and political changes or control.

Violence is those actions extending from kidnapping to murder, of whose aim is to discourage and suppress people in order to impose them certain type of ideology or behaviour through force or threat of force (Ergil, 1980; Bozdemir, 1980 in Keleş, 1982). Likewise, it is one of the choices that people use in order to change public policies. Moreover, it is the threat of utilisation of actions toward individuals or

commodities in order to react against the state *modus operandi* and public policies (LaPalombara, 1974 in Keleş, 1982). Violent behaviour stands for deliberate attraction taking manoeuvres in order to be recognised by the target population and obtrude power on specific group. Additionally, Keleş (1982: 22) asserts,

Nieburg's (1969) definition of violence refers to acts of disruption, destruction, and injury whose purpose, choice of targets or victims, surrounding circumstances, implementation and/or effects have political significance, that is tend to modify the behaviour of others in a bargaining situation that has consequences for the social system.

Violent actors turn out to be the instruments of other provocative primary forces whose aim is to mobilise and utilise crowds of people in order to have outrageous impact on another target group or an individual. There is a kind of arbitrariness about who commits a political act and for what reasons. The historical record displays that many assassination plots are happening at approximately the same time but in different places and frequently with different motives. In other words, the actors of violent events may be instruments of larger dynamic relationships along with the fact that those violent actors might have individual concerns as well. As Nieburg (1969:14) states,

Violence and threats of violence as a form of 'propaganda of the act', as a demonstration of group unity or individual commitment, or as a test of these qualities in rival groups, as a demand for attention from a larger audience; as a claim, assertion and testing of legitimacy.

On the other hand, Scott (1985 in Keleş, 1982) differentiates types of resistance, for example 'real resistance' referring to organised, systematic, preplanned or selfless acts with revolutionary consequences, and 'token resistance pointing to unorganised incidental acts without any revolutionary consequences, and which are accommodated in the power structure.

Nonetheless, it is almost always difficult to separate the individualised motives, and violent actors' social intention and purposes from which their actions are derived. As a matter of fact, it is not necessary to do so since it is more realistic to take a wide variety of motives into account. Those may include individual problems and values, as well as one's relationship, aspiration, and sense of identity with other groups and individuals. Violence has been defined in several ways. There are different approaches to conceptualise it. The reasons why violence is happening can be collected under three headings, namely, socio-psychological approaches, the socio-political approaches and the structural approach.

Psychological approach deals with frustration and aggression, relative deprivation, the relationship between relative wealth and violence, social change and systematic frustration. "The deprivation theory begins with a discussion of relative inequity, injustice and inequality among social groups"(Nieburg, 1969). It presumes that the sharper the perception of inequity, the more intense the modes of protest. In other words, the greater the disparity is between them, the larger will be the incentive for high-risk provocation. The source of inclination towards violence lies in deprivation and aggression (Dollard, 1939 in Keleş, 1982). The theory states that the ones who cannot effectuate their objectives, and who are obstructed from reaching the destination in their minds tend to become hostile and aggressive. Similarly, violence comes about because of the discrepancy between what one expects and what one possesses to achieve their expectations. The potential public violence is directly proportional to the grade and growth of the relative deprivation that certain segments of the society share. The displeasure of deprivation is a universal phenomenon and a universal warning.

Besides, political violence comes up with increasing displeasure and follows path to be political and unfolds violent actions toward political figures and characters (Gurr, 1994).

A rapid increase in a society on socio-economic grounds causes new anticipations and constantly increases desires. More broadly, in developing countries the chance of violent actions is much higher than the poor or underdeveloped countries (Davies, 1962 in Keleş, 1982). While the national income per capita increases according to a certain degree, the anticipations of the society increase in a steep line. Therefore, the discrepancy between them causes outbreaks and reactionary movements that extend to violence. Moreover, revolutions derive from the strategies that make societies believe in the achievement of constant growth and development, which is succeeded by term of turmoil and crisis. Unlike Marx who claims the emergence of violence out of public destitution, Davies (1962 in Nieburg, 1969) states that as a matter of fact revolutions come out of relative welfare and augmentation. People may get accustomed to a certain life standard and accordingly a sudden degradation at the socio-economic level may arouse sharp conflict and frustration within the society. In due course, the frustrated society is associated with outbreaks in order to express their complaints and point of view of what comes about in the end of any constant decline. Marxist theory describes the urban poor as lumpenproletariat, which refers to propertyless people who do not produce, such as beggars, thieves, criminals, things who are in general poor but live on the labour of other working people. Marx depicts them as the “dangerous class” or the social scum. He does not consider this group to be of any importance in terms of potential for creating socialism; if anything they may be



considered to have a conservative influence. Other writers and analysts have considered them to have some revolutionary potential. One of the main reasons for mentioning them is to emphasise how capitalism uses, misuses and discards people, not treating them as humans. Today's representatives of this class of lumpenproletariat are the homeless and the underclass (Bottomore, 1983 in Nieburg, 1969).

On the other hand, “differential access”(Nieburg, 1969), namely, the impediments to have an access to resources tend to extend more violent actions. Cloward and Ohlin (1960 in Nieburg, 1969: 106) state “social disorganisation and the rise of subcultures of violence are viewed more as results of differential access and unequal social power than as inevitable results of relative deprivation.” Although this theory is not fully applicable to illuminate the reasons mobilising violent actors, it also needs serious attention and consideration in the violence discourse.

Feierabend and Nesvold (1969 in Keleş, 1982) use the term “systematic frustration” to define a sense of shared values by every individual of the members of the society. It delineates an impediment encountered against the fulfilment of desires and social values. In other words, it is the outcome of the discrepancy between desires and social expectancies, and what is achieved. This theory argues for social change for the underprivileged. However, despite the fact that it is an important factor, it is not a sufficient explanation as well. Although deprivation may provide drive and momentum to intensify political behaviour, violent outbreak springing from deprivation neglects the fact that such outbreaks occur selectively.

As far as socio-economic and political approach is concerned, Tilly (1975) claims that particular groups who challenge political regimes and retain some sort of

power are parallel automatic cores against the dominant order. People come together in order to achieve goals and to modify their environment through means that they use to express themselves against authorities that hold power. The move away from welfare state and move towards market provision were responses to fiscal crisis and the increasing demands made on the state for facilities and services. However, that shift might create new problems of social justice, law and order. Consequently, the state is forced to maintain its social functions and to deal with fragmented politics in which local objection can take the form of violent actions (Savage and Ward, 1993).

Tilly (1975) states three principal conditions that may turn collective actions into political violence. First, the rivalry between opposing groups in that one of the groups distinguishes the other group as an enemy and violates its properties. Secondly, reactionary affairs comprise that one of the groups claims rights on the other group's assets in that the vulnerable group tries to protect its right to property by opposing the intruding group. Thirdly, the conducts leading to reaction comprise the situation in that a group declares right on some reserve and the other group opposes the other group's intrusion to use those privileges.

On the other hand, Huntington (1968) states that the violence and political instability in the Asian, African and South American countries eventuate from the discord between the development of the effectual political institutions and the process of socio-economic transformations. He assumes that when traditional, transitional and modern societies are concerned, violence and political instability is mostly probable in transitional societies. Huntington delineates transitional societies comprising the ones that have achieved particular economic development yet they lack adequate political

institutions. Under the inadequacy and the absence of political institutions, it seems rather difficult to rearrange the fluctuation within the society and legitimate manifestation of the prevalent demands in the political system. Likewise, Huntington explicates the relationships between rapid economic development and political instability as follows. As a beginning point, rapid economic development may cause the collapse of traditional and social groups. Accordingly, it increases the number of outcasts who are pushed into revolutionary tendencies. In addition, it creates the new rich that neither sustains harmony nor melts in the extant order, and who chases political authority and social status along with their new economic positions.

On the other hand, growth may weaken class organisation, marginalizing some sectors of the population so that they cease to be important factors in influencing events. Marginality is seen as a permanent and irreversible result of capitalist development (Roberts, 1978). Quijano (1973 in Roberts, 1978: 162) asserts,

Those who are marginalised by the dynamics of capital-intensive industrialisation find work in those sectors of the economy.... These sectors are primarily the urban-based tertiary sector of the economy, such as petty trade, personnel services, small repair shops and so on.

In the underdeveloped situation, the dominant classes take the poor as potential threats to political order; therefore, the economic relationships between the dominant classes and the marginalised groups are inconsistent, disconnected and unstable (Quijano, 1973 in Roberts, 1978). However, the marginals are more likely the group that is mostly bound to the state. In other words, the state becomes one of the major sources of survival for these groups, providing social and economic assistance and creating a network of patron-client relationships between agencies of the state and groups, and individuals among the marginals. Peripheral groups or regions find difficulty in altering

their subordinate situation because their economic and social fragmentation prevents their class organisation and in accordance a coherent struggle against exploitation from the centre (Roberts, 1978). Thus, the fact of socio-economic differentiation of various segments of the society unfolds itself as discontentment of the extant conditions.

To a greater extent than in the analysis of Quijano (1973 in Roberts, 1978), Roberts (1978: 164) asserts that capitalism is viewed as an internally developed capacity to transform local social and economic structures. This dynamic is heavily dependent on the state and consequently varies with the strength and the nature of the state apparatus in different underdeveloped countries.

## **1.2 Violence and the City**

In order to illuminate the conceptualisation of violence, the role of the urban way of life has always been an important issue. The main question is whether urbanisation and urban living increase violence. Those arguments are supported with the claim that urbanisation brings about violence because of its heterogeneity and modernity, - which is another disputable subject. On this issue, Wirth's basic argument was that city life is characterised by social disorganisation and isolation because all cities are heterogeneous, large and dense (Wirth, 1964).

The disorganisation argument assumes that urban dwellers are no longer effectively integrated into a community, no longer subject to informal social controls over their behaviour, "without a firm commitment to community values, they are easily attracted by the promise of quick gains, seduced by the lure of vice" (Gilbert, 1992). The contrast between the rich and the poor is prominent in the cities. Limited

opportunities for social mobility thwart their aspirations, and they experience anomie (Gilbert, 1992). Similarly, Wirth (1964: 75) asserts that

Large numbers count for individual variability, the relative absence of intimate personal acquaintanceship, and the segmentalisation of human relations, which are largely anonymous, superficial and transitory, and associated characteristics. Density involves diversification and specialisation, glaring contrasts, a complex pattern of segregation, the predominance of formal social control, and accentuated friction among other phenomena. Heterogeneity tends to break down rigid social structures and to produce mobility, instability, and security, and the affiliation of the individuals with a variety of intersecting and tangential social groups with high rate of membership turnover, the pecuniary nexus tends to displace personal relations, and institutions tend to cater to mass rather than individual requirements. The individual thus becomes effective only as he (sic) acts through organised groups.

As urbanism spreads, so primary social relationships and values weaken and decline. Disorganisation, with the decline of secure and pervasive social bonds in an urbanised society, is inevitable. For Wirth, the main impediment to achieve social consensus in modern societies is the segmentation of values and interests and their lack of integration with one another, and “from the failure of men (sic) to participate together in reaching common decisions” (Wirth, 1964). He viewed the modern world with people who are unable to communicate with each other. The people are atomised into multiplicity of interests. People cannot come together and mobilise for certain goals for the reason that they are excluded from decision-making process. “Generating participation in common decisions” becomes gradually inevitable since legitimised institutions make decisions for them. The opposite impression of the city being enormously diverse is created since we continually pass people in the street whom we do not know and whose cultures we are not accustomed to, and thus understanding them is difficult. Then the city gives the impression of being an enormously fragmented

place (Savage and Ward, 1993a). The anonymity of the city, that is, its capacity to embody various ethnic, economic and religious constituents who become unknown to one another as individuals, and different desires and expectations of the individuals may lead to their clash in some ways. Especially, the economic, namely, class discrepancies within the society may result in significant degrees of polarisation between those classes.

The competition for limited resources of cities creates rivalry between various segments of the society. On the other hand, Simmel (1955) states that urban culture is the culture of modernity. Simmel (1955) delineated the metropolis as the site for the lonely, isolated individual, shorn of strong social bonds. “The relationships and affairs of the typical metropolitan usually are so varied and complex that without the strictest punctuality, the whole structure would break down into an extricable chaos” (Simmel, 1950 in Savage and Ward, 1993: 110). However, Simmel made historical comparisons of the cities, he did not analyse the rural-urban distinction. Simmel was not concerned in cultural traits that urbanisation brought about. The issue he was interested in is the role of the city as the centre of the money economy (Simmel, 1978, in Savage and Ward, 1993). Simmel’s main argument is that modern societies are based on the dominance of the money economy, and they exhibit very different cultural traits from traditional societies. From our perspective, there are two of Simmel’s ideas that are relevant. He asserts that the way people live in a modern *Gesellschaft*-like society make it difficult to interact with so many other people. It is not possible that people in a dense, urban society possess the same living standards with one another. If you live in a small, primitive band with twelve other people, it is easy to interact with everybody. If

you live in a town of 100,000 or more people, you cannot possibly interact with everyone. So, Simmel came up with the notion of 'reserve,' namely reserved humans (Simmel, 1978 in Savage and Ward, 1993). Modern urban dwellers remain reserved. They simply stay detached from the majority of the people around them. They do not interact with them. They may not even acknowledge their existence. They become selective in their social relations. This does not mean that they are not dependent on everybody else. Just because I ignore the greengrocer that just walked by me on the street, does not mean I am not going to use his product. It just means that I am not going to interact with him/her socially. I will go into his shop, I will buy vegetable from him/her, but I do not have intimate social interaction with him/her. However, that would not be the case in a small village (Simmel, 1978 in Savage and Ward, 1993). Simmel actually asserts that the remoteness between people in large communities such as the city, the interaction process becomes narrower.

In cities as large settlements, social activism units and movements could be easily achieved because activists could hide without drawing too much attention. In large areas where no one knows the other well, activists could move easily among crowded populations. Additionally, the police forces have difficulty in following them. In rural areas, the support of the local population against the ones in power is necessary, but in urban areas it is not the case. As cities have immense population growth and socio-economic inequalities among the stratified groups, activists could make best use of these ready to fire bombs (Keleş and Ünsal, 1982). The agitators take the advantage of unhappy segments of the society that are cumulated in cities.

Cities that are not industrialised, that have numerous unemployed and underemployed people and that comprise people who belong to different social milieu in terms of life standards and culture prepare the base for acute alienation. In similar terms, masses that could not be integrated into urban pattern and could not attain their goals begin to dissolve in material and ethical terms (Keleş and Ünsal, 1982). Even though urbanisation is evaluated with its positive aspects, by the authors, this process is claimed to bring about problems that are unable to solve (Keleş and Ünsal, 1982). When it comes to Third World societies, modernisation and urban migration in developing countries has caused a dramatic expansion of impoverished urban settlements; and the growing urban “underclass” is thought to provide a mild ground for the spread of radical movements (Bayat, 2000). Turkey is getting urbanised but the increase of the share of living in cities and the high urbanisation rates are not sufficient to assume that a country is fully urbanised (Şenyapılı, 1981 in Keleş and Ünsal, 1982).

Pessimistic critiques claim that such unsatisfied crowds become radicalised. Some scholars assert that especially newly migrated crowds in squatter settlements who are exposed to acute alienation and dissatisfaction from the society turn out to be a crucial phenomenon, which is an indispensable outcome of capitalist development (Keleş and Ünsal, 1982). Similarly, according to Ward (1964 in Keleş and Ünsal, 1982), the unqualified poor who live in the countryside with low income migrate to city with hopes, however, by doing that, they exchange rural poverty with deeper urban poverty of the expanding *gecekondu*<sup>1</sup>, *favelas*<sup>2</sup>, and *bidonvilles*<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Gecekondu refers to squatter housing in Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> Favela refers to squatter housing in Brazil.

<sup>3</sup> Bidonville refers to squatter housing in Northern African countries.



These masses may engender the youth activism such as in Congo, and urban social movements in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and in Calcutta (India).

On the other hand, minority groups may cause conflict in society. Minorities occupy a disadvantageous position in society. As contrasted with the dominant group, they are debarred from certain opportunities- economic, social and political. These deprivations confine the individual's freedom of choice and self-development. The members of the minority are held in low esteem and may even be objects of contempt, hatred and violence (Wirth, 1964). They are generally socially isolated and frequently spatially segregated. They suffer social and economic insecurity. As a result, minority groups tend to develop their own set of values and attitudes, which also tend to set them apart from the rest of the society.

This anomic sort of characteristic may drive them toward extreme and violent behaviour. The differential treatment and the sense of being discriminated against may result in rebellious action.

Another dimension of manifestation of violence on the urban pattern is that urbanism increases geographical mobility, which unbinds social ties and leads to rapid immigration to the cities, causing alienation and political extremity. Additionally, geographical mobility enlarges the number of people whose life standards are in decline; thus it expands the gap between the poor and the rich. The haves and the opportunities to possess resources that the rich hold in their hands and the have-nots that the poor do not possess and their remoteness to resources engender conflicting situations. Those factors diversify the chances for the groups to organise and as a result it strengthens the group demands that the government cannot afford to meet. In short,

Huntington (1968) suggests that as far as those particular relationships continue, the less the economic growth and welfare proceeds, the more the public dissatisfaction extends.

Pahl (1975 in Erder, 1997) indicates that urban environment is the source of inequality in the distribution of individuals' and groups' chance of livelihood for the reason that the resources are limited and the ones who hold political power decide the distribution of these resources. Cities are arenas of politics and, the use of public space becomes as a site of contestation between the actors and the authorities (Bayat, 2000). "This is so because these sites (sidewalk, public parks, intersections and so on) are increasingly becoming the domain of the state power which regulates their use, making them orderly" (Bayat, 2000: 551). It expects the users to operate in them passively. An active use challenges the authority of the state and those social groups that benefit from each other (Bayat, 2000). Therefore, the urban space is a convenient place to operate against the authorities when there is an issue that contrasts with the authorities since the streets serve as the only locus of collective expression form but by no means are limited to those who generally lack an institutional setting to express discontent, including squatters, the unemployed, street subsistence workers, street children and women. Likewise, factory workers or college students may cause disruption by going on strike (Bayat, 2000).

The second element that shapes street politics is the passive network (Bayat, 2000). This term implies that individuals may be mobilised to act collectively without active or deliberately constructed networks. Street as a public space has this intrinsic

feature that makes it possible for people to get mobilised through establishing passive networks. Bayat (2000:552) states this argument as follows:

Once the individual actors, the encroachers, are confronted by a threat, their passive network is likely to turn into active communication and cooperation. That is how an eviction threat or police raid may immediately bring together squatters, or street vendors, who did not even know one another.

There are several types of political participation in urban politics. Urban social movements, rioting, lobbying, or mainly influencing councilors and joining associations are the ways to participate in urban politics. We can also talk about “new social movement” in which groups of people combine to press for specific, usually single-issue goals” (Savage and Ward, 1993). It is argued that those social movements are mainly middle-class politics since the middle classes have the resources like knowledge, time, skills and connections, which make their protests more effective.

‘Poor people’s movements’ by contrast, are likely to rely on occasional outbursts of protest, like a demonstration or a riot, their lack of resources making it difficult to mount a sustained campaign of any other kind. Moreover, the extent of grassroots participation itself varies from country to country, with direct local participation in movements (Halkier, 1991 in Savage and Ward, 1993: 182).

The multitude of protests that emerge in cities over housing and transportation might be coordinated by labour movements’ organisations. The actual reason of those movements is the demand for provision and municipal services. Related to this subject, Manuel Castells (1983) maintained that in late capitalism the specific social functions of the city were its becoming a site for the reproduction of labour power and collective consumption. The state is bound to provide the labor force with subsidies such as transportation, housing, health and education services as well as food. Those “collective consumption” services are vital in order for capitalism to be reinforced.

Many capitalist entrepreneurs are not inclined to provide those services because they are not profitable. Nonetheless, those services are necessary for the reproduction of labour so that capitalism survive. In general, the state has to rely on taxation to a certain extent without causing social unrest. In the case of insufficiency of those taxes as state income, the state diminishes these provisions. Accordingly, that causes unrest for the ones relying on state provisions. The outcome would be urban social movements. Furthermore, the ethnic and gender based movements cannot be deniable as well (Savage and Ward, 1993).

Tekeli (1982) states that there is a wide assumption that urbanisation, and especially large cities or metropolises, cause the disintegration of public ties and control, which lead to violence and terror. Presumably it may be assumed that the good society image has always been identified with the rural and its homogeneous state of nature in the Western context. The reason for this assumption turns out to be the modernisation of urban life and the discrepancies between the rich and the poor. However, that kind of assumption does not prove to be sound to explain violent actions because it does not expose the complete relationship between the urban pattern and violence, that is, by and large, defining violent outbreaks with the urban experience does not seem sufficient.

Durkheim's (1893 in Ewing et.al., 1998) anomie is any form of deregulation or lack of cohesion from which society may suffer. Two main streams of theory emerged as anomie developed in the American social science literature. Robert Merton (1964 in Ewing et.al., 1998) emphasised the social structural aspects of anomie, while Leo Srole (1956 in Ewing et.al., 1998 ) focused on the psychological characteristics of anomia.

Merton states that anomie has a disproportionate emphasis on cultural goals (such as the American dream, wealth and power) over institutional means. Likewise, McIver (1950 in Ewing et.al., 1998) defines psychological anomia on the “breakdown of the individual’s sense of attachment to society.” There are two essential issues to indicate. First, the issue of culture clash represented by “those who having lost...any system of value...having lost the compass that points their course into the future, abandon themselves to the present,” and secondly, rapid social change represented by “those who have lost the ground of their former values” (McIver, 1950 in Ewing et.al., 1998).

The violent actions and also the actors of those violent actions have various reasons in order to express themselves in destructive modes. Besides, it is almost inevitable to overlook any of those factors since violent outbreaks are dependent upon the combination of some of those factors. It is not academically sound to put violence on the grounds of single reason. On the other hand, it is almost inevitable to eliminate some of those factors. In some ways, they appear to be the cause of violent outbreaks and the fact that which of them are more influential in various occasions depends on the socio-psychological, political or structural premises.

### **1.3 Violence in the Post-1980 Neoliberal Period**

Since 1980s, a range of different global processes has impacted on Third World cities, which are crudely cumulated together under the term ‘economic restructuring’ (Gilbert, 1994). The restructuring policy comprises changes that are targeting improvement in ‘economic performance’ in Third World countries, deregulation of labour markets and economic enterprise, privatisation, modernisation of the state and economic

stabilisation (Gilbert, 1994). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and its structural adjustment packages for developing countries that have economic crisis have been determining the liberal and neoliberal policies. Urban economy and society begin to change due to economic decline and instability. Withdrawal of the state grants cause steep decline in public services and investments and that appears to bring about social polarisation.

Restructuring stands for a response to economic crisis although it has brought economic decline in wake (Gilbert, 1994). Some countries have suffered from growing poverty because they have failed to restructure, whereas others have become impoverished because they have embraced structural adjustment (Woodward, 1992 in Gilbert, 1994). In Asia incomes have fallen among urban workers in Turkey and the Philippines (Arıcanlı and Rodrik, 1990, Stewart, 1991 in Gilbert 1994). Incomes in the formal sector have diminished fastest because of the fixed incomes (Cordera and Gonzalez, 1991 in Gilbert, 1994); wage and salary earners in urban areas have wage freeze or steep cuts in their incomes. Workers are “laid-off as recession put companies out of business and as privatisation and government retrenchment lead to the firing of some workers” (Bortz, 1991 in Gilbert, 1994:612). Privatisation fundamentally is to convey state enterprises to private capital. In broadest terms, it is the limitation of public economic activities and partial or whole conveyance of it to private capital (Bireşim, 1994). Public services that were previously met without payment such as education, health, electricity, water, natural gas and roads, are privatised and they are commercialised (Bireşim, 1994). The concept of the social state is claimed to be disappearing with the privatisation process, especially privatisation in education and

health causes great losses. The more the state enterprise decline in underdeveloped regions, for example, in Turkey, the more migration to large cities increases where the possibility of livelihood is higher. For instance, in Sinop and Iğdır (Turkey) the factories were closed due to their lack of economic profit. Therefore, the workers have been moving to industrial cities such as Istanbul (Bireşim, 1994).

Besides laid-off workers, there are other groups who are exposed to changes due to policy changes, including privatisation. The structural adjustment program led to the erosion of much of the social contract, collective responsibility and welfare state structures (Bayat, 2000). Millions of people in the global south who once depended on state provisions must now rely on their own to survive. Deregulation of prices on housing, rent and utilities, jeopardise many poor people's security of tenure, subjecting them to the risk of homelessness. Reduction of spending on social programs has meant reduced access to decent education, health care, urban development and government housing. In the privatisation process, public sectors have either been sold out or reformed, which in their case has caused massive lay offs. According to the World Bank, in the early 1990s, during the transition to market economies in post-socialist, adjusting Latin American and Middle Eastern countries, formal employment fell by 5-15 (World Bank, 1995 in Bayat, 2000:534).

Informal sector is the term that is used to explain the work market of societies, which experience rapid urbanisation. It comprises in loose organisational structure and loose relationships (Haan, 1989 in Bayat, 2000), and it depends on small entrepreneurship.

With the development of highly prosperous groups, the new structuring has generated and led to the growth of a marginalised and deinstitutionalised subaltern in the Third World cities (Bayat, 2000). There are now an increasing number of unemployed, partially employed, casual labour, street subsistence workers, street children and members of the underworld-groups, which are referred to as urban marginals, the urban disenfranchised and the urban poor. “Such socially excluded and informal groups are by no means new historical phenomena...what is novel about this era is the marginalisation of large segments of the middle classes” (Bayat, 2000:534).

“The new global restructuring has been a double process of integration on the one hand and social exclusion and informalisation on the other” (Bayat, 2000: 533). Both processes tend to generate discontent on the part of many urban grassroots in the Third World. The concept of social state has disappeared with privatisation process; especially privatisation in education and health causes great losses. The state remains as the organiser of investment, market regulation, policing, and disorganiser of old forms of welfare provision.

It is widely assumed that the recession of the state has brought in social polarisation and created the new urban poor. The narrowing of the welfare state enables the state to leave public services to the society, such as education, health and social security. The acquirement of social consumption services from the market as goods increases the quality of the services but it has brought spatial differentiation and polarisation as well (Erder, 1998). Nonetheless, Savage and Ward (1993) claimed a counter-argument that the privatisation of such public services has declined the quality



of the services in Great Britain; there had been recorded many mistreatments in private hospitals (Savage and Ward, 1993).

Some segments of the society could get adapted to the commercialisation of the services; therefore, some urban groups enjoy having high quality services. On the other hand, those income groups could organise among themselves and establish civil society organisations to reach the resources that they have expected from the state to fulfill. However, middle and low middle-income groups who are bound to extant state provisioned public resources and opportunities cannot reach those resources with such ease as the previous groups can do (Erder, 1998). Aside from those groups, the low-income groups have the utmost difficulty in reaching those resources. With this new tendency, it is indisputable that low-income groups would attach to informal assistant ties. Although some civil society organisations try to increase social awareness toward those deprived groups, such as street children.

Moreover, informal relationships may engender new type of inequality because those ties take in the ones who are extending their social statuses. They reveal “hierarchal power relations” and encourage ethnicity, besides encouraging “male and adult dominancy” (Erder, 1998: 14). Similarly, according to a field research conducted in Ümraniye, Istanbul, it was assessed that informal assistant ties encourage and help male-dominant prospering families in socio-economic rank. On the other hand, the residents of the same locality who do not have fellow-villagers are excluded from those ties and left isolated from the rest of the local society. It is clear that those informal relationship ties can be class-based, cultural or conjunctural (Erder, 1998). However, it can be assumed that informal relationships are partial and insufficient to solve the

problems of the migrant population in gecekondu regions. On the contrary, they may create competitive situations between the ones who could receive assistance from those ties and those who could not receive. Erder (1998) asserts that there are wide “outcast” groups who are deprived of both informal relationships and public support.

In brief, based on this, it is indispensable to assume that neo-liberal economic policies have altered the way of living in some ways, especially in the low-paid segments of the society who are dependent on state provisions. In due course, it is necessary to assess them to display reactionary attitudes toward those changes and their deprived way of living.

Although the assumption of the relationship between stigmatisation of a groups and tendency of a group toward violence is significant. It is obvious that not every stigmatised group is prone to violence.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **INTERNAL MIGRATION FROM RURAL TO URBAN AREAS AND VIOLENCE: THE 1950S-1980S PERIOD**

#### **2.1 Migration in the Third World Context**

The term urban, according to its dictionary meaning, refers to a relatively permanent and highly organised centre of population, of greater size or importance than a town or a village. It also refers to a particular type of community, and its culture. In narrow terms, urbanisation comprises the increase in the number of cities and of the population living in cities. Nonetheless, urbanisation cannot only be taken as the mobility of population but also as the economic and societal alterations occurred in the society. In other words, urbanisation is a population collectivity in that the increase in the number and growth of cities as a condition to industrialisation and economic improvement causes particular modifications in the institutions, specialising and distribution of jobs and metamorphoses in the human conduct and relationships. As a matter of fact, change in the political participation is another dimension in the special urban behaviour (Keleş, 1990).

The city is characterised not by a particular urban life-style, but particularly in the Third World context rather by the life-style alternatives it offers (Gilbert, 1992). The growth of the city is associated more with internal migration processes than the natural growth in large metropolises. It is mostly the case that internal migration causes to alter the structure of the city life for the reason that it aggravates the opportunity gap

between what could be provided and what is acquired in the urban pattern. Internal migration from rural areas to urban regions is a social phenomenon that shapes urbanisation and the life style alternatives in the urban space. “Migration is taken to invoke the permanent or quasi-permanent relocation of an individual or group of individuals from a place of origin to a place of destination” (Parnwell, 1993: 112).

Migration is a social phenomenon that has numerous reasons to take into account in analysing its causes and effects. Additionally Parnwell (1993: 157) asserts that “the limited development and diversification of the non-farm economy may also determine that there are few employment opportunities locally which might absorb a steadily growing workforce, providing further incentive for people to move to seek their livelihood elsewhere” (48). Similarly, Roberts (1978: 67) indicates, “migration is influenced by the particular stage and intensity of the industrial development through which a country is passing.” What is more, Kearney (1986 in Gilbert, 1992) claims that most people move for economic reasons. The bright light theory of rural-urban migration does not seem too prevalent to be true generally.

Dandekar (1986 in Gilbert, 1994:122) reports that she asked a textile worker whether he preferred to live in Bombay or go back to Sugao, his village. The textile worker said, “What kind of question is that? There is no question about it. Of course I would live at home if I could make enough money there.” The textile worker had nothing to do with the excitement of city life. All he had to do was to work hard in order make money to survive. However, Grindal (1973 in Roberts, 1978) states that many migrants in Ghana whose expectations were not met in the city could not return

their hometowns because they had to stay and work, and their pride forced them to remain in the South in order to escape the humiliation of coming home in poverty.

Parnwell (1993) suggests that, as far as the conditions of the migrants are concerned, they may be seen and treated as second class citizens by the host society, and may have great difficulty in acquiring well-paid employment and in adjusting socially and psychologically to their move. Urbanites have the chance to enhance their circumstances or status in comparison to rural migrants.

One of the characteristics of the poor is that they are found disproportionately in rural areas. The populations living in rural areas have declined relatively, if -not absolutely, over the last forty years (Parnwell, 1993) because rural migrants become to aggregate in urban areas. And “the stages and causes of migration differs... migrants may go directly from the countryside to the largest cities or they move in steps from village to town to small city and then to the metropolis” (Danielson and Keleş, 1985:29).

Parnwell (1993:69) suggests that migration process occurs in such a way that economic factor is situated as the most influential incentive. “ The predominant direction of movement tends to be from economically depressed areas where opportunities for advancement are very limited, to economically dynamic locations where opportunities are perceived to be plentiful.” It suggests a close association between the unevenness of the development process and the incidence of population movements.

Another dimension that causes migration movements is modernisation and social change in many Third World countries. In rural areas, there is the dislocation

especially for the people who are displaced from the land by various forms of agricultural modernisation (mechanisation in particular) or through the transgression of other forms of economic activity (commercial logging has had a severe effect on shifting cultivators in many parts of South-East Asia) (Parnwell, 1993).

In many cases, migrants are small farmers forced off their lands or agricultural labourers whose livelihood has disappeared because of soil erosion, low crop prices or the increasing concentration of land ownership, with consequent changes in crops and the means of producing them (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1995). The limited resources in rural regions for farming in terms of land capacity and mechanisation process drive rural inhabitants to the city seeking labour and opportunities to survive. For instance, in the post-World War II period, Western European countries became destitute in terms of their economic situations, which led the USA give them financial aid (the Marshall Plan). This Marshall Aid also comprised Turkey, which aimed to modernise its agriculture and brought machinery to rural regions and influenced their economic structures. Although the aim of this aid was to develop the agricultural sector in Turkey, the outcome did not turn out to be the way it was planned. Consequently, small farmers were pushed to seek new opportunities to survive under such conditions. Moreover, despite the anti-urban and pro-rural orientation of this plan, it turned out to be the reverse. Accordingly, massive rural populations moved toward cities because their human power was not worth in rural areas any more or they had lost their land. Ironically, the impact of the agriculture-oriented policies was as dramatic in cities as in rural areas (Keyder, 1987 in Şengül, 1999). Therefore, from the 1950s and continuing

during the 1960s and 1970s at an increasing pace, the rural surplus labour power poured into cities (Şengül, 1999). As Parnwell (1993:117) suggests,

The pushes and pulls leading to migration were generally seen to be created by two main forces: population growth in the rural sector that brought a Malthusian pressure on agricultural resources and pushed people out, and economic conditions generated mainly by external forces that drew people into cities.

In addition, evacuees, namely, the people who have to leave their homes to make way for infrastructural projects, such as roads, reservoirs, ports, and air terminals, form another group of involuntary migration. In such cases, the interests of the inhabitants of that particular region are seen as inferior to the broader national or strategic interests, as in the case of the dams constructed by the World Bank between 1953 and 1976 in Third World countries (Lightford, 1978 in Parnwell, 1993).

Finally, people in Third World cities have been displaced from their home regions by various forms of expulsion. This resettlement process of refugees may come out of racial/ethnic conflicts between groups and political opposition of the groups against each other or against the state. It may be in the form of “warfare between neighbouring countries or a civil war between rival factions; inter-ethnic or inter-religious conflicts” (Keleş, 1982: 59) that come out because of particular historical debates between individuals or groups of people, especially, if one of the groups had to move away from their region formerly. Whatever the precise reasons are, the only solution to escape further conflict and unrest is to dislocate the inhabitants of this particular region, with the decision of the government of the time (Parnwell, 1993).

The issue of anomie is to be considered while mentioning the migration phenomenon since it causes the formation of squatters, which signifies a deprived way

of living. As Wirth (1964) suggested the discrepancy on the urban pattern based on heterogeneity causes anomie and sense of deprivation. Additionally, Parsons (1951 in Ewing et.al., 1998) summarises anomie as follows:

Some have used the anomie as equivalent to normlessness (Durkheim, 1893), thus inclining toward the first type of interpretation of the concept; such a view tends to treat social conflict as the result of incomplete moral consensus and to trace the sources of deviance to imperfect socialization or incomplete moral development. Others have tended toward the second type of interpretation, using anomie to mean normative strain (Merton, 1957) rather than normlessness: that is, a situation where the moral values or norms, which are accepted by the members of a group, are not matched by the possibilities of realizing the goals thus affirmed.

As it is suggested above “imperfect socialization” which is the possible outcome of the insufficient living conditions causes anomie.

## **2.2 Squatter Formation in Third World Cities**

In assessing the effects of migration on the places to which people move, we must again remember that the impact of migration depends on who is moving (Parnwell, 1993). Rural-to-urban migrants are mostly in short of financial standing and therefore they try to make most use of the resources they have in the migration process. Indisputably, housing is one of the main problems. As the migration process is inevitably identified with the resettlement of those people in the urban space, the need for shelters and accommodation becomes the utmost concern both for migrants and governments. In some way or another, migrant people can find home for themselves on the peripheries of especially large cities where economic opportunities are available. Migrants purposefully prefer low quality housing because building or renting such



houses enables the migrant to save a greater proportion of his or her urban earnings (Parnwell, 1993).

Hardoy and Satterthwaite (1995) state that most new housing and neighbourhoods in Third World cities are squatter settlements. "It could be said that the unnamed millions who build, organise and plan illegally are the most important organisers, builders and planners of Third World cities" (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1995:129). For instance, in San Martin, a squatter settlement in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the government tried to bulldoze the dwellers in November 1981, but was successfully resisted, largely by women and children who stood in front of the bulldozers. However, living in an illegal shelter has serious disadvantages. There is the obvious problem of lack of public services such as police and emergency services to cope with fires, accidents or serious health problems (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1995). The infrastructure is barely sufficient for the squatter regions. Essential services such as, piped water, sewers, all-weather roads, public transport, electricity, and health care are insufficient and absent most of the times. The provision takes place after years or even decades when the settlements first developed and usually after the inhabitants have mounted a long and well-organised campaign for such provisions. Few governments have become tolerant and have tried to provide basic infrastructure and services. Most governments mingle indifference with repression; some illegal settlements are tolerated, while others are bulldozed. The populist policies of the political parties may increase the governments' tolerance toward the squatter settlements in their concern to get votes. As so many aspects of their lives are illegal, poorer groups are exposed to

exploitation from landowners, businesses and the police or military forces (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1995).

Migrants have to build their own houses and neighbourhoods and they have almost always build them outside the official “legal” city of the elite and contrary to their norms and regulations. The last four decades have seen illegal house construction; either on illegally occupied or illegally subdivided regions. It becomes the major source of cheap housing in most Third World cities. For instance, in Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania, a 1981 estimate displays that 64 per cent of the population lived in squatters (Theunynck, 1981 in Parnwell, 1995).

Housing in squatter settlements is illegal in two ways: land is occupied illegally, and the site and the building are developed and built illegally which is contrary to zoning regulations and sub-division regulations (drainage, roads, etc.). The poor majority in Third World cities has no safety net; they have no choice but to find some activity which allows an income to be earned and some form of accommodation, because they have come to survive under city rules, and low cost housing is the only way for them to handle. Cities are places of power and privilege, and certainly many urban dwellers live in desperate conditions (Gilbert, 1992).

There was widespread belief that the diversion of scarce capital to such ends was waste since economic development would create the conditions for improved housing and a more productive economy. The rapidly growing illegal settlements were often regarded as a transitory phenomenon, which would soon disappear as the economy developed. Such an attitude proved convenient for governments since it justified taking no action at all (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1995). These were often

seen as a “cancer” and thus in need of eradication; the most common reaction was large slum and shanty clearance (Abrams, 1964 in Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1995).

Additionally,

Many studies have shown how these clearance schemes greatly exacerbated the problem, they destroy some of the few housing options open to poorer groups; the result of such actions is usually to make conditions even worse in other settlements as those evicted have to double up the other households or build another shack in another illegal settlement/ perhaps more serious than this is the damage done by the eviction to the network of family, friends and contacts which individuals and families build up within their neighbourhood. This network often has enormous importance for poorer households since it is through this that they find out about new jobs, borrow money or goods during difficult periods, share child-minding to allow more adults to go to work etc, all of which have considerable importance of their survival (Lomnitz, 1977 in Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1995: 156).

For instance, the women of the settlement develop mutual aid links with previously unknown neighbours because of the insufficiency of the major resources such as electricity and provision for the disposal of household wastes (Moser, 1987 in Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1995).

Rehousing those evicted people in an undeveloped site at some distance from the city centre has been the common solution. Relocation has meant a significant increase in transportation costs and time spent travelling to and from work. Consequently, increased costs give rise to impoverishment. Governments usually justify evictions in three ways. The first and perhaps the most common one is to “improve” or “beautify” the city. In Manila (Philippines) and Seoul (South Korea) many evictions took place just before major international events; in Seoul before the Olympics, in Manila before the Pope came because of the Miss Universe contest (Urban Poor Institute, 1989 in Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1995).

There is usually lack of dialogue between citizens and the local agents within the government. The absence of representation of citizens from every section of the city hinders the viewpoint of citizens. Actually, the government applies the laws and the representation issue is not a matter of concern. Governments allow the citizens of the squatter settlements in the times of election since they are of importance in terms of their participatory power. For example, in Turkey, most of the *gecekondu* settlements, especially the ones around the metropolises such as Istanbul, Ankara and İzmir, receive acceptance and legality during election times. The aim is actually to gain favour from the squatter population. Squatters in many nations have shown themselves to be politically competent at negotiating for basic services in return of votes.

A second way in which governments justify evictions is the idea that “slums are the centres of crime and the havens for criminals” (Erder, 1997:85) Eviction of the slums is presented as the eviction of the concentration of crime in squatter areas. “In mid-1982, the Mayor of Metro Manila, Mrs. Marcos talked of ‘professional squatters’ who were plain land grabbers taking advantage of the compassionate society” (Roberts, 1978: 102). In Malaysia, illegal settlements were said to “ ‘harbour criminals and racketeers, pose fire and disease hazards...tarnish the image of the capital at home and abroad and furthermore’, promote juvenile delinquency, challenge the status of the government as the source of law and order and threaten the economic, social and political stability of the city” (Aiken, 1977 in Hardoy and Satterhwaite, 1995: 97).

The third way is the redevelopment of the urban space of the squatter settlements in order to build public works or facilities. Due to their location either centrally or strategically, some regions become increasingly valuable as the city

expands. Those redeveloped regions are to yield higher returns. Landowners or developers can make large amount of profits in redeveloping such sites. If settlements are to be “illegal” even if they have been there for decades, it is easy to bulldoze them without paying any compensation to inhabitants. “Rapid population growth does not create poverty; it merely makes poverty more visible” (Koenigsberger, 1976 in Roberts, 1978: 93) because legal and institutional structures are unable to cope with the needs of the population and the tasks of providing and running city services. The weaknesses of municipalities and city governments increase the problem in the way in which municipalities see the solution in permitting the squatters to exist without sufficient conditions.

On the other hand, city businesses benefit from the cheap pool of labour that their inhabitants provide or the cheap goods and services produced by the workshops and businesses, which develop in many of them. Illegal settlements help to keep housing costs down, so that wages can be kept low. Those invisible workforces and the business become mutually dependent.

### **2.3 Migration and Gecekondü Formation in Turkey Until the 1980s**

The countries that could not achieve the creation of industrial employment have difficulties in absorbing the rural migrant population. In the city centres that receive abundant rural migrants within a short period of time, it is inevitable to have gecekondü extensions around the cities. In the cities, the more the income and environmental standards fall, the more people want to get closer with relatives (Gökçe, 1993: 19). The gecekondü formation process in Turkey began in the 1950s after the post-World War II

period. With the Marshall Aid of the USA (for example, the introduction of tractors, irrigation systems, fertilisers, and new agricultural products), the modernisation of agricultural sector became a fundamental issue. However, this caused mass migration from the rural areas to the urban areas for the reason that the Marshall Aid brought in mechanisation to the agricultural sector, accordingly the rural population started to be unemployed in the countryside. Thus, the modernisation of the agricultural sector, the cities, especially large ones, became the target of massive migrant labour power. However, “ the housing stock of the cities lacked far behind the housing of the newcomers” (Erman, 2001:513). Thus, the newcomers built their own houses. In brief, we can say that the gecekondü is a settlement type that is the outcome of insufficient conditions in the social and physical migration processes (Gökçe, 1976 in Erman, 2001).

On the other hand, the shape and content of gecekondü housing in the metropolises and in the cities in Anatolia consisted of various differences (Gökçe, 1993: 19). Although there is a general image of gecekondü across the country, it is found through research that there are significant differences among the gecekondü settlements in different metropolises (Gökçe, 1993: 11). Even within Istanbul the differentiation is striking among the gecekondü settlements. For instance, the gecekondü settlements of the metropolises in Turkey, especially Istanbul seems different from those of in Anatolia. Istanbul includes gecekondü settlements, which are considered to be dangerous to enter such as Gaziosmanpaşa. However, in other large cities such as the ones in Ankara or İzmir do not seriously have such threatening stigma. This differentiation might be associated to the financial capacities of the

municipalities, namely the reception of the gecekondü settlements municipal services and provision along with the ethnicity and religious polarisation phenomena of the gecekondü settlements. For instance, at the end of the 1950s, for instance, 58.5 per cent of municipalities had prepared development plans while implementation of these plans were quite rare (Keleş and Payne, 1986). Even due to the lack of finance and personnel, municipalities failed to fulfill their obligatory functions. Most of them were in debt during this period and had difficulty in paying the salaries of the staff (Tekeli, 1978 in Keleş and Payne, 1986).

At the end of World War II, the authority of the state started to be challenged by the massive crush of the rural population to urban areas. As it happens, the focus of urban conflicts shifted from the state to the society. Disparities between life in the cities and in the villages along with a rapid increase in rural population underlie mass migration and accelerating urbanisation in modern Turkey. Rural life standards are so low that the rural populations decide to seek livelihood in the city. For instance as Danielson and Keleş suggests (1985: 87),

In 1970, fewer than one in six rural households had electricity or running water, whereas two-thirds of all urban families had water and more than three-quarters electricity. Inadequate water and electricity service meant rural dwellers were less likely to have toilets, baths refrigerators, washing machines, and other conveniences than were city residents.

Likewise, education and health services are poorer in rural areas. Those resources are much more accessible in the cities. Therefore, the attractions of higher income, better schools and more public services in the cities have been augmented by the rural situations in rural regions of Turkey. In the same way, the insufficiency of cultivable land to support rural population results in acute unemployment and underemployment.

In other words, besides social conditions, agricultural conditions push rural populations toward the cities (Danielson and Keleş, 1985). Many farmers' lands are scattered parcels, which make economic operation difficult and severely limit the use of modern agricultural techniques (Danielson and Keleş, 1985).

Involuntary migration is another reason for the people residing in the Southeastern regions of Turkey. After the outbreaks during the 1920s and 1930s, thousands of Kurdish people were resettled in various regions of Turkey to disseminate their density in the southeast. In order to prevent guerilla actions, Turkey situated a security line along the Iraq border. Tunceli became the centre for the opposing actions of Alevi Kurds that had been residing there for a long time (Bruinessen, 1999). Therefore, the peasants were forced to live the city and a forestation plan was used to legalise this operation to evacuate 20 more villages in the region (Laber and Whitman, 1988 in Bruinessen, 1999). After Iraq invaded Kuwait, there were such hard policies applied in the region that those involuntary migrations could only be predictable in number (Bruinessen, 1999).

The migrant population who arrived in the cities in massive numbers started to create their own layer of interaction with the previous one. They are claimed to have been imposing their own sets of values and sub-culture in uneasy ways to the previous ones (Şengül, 1999). Şengül (1999) remarks that starting from the 1950s, and continuing during the 1960s and the 1970s at an increasing rate brought in the urbanisation conflict especially in industrial and large towns. In this sense, the rapid migration and urbanisation of the villagers to form massive labour pools in the large cities was the single most important feature of the period between 1950 and 1970s. The



rapid urbanisation brought about important changes in the spatial, social and political structure of large cities. As far as the spatial structures of the cities are concerned, the most important dimension of this transformation was the production of a new form of social space; namely, the new comers built their houses. The mushrooming gecekondu settlements on the outskirts of the cities as well as inner areas, created striking contrasts between the “authorised and unauthorised housing areas” (Şengül, 1999). The existence of land, owned by the state or of which ownership was uncertain, as well as a tolerant attitude on the part of the governments led to the growth of gecekondu. Most new low-income housing was developed in these illegally occupied areas (Payne, 1982 in Şengül, 1999). The juxtaposition of two contradictory urban spaces side by side (Şengül, 1999), which has been increasing in the 1980s as the competition for urban land sharpens, is the spatial dimension of an emerging conflict between the newcomers and the state, and between the established middle class urbanites and the migrant newcomers.

Rapid urbanisation that has increased the size of the cities faster than their modern economic bases, brought far more poor people into the city than could be housed conventionally (Danielson and Keleş, 1985). Those “built overnight” houses were the matters of concern for the large cities. For example, when the Democrat Party was in power, its politicians made populist policies to gain the voting potential of the gecekondu settlers. However, as Erman (2001:514) suggests “the optimism of the 1950s started to fade away in the later years of the decade when the Democrat Party could not keep its promises for a wealthier and more democratic society.”

During the military coup of May 1960, “there were interludes of fairly vigorous enforcement of the prohibition on new settlements. But political realities eroded enforcement after the restoration of elected governments in 1961” (Danielson and Keleş, 1985). In the beginning of the planned period, the attitudes toward the gecekondu became permissive, that is, the first five-year plan proposed improvement rather than annihilation as a solution to the housing problem of the newcomers.

In 1966, the Squatter Decree 775 (Gecekondu Yasası 775) was passed as a result of increasing migration and accordingly the expanding problems of the illegal housing in the cities. It was the first decree under the name of gecekondu housing. The betterment, the termination and the prevention of those dwellings were the very three objectives of this law. The betterment was for those gecekondu houses that could be amended to settle in. Conversely, the termination was for the ones that could not be amended to settle in and/or that envired the historical places and disqualified them. And the third pillar of the law was to prevent future gecekondu formation. With this law, presumably the aim was to bring in solutions to the political and economic topics along with the urbanisation problems of the gecekondu settlements. Despite the initial aim was to uplift the wretched conditions of that kind of housing, the outcome was not that optimistic.

The precaution and prevention attempts were considered in long term and in short term periods. The short-term prevention has two dimensions: positive and negative (Keleş, 1972). The negative aspect is that after those gecekondu houses were built up, local governments decided to annihilate them and absolutely it caused great outbreaks. The positive outcome is that the state provision of housing could be offered

to those migrants before they attempted to construct gecekondu houses. The long-term precaution ideally is the indirect prevention of the masses from moving to the large cities but it has not been achieved since then.

However, in practice, governments have not erected barriers to migration, as has been the case in some rapidly urbanising nations. Instead, most of the time, public policy has been permissive toward migrants once they reach the cities (Danielson and Keleş, 1985). Turkish governments have viewed urbanisation as a vehicle of economic and social development. Governments also concluded that there was no other alternative to “allowing massive migrations to urban areas because agricultural land was at, or near, its maximum utilisation” (Karpat, 1976 in Erman, 2001:531). At the beginning, the factual intention of the authorities was to provide the legislation of gecekondu settlements and the provision of basic services, such as electricity and water, because gecekondu settlers were able to impose their demands on the state because of their voting potential. However, once this process had taken place, gecekondu dwellers received taxes besides recognition and services. Therefore, they now claimed to be full citizens with the same right not only to the basic services, such as electricity and water, but also to roads, schools and other services. Lately, gecekondu settlers constituted almost more than half of the total population of the large cities.

As a matter of fact, there were inconsistencies in state policies regarding gecekondu settlements especially between local and central governments. Nonetheless, the main differentiation of politics was derived from the divergence of the political parties and political ideologies. As far as the demand for the public services and state

provisions are concerned, it is indisputable that, gecekondu settlers preferred to choose the political party, which promised to bring public services into their neighbourhoods. On the other hand, when municipalities attempted to initiate new projects by using their existing resources and power, central governments opposed and obstructed them, and in that respect in the 1970s there were clashes between municipalities and central governments (Tekeli and Ortaylı, 1978 in Keleş and Ünsal, 1982).

Over the years “the shanties turned into ‘shanty towns’ surrounding the city. The migrant population and their shanty towns were tolerated by the government and the private sector.” (Erman, 2001: 544) because towards the end of the 1970s the gecekondu settlements began to determine largely the political agenda of the large cities. While first generation immigrants were active in city politics, the second-generation youth was more active and demanded for more social life and modernity, besides attending to more radical revolutionary youth organisations. Bayat (2000: 551) asserts,

Unregulated jobs, unregistered people and places, nameless streets and alleyways and policeless neighbourhoods mean that these entities remain hidden from the governments’ books. To be able to control, the states need to make them transparent. Indeed programs of squatter upgrading may be seen in terms of this strategy of opening up the unknown in order to be able to control it.

In due course, in Turkey several adjustment and regulation plans have been put forward for years. For instance, Tantan, a former mayor of Istanbul demanded radical precautions in order to prevent illegal constructions that cause socio-economic problems, but faced local administration’s oppositions. In Istanbul where the illegal construction is widespread, the grounds for the opposition of the mayors were that 65%

of the city was illegal. If the proclamation were applied to erase the illegal buildings, there would be no building left erect.

#### **2.4 Urban Violence in the Turkish Context**

Urban violence initially exploded in the late 1960s with the university students who separated between the leftist and rightist ideologies. However, the combatants were students rather than gecekondu dwellers. On the whole, Turkish cities were being encompassed by increasingly violent confrontations between the radical left and extremist right. However, violence did not originate in gecekondu areas, but spread to gecekondus, inflamed by discontent with mounting unemployment and unsatisfactory living conditions (Özbudun, 1980 in Keleş and Ünsal, 1982). Conflict also was intensified by the proximity of different income groups; for instance, almost sixty percent of the violent actions in Istanbul between 1975 and 1979 were in gecekondu districts neighbouring to middle- and upper class housing settlements (Keleş, 1985). As a matter of fact, in 1977 and the following years, especially in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, the gecekondu regions were declared as “rescued regions” (Keleş and Ünsal, 1982) by the politicised groups in order to receive approval from them.

In the 1970s, the challenge of the newcomers turned out to be at the peak as the most significant feature of the urbanisation process at the time. The lack of any alternative solution produced by the state created a crisis both for the state and the newcomers. Besides, the number of gecekondu dwellers had reached a level where it was not possible to ignore the power of the political participation of those people. Similarly, for the import substitution policy of the state, it appeared to be profitable to

let those people dwell in gecekondu houses because through this way the cost of the reproduction of labour was reduced both for the state and the private capital (Keyder, 1987 in Şengül, 1999). Moreover, the role of the gecekondu communities in the production and consumption spheres increased in this period (Şenyapılı, 1982). Although they were once marginals in the city, the gecekondu citizens became indispensable in the economy. This improvement is reflected in the appearances of the gecekondus, the shanties were replaced by well-built single-or double-story houses (Erman, 2001). Additionally, Erman (2001) states that, although they were economically integrated into the society, presumably they could not integrate socially because of the isolative attitudes of the urbanites. Nonetheless, in this period, there were several studies, which asserted that structural barricades were preventing them from integrating into the society. For instance, the jobs available for them (Şenyapılı, 1982), and the question of underemployment (Keleş, 1985) were among those structural problems. Gecekondu people had to work without insurance and for a little amount of money. This created discontent since they had moved to city in order to earn their livelihood and that the case of insufficiency in terms of both social and economic factors had the potential to create sense of deprivation and stress. Likewise, the gecekondu youth felt deprived since their rising expectations ended in frustration, potential for aggression. While the first-generation settlers had compared themselves to their rural conditions, the second-generation gecekondu migrant youth compared themselves with the urban youth. Therefore, the discrepancy is visible between the expectations occurred in the two situations. While the first-generation migrant settlers mostly take their urban conditions better to the ones in rural areas, as far as the second-

generation youth is concerned, it is clear that the discrepancy enlarges between what was expected and what is received. Based on this, it might be assumed that such discrepancy could create hostility toward urbanites.

The lack of job security in the workplace and unemployment also could cause dissatisfaction of those people as a matter of course. Since rural migrants could not adequately take advantage of the urban facilities and services, they were bound to remain 'unintegrated'. In due course, Eke (1981 in Erman, 2001) and Kongar (1973 in Erman, 2001: 541) stated that disintegration of migrants into the urban society was "not the fault of the migrants but it is the lack of the public policies designed to assist them." The gecekondü people were open to using the opportunities in the city and they did not want to be treated as second-class citizens" (Kongar, 1973 in Erman, 2001: 542). "It was wrong to call gecekondü people as marginals when they made up more than half of the urban population" (Kongar, 1973 in Erman, 544).

The 1950s up to the late 1970s period might be called the period of getting accustomed to the continuous flow and inhabitancy of rural migrants into the urban pattern. However, the more they get integrated into the economy, the greater their influence is felt on the urban pattern, challenging the existing order. As it is clear in the 1980s and the 1990s, the impacts they have in the socio-economic grounds are inevitable to overlook on which the following chapter expands.

Although urban violence has a wide range of reasons, I prefer focusing on gecekondü phenomenon in analysing the reasons of attribution of being violence prone on these settlements. As far as the reasons are considered, namely, anomie, relative deprivation and poverty, seemingly gecekondü people are exposed to such dimensions,

which initiate violence. In short, the reason why I have focused on gecekondü settlements is that these people are the most frustrated group. While the first generation settlers were comparing themselves with their fellows in the rural areas, the second generation compare themselves with urbanites. Therefore, the discrepancy may initiate a tendency toward violence. Nevertheless, the impact of media representation and media's abuse of these settlers as a scapegoat to feature violence are indispensable. As a matter of fact, this stigma may be treated as the inattention of media, in that there is not any deliberate attack and intention of stigmatisation of these people, but the outcome reveals that media shapes the public conception of these people.

## **2.5 The Changing Images of Gecekondü People Over the Years and the Emergence of the *Varoş* as the New Image of Gecekondü People**

Gecekondü is not a static and unchanging phenomenon. Several studies have displayed that a new and specific sense of “us” constitutes a new cultural identity and this enables common attitudes and unity of action. For the peripheral city, of which main constituters are migrant flows, it is inevitable to overlook the socio-political or cultural change that might happen in these regions

The 1950s and 1960s periods brought about the approach in that “modern urbanites and rural migrants occupied poles of the modernised continuum” (Erman, 2001:523). Rural migrants in the city were expected to assimilate into the modern urban population by abandoning their rural ways of life and values, which extended from their accents and their way of dressing in order to adapt to Western appearance (Erman, 2001). Those who did not fit into this model were regarded as transitional:



“The gecekondu family, having one end in the village and the other in the city displays the characteristics of a transitional family” (Yasa, 1970 in Erman, 2001: 549). Gecekondu people were seen as having dualistic life styles in the way in which, “while they grow vegetables in his garden like he did in the village, he also works in a factory in the city” (Yasa, 1970 in Erman, 2001: 550). As a matter of fact, this way of life was blamed for ruralising the city life (Erman, 2001). Yasa (1970 in Erman, 2001) states that gecekondu women preferred bright and shining fabric, covering hair with scarves. The gecekondu family had strong ties with relatives (Yörükhan, 1968 in Erman, 2001). It was also investigated whether gecekondu people had ever gone to movie theatres, plays, or concerts in order to assess their integration since those activities were seen as modern and urban. Briefly, the gecekondu people were mostly seen as ignorant, culturally backward and the ‘Rural Other’ (Erman, 2001). They had been ignored by the urbanites since they had always been seen as the migrant outer groups. The fact that they were unrecognised by the urbanites might create another motive for the gecekondu people to react against such presumed image.

In the 1970s period, “the gecekondu people were the hope of the leftists and gecekondu settlements became the sites of radical politics” (Erman 2001, 517). The gecekondu settlements which were dominated by the leftists were called as the ‘rescued regions (kurtarılmış bölgeler). The state and police forces could not enter to these districts (Erman, 2001) and they had become more radicalized. On the emergence of the right wing ultra-nationalists, there existed an extensive polarisation between the groups and that caused violent attacks to each other in the cities (Erman, 2001).

In the post-1980 period the diversity among the gecekondu people was recognized in the academia. In recent studies conducted on the gecekondu population, the diversities are emphasised rather than their common rural origins; heterogeneity based on divergences that are cumulated as ethnic, sectarian and regional diversities has been brought forward. Moreover, rural to urban migrants were defined as the urban poor by some scholars (e.g. Erder, 1995), while their “rural” attribution was still preserved, although being rural was not seen as their initial characteristic (e.g. Gökçe, 1993). ‘The new urbanites’ and ‘the urban poor’ have become widespread in use than “the rural” to refer to gecekondu people (Erman, 2001).

The ideology of the time (the Özal period) valued wealth (and not so much education) and individual ambition. The changes in the gecekondu laws in the 1980s, which encouraged profit making from gecekondu settlements, were considered to be responsible for the abuse of the system by the gecekondu people and a new image of the gecekondu people emerged as the “undeserving rich”(Erman, 2001). Apartmentalization of the gecekondus was allowed to build up four-story buildings. “It wide opened the doors to the commercialisation of gecekondus, which could be interpreted again as the government’s bribing those who suffered the most from the liberal policies implemented by the governments” (Erman, 2001:519).

Recently, in the 1990s, especially after 1996, the gecekondu population has been stigmatised by the term “*varoş*”, that is, the stigmatised subculture indicating a negative denotation. *Varoş* stigma has been imposed on the people since the mid-1990s, although these people were called as gecekondu dwellers before then. *Varoş*, hostility and violence constitute a contemporary triple concept that is being used especially for

the last couple of years (Ayata, 1996). Since the beginning of the 1990s, the informal settlements around the city centres, namely, gecekondu settlements have begun to be called as “*varoş*”. However, presumably the rest of the society has come to assume that there occurred a group adopting the culture of *varoş* as their own essence, as if it is an inherent culture. After all, the word not only signifies the gecekondu settlers but it has also begun to define a subculture particular to the gecekondu people. Violent actions reveal as the encounters happen between the gecekondu people and the police, namely, *zabita* (municipal officials who are responsible for the commercial activities in towns) because of the existence of numerous street vendors. Also the encounters between the gecekondu youth versus the police, as well as radical religious, political and ethnic group conflicts (Erder, 1997: 27), or economic-based conflicts increase the tension on the urban pattern.

The growing poverty in gecekondu districts since the 1980s (Ecevit et.al., 1999) contributed to the emphasis on poverty in the definition of the gecekondu population. They are seen as the source of threat (Etöz, 2000: 50). As Etöz says, (2000) no perpetrator or society desires to name themselves in negative tendencies. The one who names the other with negative connotation means that it is trying to establish its hegemony. Therefore, within the *varoş* context, we might assume that the urbanites have named the gecekondu people as the *varoş* people in the sense that the urbanites seek some sort of difference or rather superiority over the gecekondu people. It is obvious that the gecekondu people are not content with this stigma. This is an attempt to draw line between “us” and “them” by the urbanites.

The fact that the urban tension in Turkish metropolises mostly derives from the origination of new illegal urban areas, it is assumed that the basic urban tension has developed around those regions, which are in the struggle of “integration.” However, it should also be taken into account that those illegal settlements encompass low-income groups experiencing different stages while developing. For a long period of time, the problems occurring in those regions were tolerated because they were the first migrant settlements and they were justified within populist policies. However, the existence of established informal relationships, populations that can express their demands and their complaints but whose demands could not altogether be met and whose low standard of living conditions could not be obstructed, increase the interaction between gecekondu population and the municipal authorities as well as with the governments.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MEDIA INFLUENCE ON ASSESSING THE “*VAROŞ*”

#### PEOPLE

The media coverage of the speculated relationship between the gecekondu people and urban violence is significant since, as I have mentioned, the concept of *varoş* points to the stigmatisation of the people who were once seen as gecekondu people. I assume that the impact of the media is substantial in assessing the public images of the gecekondu people. The way gecekondu is presented in the media, by and large, depicts a picture of gecekondu in society. The media influence on the conceptualisation of the gecekondu has been discussed with its positive and negative aspects. For most of the city residents, the only way to learn about the contemporary events is through the visual or printed press. Thus, it might have prejudiced impacts on urbanites and on governmental organisations about the gecekondu people. There might be a stigmatisation of these people through the media. However, it might not be deliberate but it might be just an outcome of a search by the media for a new portrayal of these regions, which changed both in physical and socio-economic terms. Particularly, some gecekondu regions are not conventional gecekondu settlements any more and some have changed in economic opportunities. Therefore, there might be a need for a new word to replace the term gecekondu to indicate such changes. However, the fact that *varoş* has negative connotations discouraged me to use it. Instead, I have used the prevalent term gecekondu to refer to these particular districts in order not to associate the residents of these districts with violence.

Violent attacks and street movements mainly of the lower classes have been occupying notable place in the media. In general terms, studies have shown that media documentation of violence and brutality engenders feelings of fear even among the individuals who have not been directly exposed to such violence and for whom it poses no immediate personal threat (Bandura, 1986 in Slone, 2000). Similarly, other critiques assert that the absence of neutrality in the majority of the media reports suggest that the public is exposed to bias (Slone, 2000). The mass media should have comprehension of its potentially powerful effect on the public's psychological well-being and consider its policy in presenting emotionally evocative content in its political coverage, where ethically necessary (Slone, 2000). However, it is interestingly apparent that there is not a homogeneous negative image of gecekondu in the Turkish media. Conversely, the optimistic views, which cover notably the changing consumption patterns of the gecekondu people, are worth mentioning.

In 1945, in Turkish newspapers, gecekondu was not a common term. There was news about the city regarding the insufficiency of infrastructure, security problems, and speculative profits obtained by various groups due to the inadequacy of housing (Şenyapılı, 1998). The intensified gecekondu news conveyed to newspapers first began in 1947. Since then, gecekondu problems have always become one of the leading concerns of several writers and columnists of the printed press on which I have especially focused in the thesis. As a matter of fact, the most striking issue dealt by the visual and printed press is the social polarisation in the urban pattern. The social polarisation within the metropolises, especially Istanbul, and the reactionary attitudes

exposed on the urban pattern have been a significant issue on which to interpret, especially for the last ten years.

In addition to the social polarization issue, the other most probable news about gecekondu settlements are about the ethnic strife among various groups, and violence of children who use thinner as drug. The news about the new investments in gecekondu regions constitutes another important section since it demonstrates the gecekondu people as potential consumers in the new liberal economy.

In the following section, the viewpoints about gecekondu districts are presented in three parts. First group of writers takes sides against the gecekondu people by stigmatising them as the *varoş* people who are offensive, vulgar and prone to violence. The second group sympathises with the gecekondu people because, they are deprived of necessary resources and blamed the state forces and illegal organisations for being responsible for the outbreaks since both tend to abuse these people in that the state failed to meet the needs of the these people and the illegal organisations sensed the advantage of using these disadvantaged people for their own purposes. The third group takes the gecekondu phenomenon for granted and considers that it is a transitory period toward achieving a developed urban presence, for instance through better investments in those particular regions. I have analysed the articles in the newspapers in accordance with such division. The archival research that I have conducted comprises the years after 1995 since as I have mentioned, the *varoş* stigma has been covered in the media especially after the street events occurred in 1995 in a gecekondu district in Istanbul (the Gazi event) and onwards. The 1990s experienced sharpening of ethnic and religious diversities as well as economic deprivation and social polarisation in the

urban context, thus urban violence could best be analysed in recent references of the media on this issue. I have covered *Milliyet*, *Sabah*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Radikal* and *Yeni Yüzyıl* articles along with *Para* and *Aktüel* magazines. This research was made on the Internet and on the online archives of the newspapers and the periodicals. I have mainly searched for the key words “violence”, “*varoş*”, “gecekondu”, “social polarization”, and “income inequality” since the interest of this thesis is mainly the relationship between gecekondu and violence. Additionally, I have covered some articles from Kılıçalp’s Master’s thesis (1999).

### **3.1.1 First Group Analysis: *Varoş* as Prone to Violence**

Alpman in *Milliyet* (5.3.1996) mentioned the youth between the ages 15-20 who came from the outskirts of the cities. They were mostly rural-urban migrant settlers and were against all the symbols of the cities, like banks and shops, because they could not use them in the way urbanites could use them efficiently. He stated that it was an instinctive violent act. In *Yeni Yüzyıl*, a columnist (2.5.1996) entitled his article as “*Varoş* people descended to the city! Rock, plunder and ecstasy.” He suggested that labourers, official employees and young people who came from the gecekondu of the city shattered down the shop-windows, which were filled with the commodities that they could never buy (İnceoğlu, 1996). The columnist intended to narrate the hatred of the so-called *varoş* people who had probably reacted to their socio-economically deprived conditions where other urbanites enjoyed having sufficient socio-economic conditions. Altan (*Yeni Yüzyıl*, 5.2.1996) defined the May 1 (1996) events as barbarism, terror and a tendency for plunder.



Another article published in *Sabah* (10.22.2000) drew a negative picture of a *varoş* settlement, which was established around the giant construction to be prepared for the candidacy of Olympics 2008 in Istanbul. The *gecekondu* settlement was established there because the existence of that construction had brought in basic public services such as electricity and water. However, the columnist considered that the existence of the *gecekondu* houses shadowed the importance of the construction as a representative of Turkey's candidacy for a global organization.

In *Yeni Yüzyıl*, according to a report prepared by the Research Commission on Istanbul's Problems, the *varoş* in Istanbul posed serious threats unless any serious precaution was taken (08.05.1996). The rapidly growing *varoş* regions around Istanbul originated conjunctures that lacked any order. The migrant groups coming from various regions of Anatolia chose specific areas and rendered difficulty in providing security and communications. Moreover, illegal groups use the inadequacy of infrastructure services in order to push youth toward violence. That these communities lived like colonies close to outer societies, every kind of criminal would hide in them. It was also claimed that the money acquired by the sale of the *gecekondus* was being transferred to terrorist groups. The ethnic and religious diversities were exploited by separatist activities. In Istanbul, the natural population growth was 200.000 whereas the growth by migration was 300.000 per year. Sixty five percent of the population lived in *gecekondus* in Istanbul. Twenty two thousand houses were built every year. Additionally, it was seen as an important issue that in order not to leave Istanbul to Mafia type organisations and to establish peaceful conditions, specific security systems should be organised for Istanbul (Kayış, 1996).

Another columnist in *Milliyet* (05.20.2000) claimed that the source of *Hizbullah*, which is a radical Islamist group, was engendered in *varoş* zones since the dwellers were easy to be marginalised in the absence of convenient socio-economic conjuncture. The lack of integration, and cultural factors, namely ethnicity and religious diversities, provided the incentives to tend to violence. Those groups would effortlessly lean toward violence if political conditions were convenient as well. Zapatists in Mexico and the PKK and Hizbullah in Turkey formed examples for such groups that were thought to originate in such settlements. The lack of integration of migrant populations into the urban way of living propelled them toward communal or tribal polarisation (Özkan, 2000). It cannot be overlooked that the gecekondu people demand equal share from the vast urban resources that have already been exploited by urbanites. The unequal socio-economic conditions for gecekondu people may initiate sense of deprivation and reactionary manoeuvres.

In *Sabah*, Türkoğlu (03.08.2000) asserted that according to the report of the Istanbul Security Department, activist groups such as radical leftists and extremist Islamists were organized in *varoş* districts in Istanbul. For instance, *Hizbullah* was organized in Gaziosmanpaşa, Ümraniye, Pendik, Beykoz, Üsküdar, and Sultanbeyli. Similarly, *İBDA-C* was organized in Eyüp, Ümraniye and Gaziosmanpaşa.

Another gecekondu settlement, Altınşehir (the Golden City) in Istanbul, is depicted as follows: The lack of infrastructure, muddy roads, smell of canal structures that flowed into streets, and absent or mostly low-voltaged electricity. The houses do not have rooftops. The strategy used by migrants is to find a land of state treasury and to build a house, and leave the rest to God until the subsequent elections since they

know that they will acquire legitimacy because of the populist party policies (Milliyet, 03.31.1999). A *Sabah* columnist Heper (07.02.1999) asserted that migration meant destitution, gecekondu and informal sector that were not easily attainable because both sectors were in the hands of the Mafia. Central clashes, dilemmas, increasing crime result in *varoş*. Two-thirds of Istanbul and Ankara were gecekondu. Political stratagem and bribery shaped Istanbul's construction policies. The boundaries of the city could not be assessed any more (Sabah, 1999).

Another *Yeni Yüzyıl* columnist (9.28.1998) asserted that taxi drivers should be careful of the customers taken in *varoş* districts like Esenyurt, Ümraniye, Kağıthane, and Küçük Çekmece in order to prevent the taxi drivers from being slaughtered by unknown perpetrators (Toprak, 1998).

### **3.1.2 Second Group Analysis: *Varoş* as Stigmatised and Victimised and as Deprived of Resources**

As mentioned earlier, one of the most striking urban violence examples is the Gazi district (Gazi Mahallesi) events happened in 1996 in Istanbul. A *Cumhuriyet* columnist interviewed with the dwellers of Gazi region and asserted that they complained about the lack of investment in their region. After the catastrophic affairs that ended with the death of 21 people, they had been considered potential lawbreakers. The Gazi youth could not find jobs or they were fired when they said that they lived in Gazi mahallesi. The sense of abandonment was growing epidemically in the district (Turgut, 05.12.1997). According to the claims of the Gazi dwellers, an Alevi versus Sunni strife was created because of the police oppression in the region, which was out of their

consent. The youth groupings were being scattered in the streets in case they might have been gathered to activate in the district. Another Gazi resident said that a taxicab, which he took in Şişli rejected going into Gazi mahallesi because of the prejudices about the district. In other words, Gazi residents were afraid of being treated as they lived in a ghetto both by the security forces and by the other urbanites.

There are several columnists who pointed to structural socio-economic problems leading to the Gazi events. Furthermore, the deprived conditions of gecekondu people might have led such an outbreak in that particular region. For example, in *Yeni Yüzyıl* (3.17.1995), the columnist said that if a country did not provide its citizens with necessary resources such as food or job, this could lead into a social crisis. Birsel (*Yeni Yüzyıl*, 5.2.1996) took the events as the outcome of aggression and frustration due to the enlarging gap between what society anticipated and what they acquired. Ergil (*Milliyet*, 5.3.1996) asserted that the residents of the outskirts did not have broad opportunities and economic conditions to integrate into the system. Talu (5.2.1996) claimed that the outbreaks appeared due to the gap between the rich and the poor. Tamer (*Hürriyet*, 3, 17, 1996) stated that poverty and hopelessness was causing such outbreaks. Doğru (*Sabah*, 3.16.1995) asserted that economic inequalities created such conflicts as street outbreaks. Mengi (*Sabah*, 3.15.1996) asserted that the reason of the outbreaks was the lack of state authority in Gaziosmanpaşa region and the frustration of the citizens of that region in terms of public services and security and the lack of tolerance for their sectarian diversity. Livaneli (*Milliyet*, 3.15.1995) claimed that the people who joined street events in Gazi region were not criminals or terrorists

but only the victims of the events. Thus, their outbreaks should not be evaluated as terrorist actions.

Another course of representation is the provocation of the *gecekond* people by illegal groups who sensed the advantage of abusing the disadvantaged conditions of these people. It is represented as a crucial dimension in assessing the conditions of those people who are considered to be prone to or core of violent outbreaks.

In *Hürriyet* (5.2.1996) the columnist asserted that illegal groups abused and provoked the people who came together in the May 1 events. The activists closed their faces with flags of their groups; probably they were political oriented provocateurs. In *Yeni Yüzyıl* (March 1997) a columnist asserted that Turkey must accept such differences as ethnic and religious diversity. These diversities would not turn out to be problematic if they were taken for granted as the cultural richness of Turkey. Instead, they were seen as potential threats to the society and to the government. Additionally, Bayramođlu (*Yeni Yüzyıl*, March, 1997) stressed that the Gaziosmanpaşa events were the outcome of organised provocation. Some groups abused those citizens who desired to express themselves in some ways. Cemal (*Sabah*, 3.15.1995) stated that Alevi population in *varoş* regions was being abused by foreign provocateurs who tried to take advantage of Alevis due to their disadvantaged position in the society.

Apart from particular urban violence events, in a broader sense, the *gecekond* people's disadvantageous position vis-à-vis hospitals, and job market are mentioned as follows. A *Sabah* columnist, Yazgan (10.23.2000) asserted that the private hospitals were not qualified in that they were inadequate, insecure, and out of standards in terms of personnel and equipment. These hospitals were not controlled and they were

established as market stores. The public health was put under great jeopardy in these regions.

A columnist from *Cumhuriyet* (05.25.1999) interviewed the youth in worker markets near a gecekondu settlement in Adana, a town in the South, which has been receiving a large number of Kurdish speaking migrants from the neighbouring cities in the Southeast. One of the workers in the market complained, “they regard us as potential convicts” (Çetinkaya, 1999).

According to a *Milliyet* columnist Şener, (31.03.1999), gecekondu regions, in which the urban poor reside always exist as a bleeding cut. The last study conducted by the State Planning Organisation in 1991 displayed that neither the job opportunities nor integration into the city could be fulfilled by the state organisations. The research displayed that most of the workers in the gecekondu settlements did not have any job security or insurance. Children worked in workshops, men in factories. Women were not allowed to work in most cases and the educational level was limited to primary school level. Then, the end result was an illiterate population, oppression and violence on women, insecure jobs, and small houses that lacked infrastructure and official deed. The occupational choice of the gecekondu workers shifted to informal sector such as lathing, street vending, and working in constructions.

In a *Sabah* columnist’s article (4.3.1999), the informal sector issue is held. The basement floors of the gecekondu in Esenyurt had become small textile workshops. The 13-14 year old girls and 15-16 year old boys worked for 10-15 million Turkish Liras per week as unskilled and unlicensed workers without insurance. In the same region, the private bus drivers said that the number of discharged workers was so much

that they could not find passengers to fill the buses even in early morning and evening shifts. The columnist was sympathetic to the drivers who lost senses and violently chased other drivers who might try to get their passengers when there were few people to carry and earn money.

In *Sabah*, Dođru (03.03.1999) asserted that the demands and complaints of these people were not unrealistic. One of the residents indicated on being asked what he would like to alter, that if he were to become a president, he would reduce inflation rates, annihilate the gap between the rich and the poor and terminate the Mafia and bribery.

In a field research conducted by the columnist himself, he witnessed a family who could not find 350 million TL to pay the hospital fee to have the operation for their son's broken leg. Adjacent to Esenyurt, Bahçeşehir (Istanbul), a luxurious housing estate was erected with its swimming pools, woods, villas, large streets, and kindergartens, entertainment centres and with people jogging in the streets of that exquisite settlement area. The conclusion of the columnist is that among the *varoş* youth hostility dilates toward inequality and toward those people living in such opportune conditions (Dođru, 1999). Dođru followed his series of article (3.3.1999) with the problems that informal sector had brought about. The father of the family he interviewed worked in a factory around Topkapı (Istanbul). His daughters did tailoring in textile workshops, while his sons were street vendors and his wife worked as a cleaning woman in Bahçeşehir.

Another columnist Akyol (02.02.1997) in *Milliyet* referred to the second National Sociology Congress on internal migration and anomic urbanisation in his

article. One of the contributors of the congress stated that the migrant psychology engendered radical tendencies and increase convictions (Bayhan, 1997 in Akyol, 1997). “ ‘We have a malicious transition period as Huntington suggests’ ” (Huntington, 1968, in Akyol, 1997). It is clear that during this transition period our multi-party system encourages fragmentation that enhances social disintegration rather than curving clashes in order to help accelerate the development process of Turkish society.

The “Kuştepe Research 99” is based on the Kuştepe gecekondü region around Bilgi University in Istanbul. The researchers and the scholars of Bilgi University analysed the region and established close relationships with the residents of Kuştepe. The research shows that “*varoş* districts seem like hunchback on the back of the metropolises; however, the research demonstrates that *varoş* people want to change.” The research concluded that because of the university’s existence in the region the streets were cleansed, local public services increased and the dwellers paid attention to their clothing. The stigma on the *varoş* regions has existed for years as the political activist communities existed in such regions. However, such researches may brought about the chance to express themselves and show that the *varoş* people do not want to be the scapegoat and the stigmatised segments of city (*Sabah*, 10.14.1999).

In an article of a *Sabah* columnist (06.11.2000), Ümraniye, Kağıthane, Gaziosmanpaşa, Beykoz, Eyüp and Avcılar in Istanbul were declared as stigmatised *varoş* districts. In those regions, illegal constructions and gecekondus caused the political tendencies to be conservative because of the concentration of certain political party authorities in the regions owing to their attempt to contest to gain political achievement.



### 3.1.3 Third Group Analysis: *Varoş* People as Potential Consumers

The developments achieved in the gecekondu regions are mentioned as well in the media. For instance, a *Yeni Yüzyıl* columnist (20.10.1998) mentioned a new enterprise in a *varoş* district in Istanbul, namely, İkitelli. Presumably, the columnist tries to emphasise the importance of the enterprises opened in these regions in terms of development. “McDonalds descends to *varoş*” is the title of the article, which implies again inferiority but attempts to draw attention to development as well. The opening of such chain food companies in some ways was interpreted as the integration of these people into general consumption (Altın, 1998).

In an article in *Milliyet* (04.13.2001), it was said that even in *varoş* zones the urban poor tried to obtain something in the limited opportunity pool that metropolises could offer to them. Therefore, the radical uprisings against the socio-political system could easily find supporters in the *varoş* areas because of the limited resources. *varoş* has long been defined as the place for deepening unfulfilled anticipations, socio-economic straits, and deprivation against wealth, hates against have-nots, and the hatred and violence originating from deprivation.

In the *Para* magazine (12.2.1999), the writer indicated that the consumption attitudes had been changing in *varoş* zones. The columnist takes gecekondu people as the ones who have established their way of living according to urban conditions, namely the second-generation migrants. It is assumed that the second-generation migrants have developed their consumption patterns, and consumerist life styles. Therefore, local and global enterprises make investment in these regions. In

Gaziosmanpaşa, there is a French café, a shopping mall, bowling saloons, and large multi-saloon movie-theatres. The investors anticipate that their enterprises in these regions would be much more profitable than they would think it could be since the consumption patterns have altered *varoş* districts.

In another article in *Aktüel* (05.10.2000), the Internet cafes, which were widespread in Gültepe, Nurtepe, Armutlu and Gazi Mahallesi attracted the *varoş* youth. Even turbaned girls came and did chats in the cafes. In the daytimes the chat doers were generally students, and in the nighttimes the customers were almost men over 30 year of age.

In *Radikal* (8.6.2001), the columnist mentioned an urban renewal plan by the Istanbul municipality. When this plan was completed, it would alter the environment of the “wretched conditions” of the gecekondu in some districts in Istanbul. Therefore, it sounded a progressive change and would bring good to Istanbul and its gecekondu regions.

Türkoğlu (7.30.2000) asserted that the future trends would not feed the *varoş* culture but the developing consumption culture was going to replace it. The increasing trend would be even urbanisation. The *varoş* culture would not exist in a short while and these districts would be integrated into well-urbanized areas.

Another *Sabah* columnist (17.12.1999) asserted that urbanisation process was going to melt away the *varoş* culture and urban culture would expand and include these districts.

Presumably, the media is a very strong determinant in assessing the public image of the *varoş* districts. The *varoş* images differ from being the areas of potential

violence to the images of being the places of development as well as destitution. As it is clear from the various contexts of the articles in the newspapers and magazines, there is not any fixed idea about them. On the one hand, the *varoş* people are thought to be the source of violence and threat, and on the other, they are considered as deprived of economic resources and thus stigmatized populations. Actually, although the prevalent image is a negative one that initiates the existence of violence-prone populations in *varoş* districts, the future expectations are both prospective in developing the conditions of the *varoş* settlements. Nevertheless, the recent February 2001 crisis, that is mainly about the sudden and acute devaluation of the Turkish Lira against foreign exchange currency and its uncontrollable fluctuation could have waning impact on the developments in the *varoş* districts since it caused rapid increase in prices and influenced the ones who had debts based on exchange rates.

In brief, the importance of the media coverage of the *varoş* districts is undeniable, and how the *gecekondu* people will be portrayed in the media will determine the approaches of other groups in the city to them, and conversely affecting the group's participation in urban violence.

### **3.2 The Potential Conflict and Violence in Gecekondu Regions Based on Media Representation**

Based on the newspaper and magazine articles covered in the previous section, I have derived discussions for the possible reasons of urban conflict and violence based on the views of the *gecekondu* people appeared in the media. The emphasis in the media is on ethnic differences and economic deprivation. However, I also included rivalry for

public land, which was not presented in the previous section of newspaper and magazine articles. As I have mentioned earlier, I have looked through specific words in analysing the newspaper and magazine articles. I may have missed articles addressing to the contestation and conflicts about the use of public land in gecekondu settlements. However, I find worth mentioning this aspect as a part of my analysis since the literature review that I have made put great emphasis on this aspect in analyzing the violence issue. And lastly in contrast to the conditions that create a potential for violence, and in order to put more balance to the picture I find it necessary to mention some ambient factors that may act as preventing the gecekondu people from resorting to violence, and giving them hope for better conditions of in the city.

### **3.2.1 Ethnicity**

It is assumed that voluntary economic migration decreases local cultural traits, and increases integration into the receiving society, whereas involuntary political migration emphasises them (Erder, 1997: 181).

Oommen (1994 in Erder, 1997) asserts that ethnicity has positive meaning as it refers to belonging to a specific cultural and ethnic group acquiring an identity. However, if it is used as an instrument to oppose other groups by assuming superiority and making them inferior compared to them, then this instrument causes collision between opposing groups. Gecekondu settlements have changed over the years. This change can be regarded as an integration process and a result of populist political applications. For five decades, the settlement and integration processes that migrants have gone through have passed through various stages. However, the most striking trait

of this change is the delineation and the emphasis of ethnic and religious identities. Ayata (1996) asserted that ethnic and religious groups might cause polarisation and strife that later might lead to radicalisation and terrorism. In due course, as far as the heterogeneity of the urban space is concerned, it might be presumed that various groups might get polarised from each other.

Turkish society exhibits great variety in its composition and this composition is evident in rural areas with regional, religious, and ethnic differences. These cleavages have also been transported to Turkey's urban areas by massive rural migration. Turkey's main ethnic groupings include the Kurdish population of Southeastern Turkey, and Alevis who make up approximately 25 percent of Turkey's population and after the Sunnis constitute the second largest religious sect. Most Alevis are ethnically and linguistically Turkish, although some 20 percent speak Kurdish. Alevis traditionally reside in rural Central, Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. Many Alevis have migrated from their rural, mostly mountainous villages, which tend to be peripheral and underdeveloped, to the large industrialised cities of Western Turkey. They migrated at a higher rate than Sunnis did. With the development of communications and transportation, the second-and -third generation migrants have the chance to keep close contacts with their relatives, and preserve kinship ties with their fellow-villagers. Therefore, in this way they may not remain remote to their traditions and identity models. Moreover, the relatives that were previously migrated to city also constitute important associative groupings for the migrants in city.

Political Islam became dominant in the political realm. Sunni Islam was largely brought forward Alevis found themselves under violent attack in the late 1970s by right

wing ultranationalists, although much of the violence was portrayed by the state and the media as the left versus the right (rather than Sunni versus Alevi) (Zeidan, 1999:12). Since the 1980s, following the military intervention of September 1980, Sunni Islam has been supported as a state religion under the term “Turkish Islamic Synthesis” in their ‘fight against communism’. In the negative stereotyping of Alevis by Sunnis, Alevis are portrayed as unclean, practice immorality and as not true Muslims. Centuries of persecution, prejudice and misconceptions at the hands of the majority Sunnis have resulted in a persistent social gap between Sunnis and Alevis. The disjunction between orthodox Sunni Muslims and heterodox Alevis became clearer. As Erman and Göker stated (2000: 99):

General reasons for this re-politicisation of Alevilik can be identified: First, there is the fall of Communism and its effect on those Leftists close to Alevilik. This resulted in the redefinition of Alevilik as an alternative social movement (and clearly not a religious one). Secondly, the rise of Sunni political Islam has made the Alevi population, along with Sunni Kemalists, organise themselves as a counterforce against it, defending Kemalist principles, and particularly secularism.

The fact that Alevis became more integrated into the society through migration, education, and employment in the public sector has brought them with close contact with Sunnis whom they have lived separately for years. These relationships are either close social and physical contacts or direct economic competition toward each other. This situation has increased tension between the two groups in ethnically and religiously mixed places, especially in Istanbul. Migrants tend to settle with their fellow villagers, therefore, separate Alevi and Sunni regions (mahalles) have been established (Bruinessen, 1999: 120).

The political polarisation which begun in the 1970s worsened the situation. The extreme leftists accepted Alevi as their natural ally by assuming their previous actions as pro-communist movements. On the other side, the extreme right parties expressed their hatred and anxiety against Alevi and provoked Sunni Muslims against them. Those confrontations ended in several affairs of Alevi slaughter, which happened in Kahramanmaraş (1979) and Çorum (1980). The police forces of the region did little to obstruct the outbreaks. Therefore, it caused a deeper alienation of the Turkish Alevi from the state (Bruinessen, 1999: 121). The 1980 military coup was claimed to be done to cut strife between those opposing groups. The failure of the leftist movements in the 1980s made Alevi to assume Alevism more as a religious and as cultural identity. Erman and Göker (2000: 100) state: “Rapidly urbanising Alevi communities have come to mark their identities more with cultural and religious definitions, many of them criticising the ‘strong class emphasis’ of the pre-coup era.” Especially, the initial factor that awakened Alevi was the imposition of the Sunni identity of the state on the society (Erder, 1997).

After the 1990s, in the face of modernisation, the Alevi community began to reconstruct and transform its communal identity patterns, and reformulate its traditions. At the same time, Turkey’s liberalisation and the growth of civil society has encouraged an Alevi revival in major cities and the public practice of Alevi rituals. “Parallel to the growth of Islamism, Turkey experienced a ‘democratic liberalisation’ between 1988-1989, which opened up public discussion on the issues that previously as taboo” (Zeidan 1999, 212). The Alevi issue was among those taboos and since 1989 the liberal press has accepted Alevi as a separate religious community (Zeidan, 1999). The

pervasive influence of religion in public life in the 1990s has grave potential for a worsening of Sunni-Alevi tensions.

In 1993, the Sivas hotel fire was another phenomenon about the ethnic conflict dispute<sup>4</sup>. In the past, where Alevis and Sunnis were living separately, there were not any significant conflict occurred between the two groups. However, the migration process increased their interactions and they have come together in economic competition (Bruinessen, 1999: 132).

Another assault to the Alevis occurred in 1994 with the closure of an Alevi *tekke* (place of worship). Following such events a gaffe made in a television programme caused great confrontation among the Alevis. About this phenomenon Zeidan (1999: 14) asserted,

In January 1995, a comedian on Turkish TV cracked a joke about “Alevi incest” triggering the first street protest by thousands of Alevi youths. Some Alevis now demand a political party of their own to combat Sunni-dominated Islamist parties, while others are afraid that forming an Alevi party might lead to civil war.

The Islamist threats to Turkey’s secular orientation, as well as increased attacks on Alevis in the media and on the street, have activated a revival of the Alevi identity. The Gazi events (March 1995) in Istanbul and May 1 (1996) events are considered to be turning points (Tekeli, 1997 in Erder, 1997).

On March 1995 in *Gazi Mahallesi* in Istanbul, there occurred strife between the Alevis and the police forces. It caused a tension between the government and Alevis.

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<sup>4</sup> In order to give a more vivid example to the strife between some Alevis and Sunnis, the Sivas fire is significant to mention. In July 1993, during the Pir Sultan Abdal festival, the speech made by the mayor of Sivas who was from the right wing Islamist Refah party aroused the tension between the Alevi and Sunni populations. A Sunni crowd besieged the hotel in which the participants of the festival, mostly Alevis, stayed. The hotel was burned down by the burning clothes thrown off by the crowd and 37 people died in that fire.



This was a new settlement that was composed of Alevis whose economic positions were not well. On March 12, 1995 armed attackers opened fire on people from a stolen taxicab and murdered many people. The Gazi youth protested the affair in the streets and were supported by the people who came after they had heard about the event on the television. They moved toward the police station in which they believed that there were rightist and anti-Alevi people who killed a youngster by torturing. Numerous stores and shops were vandalised that were believed to belong to the “fascists”. The outbreak kept going on the following days. While the Alevi community leaders tried to pacify the groups, young radicals threw stones and built barricades against the police forces. At last, police forces lost control and opened fire on the masses. Fifteen people were killed under fire. There was also a confrontation between the Alevi community leaders and the police (Bruinessen, 1999: 126).

By and large, the accelerating tension between the Alevi communities and the Sunni communities make them develop their own community-based alliances, therefore, they simultaneously crash against each other. In the 1990s, both in the Gaziosmanpaşa and Sivas events, Turkey witnessed the violent outbreaks between the two opposing groups. Especially, the hotel fire in Sivas caused Alevis to see themselves as the victims of the system. The sense of collective insecurity and collective defence may be originated after the recurring tension in the large cities of Turkey especially in Istanbul. The Alevi youth has become marginalised in leftist identities. The religious conflict between the two groups turned out to come forth as political violence, in that many people were killed.

Actually, their partition from urbanites begins with the ethnic and religious separation as well as in reference to their poverty or “undeserving” wealth. Just after the events in 1996, it turns out to be that the *varoş* as a stigma begins to refer not only to the urban poor but also the ones who could be threatening as well. After the events that cause 21 deaths in the Gazi events, they are deprived of state provision. However, they do not want to be remembered with that event for life (Erder, 1997).

Recently, in addition to Alevi and Sunni, the Kurdish speaking people form another ethnic group in the society. There has been an exclusion of some migrant groups from migrant networks built on common origin (Erder, 1995), which has caused differentiation among migrants on the grounds of ethnicity. Specifically, the Kurdish speaking people who have migrated to cities in large numbers engendered a new phenomenon in the cities. Kurdish speaking people as involuntary migrants or rather forced migrants constitute a considerable presence in the large cities since they have migrated in large numbers especially after the 1990s. These Kurdish speaking people were not fortunate as that of voluntary migrants for the following reasons (Erman, 2001; Keyder, 2001; Erder, 1997; Ayata, 1996). First of all, it has become hard for them to become accepted into the existing migrant support networks both due to their sudden relocation and the potential stigma, which could be attached to them as potential terrorists. Thus, they cannot solve their problems through their ties with their fellowvillagers. Moreover, these migrants have moved to the city as a family, which is in large numbers including many children. Besides, those migrants do not have the possibility to return to their villages since they have been resettled due to terrorist activities and by the state policies in order to hinder the accumulation of those people

in the same region, namely in the Southeastern Anatolia. It is a deliberate state policy to disseminate them on the urban pattern in order to scatter the potential threat of the radical groups and to prevent them from performing collective action in the Southeastern regions of Turkey. Furthermore, these involuntary migrants are deprived of flexibility of the voluntary migration in that they do not have the probability to return their villages in case of dissatisfaction or failure in the city.

According to a study conducted in Ümraniye (Istanbul), Erder (1997) asserted that Kurdish speaking migrants have the difficulty in adapting to urban conditions and defined them as the worst conditioned group of migrants. These families have numerous children and what is worse is that they are poor. Consequently, they have the utmost difficulty in having sufficient means for taking care of the whole family, which might also comprise the elderly people of the family besides the children. In other words, they have migrated to the city unprepared in financial and social terms. Thus, they are left alone in the city.

Furthermore, their fellow migrant families are also Kurdish speaking people and poor as well. Therefore, the assistance ties based on fellowships could not help them improve their conditions since such ties are not strong as well, as far as economic conditions of the Kurdish speaking migrants are concerned. The fact that they speak Kurdish is another determinant for their exclusion from the society since there is the prejudice of Kurdish origin people being terrorists and activists against the state. These people cannot find jobs and mostly their probable jobs are limited to construction, street vending, or shoe polishing in the streets, which all can be counted as “underemployment” (Danielson and Keleş, 1985). Recently, the street vendors in the

large cities have been increasing in number rapidly. Without doubt, these kinds of jobs barely help them earn their living in the city. Furthermore, women migrants who cannot speak Turkish cannot communicate with their neighbours (Erder, 1997).

In brief, presumably, the negative conjunctures cause these migrants feel excluded and alienated from the rest of the society. In other words, they are more disadvantaged on the urban pattern than the voluntary migrants in that they speak Kurdish and they are seen as potential terrorists and they do not have any ties with their villages since they were largely evacuated by the state and they did not have strong fellowship ties in the city to help them improve their conditions when they first moved to the city.

In addition to attracting political groups and parties, which emphasise their ethnic Kurdish identity, the Kurdish speaking migrants attract the religion-based organisations when they put forward their Alevilik and Sunnilik. Religious Sunni organisations try to help those who claim their Sunnilik and likewise the Alevi organisations support Alevi Kurdish migrant populations. Those religious identity-based groupings also have linked to political party policies since political parties have further marginalised such opposing groups in order to attract those masses and receive their votes.

### **3.2.2 Economic Deprivation**

Rex and Moore's (1967) "housing classes" theory is fit to discuss this phenomenon. The so-called "*varoş*" society stemmed from the regional situation and the identity dispute of those people living in the gecekondu zones. According to Rex and Moore

(1967 in Savage and Ward, 1993), the categorising of social classes could be made through their housing types. As far as their theory is concerned, it is clear that they put forward the emergence of housing classes that share common housing opportunities in terms of economic capabilities.

Housing classes have territorial distribution and can be ranked. Furthermore, bureaucratic and political forces as well as economic forces influence housing opportunities. In due course, the status that *varoş* people are put in is a covertly constituted status for them by the rest of the society. The fact that they have migrated to the city with economic deprivation and that they do not have “the urban culture” in the sense that urbanites evaluate being urbanite make those people defined as *varoş* people. Presumably, it is a manipulation of urbanites to disparage the social status of those people within the society because those *gecekondu* people situate their work force among urban economic positions and constitute their liveliness there.

The relative deprivation of the *gecekondu* people is another factor to be considered in assessing the violence issue. The social polarisation that is engendered by income inequality among the individuals generates a sense of displeasure and dissatisfaction toward the urban way of life and other urbanites. The scarcity of the provision derives from their being remoteness to the city centre and the scarcity of the urban resources especially since the privatisation period. Practically everyday, for a couple of years and especially since the February economic crisis in 2001, the media has demonstrated street protests of people who complain about their poverty and deprivation. These people are mostly the ones who have families and thus who are

responsible for their family members to take care of. These protests extend from vandalism to suicide, which may be counted as a way of self-violence.

Informal sector is another outcome of the joblessness in cities. Street vendors or invisible jobs that lack state tax help improve *gecekodu* people's economic conditions since they cannot get a hold of secure and economically sufficient jobs. Only a small proportion of the *gecekodu* youth can acquire secure jobs that may give hope for the future. The *gecekodu* youth are another potential group to protest poverty since unemployment and underemployment are very serious impetus for them to revolt. The hatred and displeasure is both to the state and to the other urbanites who are living in the city centre under wealthy conditions, or living in the suburbs but in luxurious closed residences.

In another perspective of economic deprivation, the Chicago school designates the concept of "human ecology," the study of human group-adjustment process to the environment (Gottdiener, 1994). The fact that rural to urban migrants have moved to the city because of economic reasons for the most part, it cannot be expected from them to live in fully "urbanite and modern" houses like those of the established urbanites. While *gecekodus* were taken as a type of shelter, however, gradually they have become an entity, which has its own unique social structures with their relationship and assistance ties based on religious and ethnic entities. Ayata (1996) suggests that apparently the *varoş* prescribes new but negative connotation that comprises in unevenly urbanised migrant population, urban plunder, hostility and violence. Additionally, Ayata asserts that in the regions that relatively low-income families live, social changes happen and some engenders an increase in crime and violence rate

(Ayata, 1996). First of all, heterogeneity of the population in the city should be emphasised. Rapid population growth, urban density in particular, and the multiplicity of economic activities increase ethnic, sectarian and class polarities (Ayata, 1996). In other words, the ones living in the same settlement who have different ethnic identities or who belong to different sects within different religious beliefs, and members of different occupation groups and different social strata.

The ones who feel intimacy toward each other in terms of similar ethnic identity, religious belief or social strata aggregate in order to expose helpful attitudes inside the group of its members while disparaging and separating the outer groups. The main point that Ayata discusses is that, because of social polarisation, certain groups which have religious, cultural, ethnic or economic belongingness in common seek to belong to some sort of community-based alliance in order to organise against their so-called opponents in the urban space.

Nevertheless, it is still inapplicable to wholly assume that heterogeneity and differentiation of groups would lead to violence. However, when they are to combine with other factors, polarity and deliberate divergence might lead to hostility. Secondly, the instability of workforce market is another significant aspect (Ayata, 1996: 18). In the 1960s and 1970s when industrialisation began to accelerate, an important portion of the rural migrant population started to work in large-scale firms and public offices with social security. For instance, Istanbul's Zeytinburnu region attracted people to dwell because of the establishment of big factories. However, since the post-1980s, the number of small-scale businesses has increased in such a way that they did not promise any job security. Small workshops or constructions employed people with low income

and without job security. Subcontracting became widespread since small businesses began to be smaller and to lay off workers. Wages were reduced, unemployment increased, job security and stability decreased. In other words, it led to flourishing rivalries among the potential worker population to acquire secure employment. However, the number of losers outweighed the number of winners in this rivalry.

Danielson and Keleş (1985: 41) asserted as follows:

The inability of the modern sector to keep pace with the flood of migrants has created a second economy, often called the “informal” or “traditional” sector, characterised by small-scale service enterprises, labor intensive employment, and substantial excess labor. This second economy, with its ability to absorb large amounts of surplus labor, is primary response to overurbanisation, to the fact that cities in countries like Turkey attract for more migrants than can be absorbed by the growth of modernised sector of the economy.

Actually the informal sector is far from being sufficient to the needs of the *varoş* people since this sector does not have job security or adequate means for financial prosperity.

### **3.2.3 Rivalry for Public Land and Services**

Another source of conflict and violence can be the rivalry for public land and services, although the newspaper articles and magazines reviewed for the thesis do not focus on it. However, I still want to cover this aspect since it seems an essential conjuncture in analysing the urban violence issue in relation to the stigma on the *gecekondü* people.

In the Ottoman times, the land was abundant to use by the public. The state was its sole owner. The Republic carried out this practice to a large extent; political concerns prevented them from applying a large-scale land reform. This enabled the governments to take permissive attitudes toward the invasion of public land by the



migrant newcomers. However, with the increasing urbanisation processes, the use of state land has become insufficient in terms of meeting the needs of both the public, private and governmental use. Therefore, with the planned period after the 1960s, to bring in the planned use of land was aimed and restricted according to laws. Additionally, there was concern about demands of migrants who tried to be active in this allocation and adjustment. Although the governments of the 1960s and 1970s were inclined to initiate the housing sector as a social service rather than a profit-making field, governmental control and programming remained quite ineffective (Danielson and Keleş, 1985: 160):

Production of conventional housing steadily increased throughout the decades of rapid urban growth, slowing only in the wake of Turkey's general economic problems in the late 1970s. Demand was strong for middle class housing in the expanding cities, and a prolonged boom in private housing construction began in the early 1950s.

Governments encouraged the rapid housing processes due to the coercion from the housing industry. Moreover, attraction of providing political support from the urban middle class was another driving force. However, these houses increased the rents, the cheaper and more affordable way of sheltering for migrants became squatting (Danielson and Keleş, 1985).

Following the earlier period of migration to cities during which public land was abundant, a great rivalry has been engendered on the urban space since the claimers are large in number that extends from the gecekondu settlers to the private sector and to the municipal and governmental use. Since the 1970s, after the widespread use of private cars eased the transportation, urbanites have begun to prefer far outer places to dwell in, which is adjacent or somewhat beyond the gecekondu settlements.

In the same way, the private sector has begun to demand location in the outer city as well, factory owners and the ones who planned to establish factories claiming rights in the outskirts of the cities. The grounds of the “gated communities” were largely established in the 1980s. In addition, the cooperative houses have been erected as the residences for the middle class and low-middle class urbanites. In the 1990s, the construction of shopping malls and ‘hyper-markets’ became widespread. Therefore, the private sector construction industry has been demanding for more urban lands for their commercial purposes. In the same way, the gecekondü residents keep demanding the pardoning of their lands on which they built their houses. The contestation over the public land has grown sharper since the 1980s when the demand by the upper classes and the private sector has grown stronger in the process of the “globalisation in the cities.” To this rivalry for the public land, we can add another actor, namely, the Mafia. The lack of an established law system in peripheral regions causes illegal organisations to get hold of the gecekondü regions. These Mafia type organisations began to have monopoly of some activities in gecekondü settlements by using force. They use guns and force to increase strife in the land market. By this way, ethnicity based youth gangs are being used by Mafia organisations (Ayata, 1996: 21). Ideological and political polarisation and the relationships between security forces and Mafia type organisations have prepared grounds for explicit combats of splits in the society. The gecekondü people who have once struggled with the state powers to have access to the urban land have recently been exposed to the Mafia type organisations in order to take the possession of the land on which they have built their houses.

### **3.2.4 Contestation Over Values and Life Styles**

Migrants tend to cumulate to find solutions and sense of support among fellowmigrants whom they share the same religion, ethnicity or region. Particularly, individuals and families attach to traditional family-based ties that accentuate ethnicity, religiosity and/or political activity. The struggle creating cleavages and strife among the gecekondu settlers are, by and large, for the use of public space in the city, the rights to practice traditions and ways of life according to their ethnic origin or religious association and political choices. In order to enhance these ties and to broaden the gap between other groups, those who make use of them tend to establish associations or organisations in the form of support groups (Ayata, 1996). As a matter of fact, the initial concern of these associations may turn out to be insufficient public services because those associations act like civil society organisations, which have particular aims.

The internal migration in Turkey is so excessive that relationship ties cannot afford to compensate for its problems, and ethnic, religious or family ties, which shelter migrant groups may cause their exclusion and alienation from the city. The structure of closed communitarians threatens social and cultural integration. Sectarian and ethnic regions may deepen differences and injustice. Therefore, those groups may develop negative attitudes towards governmental institutions or civil urbanites.

The stigma put on them by the urbanites and by the governments is explicit, and the polarisation in metropolises germinates both wealth and poverty within the same urban pattern. Arrogant, luxurious and cosmopolitan Istanbul looks them from above. With the globalising world, the gap widens between the sections that improve their

wealth and that descend the steps toward the poverty hole. Ayata (1996) asserted that the sense of dissatisfaction against wealthy Istanbul has developed among the *varoş* settlements. Along with ethnic and religious separations among opposing groups, the strife against the wealthy “original owners” of urban land cannot be disregarded. The *gecekondu* people also regard especially Istanbul as indecent and the source of moral corruption, a threat to social order and to the safety of the individuals and families, and especially to the family honour of women (Ayata, 1996: 19). The working of women outside the home seems to cause another reason of clash within families in this case in the name of moral corruption. It seems that it constitutes tension among the families against the swallowing of metropolises. Women stand at the core point of this argument. More specifically, the protection of the chastity of women in the family is of great importance to many migrants. Even meeting with opposite sex is of importance because “unmarried girls are not allowed to see boyfriend’s because it is thought that it may prevent them from having a good marriage” (Ayata, 1996: 18). With the flourishing of the informal sector, women have begun to work more outside the home or communities in which they live. Therefore, some of those work places are not seen proper for them to work. That kind of severe suppression over women aims at creating conjuncture to have discipline over them. The *gecekondu* people living especially in Istanbul regard the city as a potential impetus for family dilapidation.

Pahl (1975, in Erder, 1997) asserted that social and spatial structures are examined in terms of coercion that is put upon them, and conflict between different people in competition for desirable but scarce resources. There are fundamental spatial and social constraints or access to scarce urban resources and facilities. Processes of

allocation generate constraints, which influence people's life chances. Furthermore, socio-spatial inequalities reflect power distribution mechanisms of allocation.

The social polarisation issue is another crucial dimension in assessing the motives of violence. Moreover, it should be analysed within the context of the ability of masses to acquire necessary requirements on the urban pattern. For instance, the allocation of resources and wealth is not equal within the urban context. The sense of social exclusion and inferiority of the *varoş* people is substantial compared to other opulent urbanites that can reach all urban resources extending from education, health, and security to the opportunities of social life. Many have developed a sense of deprivation and injustice. Therefore, those groups may develop abrogating attitudes toward governmental institutions or other citizens.

Along with ethnic and religious separations among opposing groups, the conflict against the well-to-do "original owners" of urban land cannot be disregarded. It cannot be overlooked that the *gecekond* people demand equal share from the urban resources that have already been exploited by the urbanites. The emergence of the newcomers with their rural and ethnic identities in the urban communities and the recession of the urbanites from the *gecekond* dwellers and the intentional policy of making them "Others" try to throw away their existence and alienate them from the order of the urban society. As far as the course of the *varoş* stigma is concerned, Etöz (2000) asserts that *varoş* people are seen not only as the ones who lack the necessary socio-economic conditions to consume, but also the ones who lack "consumption aesthetics". The inability to consume does not only refer to the consumption of goods but of a culture, an entity of values, namely, life styles.

Perhaps another motive in analysing urban violence is state policies toward rural migrants. Gecekondu settlements are seen not only as the urban plunder and actors of violence but also as agents of political participation (Ayata, 1996: 18). The state policy toward the gecekondu settlements differs according to the state policies of the governments. As a matter of fact, the policies are more or less inclined to pardon gecekondu settlements since the governments have not come up with effective solutions. The party politics generally let them keep the gecekondu since they meant political participation and votes.

The construction of gecekondu has become highly commercialised. Therefore, it has caused stratification in gecekondu settlements (Erder, 1996). Gecekondu phenomenon is dynamic. The formation of gecekondu regions contributes to the stratification of urban regions on the one hand, and enables differentiation of groups among each other on the other hand because the “undeserving rich” has increased in number and in the magnitude of power. “ ‘Once they built their gecekondu in one night, and now they are becoming millionaires in one day’ ” (Erman, 2001:535). Those economic developments of some segments of the gecekondu population have created discrepancy among the gecekondu people besides the economic discrepancy with urbanites, which may possibly lead to discontentment and a sense of reaction against their deprived conditions.

In order not to give a distorted image of the relations between violence and the gecekondu people, it is necessary to mention the factors that may prevent violence in

the gecekondur population. For example, it is mentioned by the authors in the third category ‘varoř people as potential consumers.’

Gecekondur districts do also have developing conditions especially in economic terms. As a result, “gecekondur communities became increasingly economically stratified” (Erman, 2001). The economic conditions of the gecekondur dwellers vary within the same neighbourhood. As Erman (2001: 532) suggests:

There were those who owned more than one gecekondur, which they rented out, and those who rented these gecekondus (usually young families with very limited incomes). There were those who improved their socio-economic positions. For example, by selling their gecekondur land to building contractors in return for several apartments (and additionally for a store in some cases) in building to replace the gecekondur, or by taking advantage of their networks in their clientalist neighbourhood.

In the first hand, the economic stratification may engender a sense of deprivation among the residents of neighbouring districts. Nonetheless, it may also raise hopes for people to reach better life standards. The economic investments made in gecekondur districts displayed that there has been an increase in adequacy of purchasing and consumption. Therefore, as far as the newspaper and magazine articles are concerned, the gecekondur districts may be seen as promising and developing. However, the February crisis may cut off this state of being.

The conjunctures that may prevent the image of being violence-prone are may be through the hopes for obtaining better life standards by gecekondur ownership, especially the hope for obtaining rents through the apartmentalization of their gecekondur district. Those who have titles to their gecekondur landscape sell their gecekondur land to müteahhits (small-scale housing contractors) in return for several

apartments in the building replacing the gecekondu. The hope for receiving the ownership of land may initiate a sense of belonging to the city rather than a sense of exclusion. Integration to the “money economy” of the city as Simmel (1955) suggested may increase the hopes and attachment to the urban way of life.

Additionally, the traditional communities and close family ties may play the role of social control mechanisms for the gecekondu people preventing them from turning into violence easily.



## CONCLUSION

Urban violence has various causes: Heterogeneity, and anomie, relative deprivation and inequality, ethnic and religious conflict. The socio-psychological, socio-political and structural dimensions constitute the reasons for outbreaks. The urban condition is also meaningful here because the migrant groups living in cities are prone to becoming excluded populations from the society due to heterogeneity and anomie in the urban environment. As Wirth (1964) suggested, social disintegration and isolation characterise the city life because cities are dense and heterogeneous. Density, hence, creates heterogeneity and anonymity, usually causing the alienation and exclusion of some groups in the same urban pattern. Acute alienation and reserved human beings (Simmel, 1955) prevent people from integrating into society.

On the other hand, relative deprivation in economic and spatial grounds is another striking factor in assessing the reasons of urban violence. The economic deprivation and the lack of integration into the “money economy” as Simmel suggested (1950) are leading factors of the marginalisation of the people living in the cities. It has become impossible for people living in the same urban conditions to have similar life standards. The socio-economic differentiation of various segments of the society unfolds itself as discontentment of the extant conditions and thus demonstrations that may extend to violence on the urban pattern. Therefore, the frustrated groups may express themselves in some ways through demonstrations. The neo-liberal economic developments along with the privatisation process especially in the post-1980s restrict urban resources more than before in that people who were once dependent on state provisions become deprived of such services, and they cannot afford the privatised

resources such as hospitals and education institutions. At the same time, the quality of the extant state-provisioned services decreases, and therefore these people feel the exclusion this way as well.

In the Turkish context, the violence issue mainly comprises the strife among the ethnic and religious groups, economic deprivation and rivalry for public space. As Tilly (1975) suggests rivalry among opposing groups causes strife. The ethnicity issue in the Turkish context can be attributed to what Tilly suggested. Moreover, when a group declares rights on some reserve and other group opposes the other group's intrusion to use those resources, confrontation among these opposing groups may rise. It suggests the rivalry for public land in the Turkish context.

Accordingly, the migration issue is a considerable phenomenon in assessing the issue. Voluntary and involuntary migrations, the latter referring to the forced migration from the Southeast Anatolia are the causes of the migration process in Turkey. In the beginning of migration, while *gecekond* people were taken as the populations living in illegal houses in misery, as time passed urban violence has been attributed to them, especially after the 1990s, with their new renaming as the *varoş* people. As far as the stigma "being violence-prone" imposed on these people is concerned, it is clear that it has been embossed both by the urbanites and the governmental authorities besides media representations. They are seen as the protesting segment of large cities. As far as I have covered, the stigma put on the *gecekond* people has acquired highly negative connotations especially after the 1990s. In assessing such change, the media impact is indispensable to take into account since the media has first introduced the usage of *varoş*. The representation in the media has developed the arguments about the existence

and conditions of *varoş* immensely since it has been discussed in the academic discourse after the media has brought it in. However, the positive representation of the gecekondu population has been developing as well.

The disintegration grows wider on the socio-economic basis of Turkish society. The gecekondu regions have always been diversified into regions according to ethnic basis for the reason that migrant groups preferred to migrate to cities within close family ties in order to survive and find better ways of livelihood than they could achieve on their own (Keyder, 2000). However, this diversification has been politicized more than ever since the 1990s. The fact that they are heaped in gecekondu regions makes them more conservative and close against other groups, both to urbanites and to other ethnic oriented gecekondu people. Apart from the ethnicity dilemma, gecekondu people are the ones who have been exposed to alienation and separation from the society because of the inadequacy of the resources and the inefficiency of the available ones. Through ethnic and religious solidarity, the inconvenient economic conditions have been attempted to cope with.

Their housing seems to be illegal and their way of living seems at least backward because they build their houses on state lands or on private-owned lands by means of Mafia type organisations. Therefore, their existence is imposed both on the government and on urbanites. It has been assumed that those new-urbanites are not welcome and outbreak and disorder could be easily expected from them. The possible incentives for their outbreaks are analysed as economic, ethnic or social factors, that is, better education and opportunities in the cities.

Thus, under these circumstances the “converted urbanites” may experience frustration. Accordingly, the repulsive end tends to turn out to be active violence against prevailing conditions. Straightforwardly, so long as those migrant people are treated as the invaders of intimate personal space (Gans, 1991), their sensibility towards the urban experience and the established urbanites remain the same. Such excluded settlement zones are not particular for Turkey. It is a problem of developing countries and even a problem of developed countries.

Due to the fact that gecekondü people are sensitive of issues like ethnicity, economic deprivation or social inequality, these issues have become exploitable. Moreover, it has been commonly believed that “*varoş* people” are prone to violence. However, it might be scapegoating these people to assume and isolate them as the actors of outbreaks in city. In order to avoid such scapegoating, attention should be paid both to the factors causing violence and those factors preventing it in the gecekondü settlements. Academics are particularly responsible for creating a balanced picture of the relationship between violence and the gecekondü population, bringing in the wider context of violence both in Turkish society as a whole as well as in the World.

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