The Discursive Politics of Welfare: Social Policies in Turkey and The Kurdish Conflict

Introduction

In 2016, the Turkish state once again showed its benevolent face in the Kurdish region. The governing Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi,* AKP) launched what they called a "social mobilization" (*sosyal seferberlik*) campaign, declaring that the state intended to embrace its in-need citizens, heal their wounds, and meet all of their basic needs. As part of this campaign, the government organized "Brotherhood Meetings" (*Kardeşlik Mitingleri*) in major Kurdish cities, where they heralded the introduction of new and extensive aid programs across the region (İhlas Haber Ajansı, 2016). In the Eid ul-Fitr following Ramadan in 2016, the state distributed "eid money" (*bayram harçlığı*) to 10,000 families (www.ensonhaber.com 2016). They also initiated new social assistance programs such as the Family Social Support Program (*Aile Sosyal Destek Programı*) and the Social Assistance Program for the Victims of Terror (*Terör Zararı Yardımı*), as well as channeled generous funding to the local governorates. This funding was to be primarily distributed to low-income women participating in the activities and education programs of Family Support Centers (*Aile Destek Merkezleri*) which are only active in the Kurdish region.

These developments occurred two years before the start of the "New Politics of Welfare: Towards an Emerging Markets Welfare State Regime" project which provides the general framework for this article. The project was inspired by a trend observed in the leading countries of the Global South over the past few decades -- a considerable expansion of the

welfare state in an era marked by intense neoliberalization. Mainstream theories explaining shifts in welfare state development as an outcome of economic and demographic transformations fall short in accounting for this puzzling mix of welfare and neoliberalism in the Global South. We argue that this question demands a more nuanced explanation – one that takes into account the dynamic and intricate political processes which mediate and transform structural pressures into policies. This article thus seeks to shed light on the politics of welfare expansion in neoliberal Turkey – an expansion which surprisingly favors the Kurdish population and region among the poor (Yörük 2012) -- that is, those the Turkish state consider the main sources of political unrest.

In Turkey, Kurds constitute 18% of the population, and throughout the history of the Turkish Republic, they have been considered to be the nation's internal "other." Until recently, the Turkish state has denied Kurds' existence as a separate ethnic group and has subjected them to ethnic homogenization policies. Although intermittent Kurdish uprisings have occurred since the early years of the Republic, the Turkish state successfully suppressed Kurdish unrest until the emergence of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*, PKK) in the late 1970s, which was originally founded as a clandestine Marxist-Leninist party with a national liberation agenda for the Kurds. Over time, the Kurdish movement has evolved into an extensive political movement capable of organizing millions of Kurds in urban and rural areas.

While the Turkish state relied mostly on military measures to contain Kurdish unrest, economic problems of the Kurdish region and population have also been a major source of concern for the Turkish ruling elite. Successive Turkish governments have sought to address these problems through various socio-economic measures ranging from large-scale

development projects in the 1970s and 1980s to the welfarist policies of the past three decades. While these efforts can partially be explained by the Turkish state's "will to improve" (Li 2007) or the intention to successfully incorporate the Kurdish region into a capitalist economy, a detailed analysis of political processes, policy documents, and debates indicates the significance of ethno-political and national security concerns in the making of socio-economic policies that primarily target the Kurds of Turkey.

The most recent expansion of social assistance programs in the Kurdish region is no exception in this regard. Even the military undertone in the wording of the "social mobilization" (*sosyal seferberlik*) campaign is an indicator of the political motives underlying the Turkish government's assumed largesse. Indeed, the campaign was launched at a time when the Turkish state waged a comprehensive military offensive against the strongholds of the Kurdish movement in an effort to contain Kurdish mobilization. In a renewed attempt to establish its authority in the region, the Turkish state declared round-the-clock curfews in Kurdish strongholds between the winter of 2015 and the end of spring, 2016 and executed heavily-armed military operations. The offensive was promoted as a victory in the "war on terror"; however, it incurred an enormous human cost. It forcefully displaced hundreds of thousands, leaving them homeless and destitute. It was against this backdrop that the governing AKP assumed the role of "the benefactor of the poor/abandoned" in the region as part of a new counterinsurgency action plan (Cumhuriyet 2016).

The interconnections between the contentious politics and policies of welfare provision evidenced by the AKP's social mobilization campaign constitute the main subject of this article. While mainstream welfare state research does not usually consider contentious politics a

significant factor in the making of social policies, concerns about the political containment of "unruly" populations are often intrinsic to welfare policy-making. For example, Frances Fox Piven and James Cloward (1971), leading scholars in the field of politics of welfare, have shown that after the urban riots of the 1960s in the United States, American governments used welfare programs to control, contain, and repress the mostly black insurgent poor. Despite a growing scholarly interest in the unsettling links between beneficent and coercive tools of social control (Soss et.al. 2011, Wacquant 2009) and the disciplinary and governmental aspects of welfare programs -- specifically, their effectiveness in the fashioning of compliant subjectivities (Ferguson and Gupta 2002, Goode and Maskovsky 2002, Gupta 2012, Wedel et.al. 2005) -- we still know relatively little about why, how, and when governments and policy-makers decide to implement welfare programs as a means of containing social unrest.

This article studies the case of Turkey, where socio-economic measures and policies have been considered by policy-makers and governments to be a means of suppressing social unrest -- Kurdish dissent, in particular. This makes Turkey an ideal case to study the ethno-political underpinnings of welfare policy-making, as well as the political factors leading to the recent expansion of welfare programs in the emerging market economies. In order to demonstrate the significance of ethno-political concerns in the making of welfare policies in Turkey, this article situates the development of social assistance programs within a broader context in which state officials and policy-makers seek a socio-economic resolution to the Kurdish question.

The article first analyzes Turkish state discourse regarding the socio-economic aspects of the Kurdish question, showing how this particular discourse has been influential in the

implementation of regional development policies targeting the Kurdish region since the 1980s. It then focuses on how and under what circumstances Turkish governments and policy-makers felt the need to complement these regional development policies with welfare programs as part of a strategy to render the Kurdish region and population more governable – a move that significantly contributes to the recent social assistance expansion in Turkey. The empirical analysis is based on content analysis of social policy and counterinsurgency legislation, government reports and programs, and news reports[i]. It also draws on empirical literature on the Kurdish question and development and welfare in Turkey in order to explain the emergence and expansion of social assistance programs in relation to the ongoing tension between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state.

Welfare State Expansion in the Global South

Theories of welfare state development have traditionally focused on rich countries of the Global North. Such theories have observed an expansion of employment-based social security systems in Europe between the eighteenth and mid-twentieth centuries and a retrenchment of these social security schemes since the 1990s, accompanied by an increase in the mean means-tested social assistance schemes, services, and cash transfers for the poor (Pierson 1994, Goldberg and Rosenthal 2002, Brooks and Manza 2006, Iversen 2001, Saraceno 2002). In analyzing these shifts, scholars have developed what Yoruk and Kuhnle (*in this issue*) call structuralist and political explanations. These perspectives primarily differ in what they deem the driving force behind welfare policy making. While the structuralist perspective emphasizes the role of social, demographic, and economic transformations in the formation of welfare state systems, political explanations point to the significance of political interests,

conflicts, motivations, ideologies, processes, and the strategies and tactics that mediate and translate structural pressures into welfare policy making.

These existing theories of the welfare state, however, do not successfully explain the shifting trends of welfare policy in the Global South, where, under conditions marked by neo-liberal market fundamentalism, new and extensive social assistance programs for the poor have emerged in the past couple of decades. Many scholars from the dominant structuralist paradigm place strong emphasis on the role of demographic or economic factors in explaining social assistance expansion since the 1990s (Pierson 2001, Farnsworth and Irving 2011, Hong and Kogshoj 2014). However, scholars still debate whether these trends (which may have played a significant role in welfare policy changes in Europe) are determining factors of the social assistance boom in emerging markets. Some, for instance, have relied on "the logic of de-industrialization" thesis to explain the contemporary rise of income-based welfare policies (Buğra and Keyder 2006, Gough and Wood 2004). This thesis, however, even falls short in explaining countries like Turkey, whose welfare system, with its relatively established employment-based social security schemes that have provided a safety net for a significant portion of the Turkish population since the 1950s, bears more resemblance to its European counterparts (Buğra and Keyder 2003, Buğra and Keyder 2006, Buğra and Adar 2008, Buğra and Candaş 2011, Eder 2010, Buğra 2017, Dorlach and Savaşkan 2017). The expansion of social assistance programs in Turkey since the 1980s can in part be explained by the rise of poverty, informalization, and erosion of the traditional solidarity mechanisms resulting from rapid urbanization, jobless economic growth policies, and the commodification of urban land. Nevertheless, none of these structural transformations fully explain why these new social assistance programs disproportionately target

Kurds – a population which initiated the most subversive popular movement in Turkey since the 1980s.[ii]

In short, structuralist approaches lack the decisive element necessary in analyzing welfare state expansion in the Global South – that is, the political dynamics and social movement processes and their role in the making of social policies. Another dominant paradigm in literature on the welfare state addresses this shortcoming by emphasizing the role of politics in mediating and translating structural pressures into welfare policies. This approach has also informed the emergent literature on welfare expansion in developing countries.

As is suggested by scholars of this paradigm, the poor became a significant dynamic in the formation of new social assistance programs in the Global South in a context where national developmentalism paradigm with its promise of industrialization and provision of job opportunities lost its credence, neoliberal market fundamentalism and structural adjustment programs led to further dispossession and precarization, and emerging market governments cannot sustain their political power by building multi-class bases (Davis 2004, Sanyal 2013, Ballard 2012, 2013, 2015, Keyder 1993, Yörük and Çemen forthcoming). In some countries of the Global South demands of the poor were translated into welfare policies through unions and leftist parties (Haggard and Kaufmann 2008, Huber and Stephen 2012). In others, social welfare movements gained more overt presence (Seekings and Natrass 2015, Ferguson 2015). And in some countries like Turkey broader grassroots movements inadvertently pushed for welfare state expansion by inventing new spaces of democratic participation, repoliticizing issues related to social justice, or engaging in contentious politics (Bebbington 2007 , Stokke and Tornquist 2013, Ballard 2015).

The literature on the links between contentious politics and policies of welfare provision is quite limited, and in the context of the Global South, almost non-existent. Aside from earlier scholars who studied the political containment function of welfare in the Global North (Trempe 1983, Arrighi 1990, Silver 2003, Offe, 1984, Piven and Cloward 1971), most works focus on the reverse relationship between contentious politics and welfare, examining the effectiveness of welfare provision in the prevention of "terror" (Burgoon 2006, Chenoweth 2007, Taydas and Peksen 2012). Our approach is informed by the literature on political containment rather than the effects of social assistance on insurgencies. In other words, instead of assuming social welfare to be the explanatory variable, we situate contentious politics at the forefront of our analysis and explore how the shifts in grassroots organizations' strategies inform welfare policies, regardless of whether or not they demand social policy change.

With the capacity of mobilizing millions of people from all across the country, the Kurdish movement has remained the main subversive popular movement in Turkey since the 1980s. We claim that the trajectory of new social assistance programs in Turkey demonstrate significant parallels to changes in the Kurdish movement's political strategies. In the beginning of the 1990s, for example, the Kurdish movement successfully mobilized Kurds to stage mass "Serhildan" protests (or Kurdish *intifada*) in urban centers of the Kurdish region. Interestingly enough, Turkey's first extensive healthcare assistance program, *Yeşil Kart* (Green Card), which provides free healthcare insurance to the unemployed poor, was enacted in these years – first in the southeastern and eastern (Kurdish) regions.

Secondly, the 2000s witnessed a major shift in the Kurdish movement's political aims and strategies. As the movement gradually abandoned secessionist claims and embraced a new

strategy prioritizing legal and popular struggle for democratization, it situated itself as a significant actor in grassroots, municipal, and parliamentary-level politics. By diversifying its political tools and expanding its sphere of influence across Turkey, the Kurdish movement became the AKP's main rival, especially in the Kurdish region and in the Kurdish neighborhoods of metropolises. This transformation in Kurdish politics coincides with a remarkable shift in AKP's discourse on the Kurdish question and an unprecedented expansion of social welfare programs -- the hallmark of AKP governments. But before examining the details of these parallel transformations, we first situate them in a historical context of the Turkish state's general approach to and discourse on the Kurdish question.

The Kurdish Question, Underdevelopment and Territorial Consolidation

After World War I, the political geography of the Middle East was completely transformed. With the emergence of nation states after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Kurdish regions were divided into four nation states (Izady 2015, McDowell 2004). The first few decades of the Turkish Republic witnessed intermittent Kurdish uprisings, which were suppressed through harsh military measures and accompanying assimilation policies. Although these policies enabled the Turkish state to contain Kurdish dissent and maintain a conflict-free environment, they did not result in the economic, social, and cultural incorporation of the region into Turkey (Yegen 2003).

Beginning in the 1950s and intensifying in the 1960s, Turkish nationalism prompted the association of the Kurdish issue with the problem of regional underdevelopment and disparity. However, this renewed attention to the eastern and southeastern (Kurdish) regions did not

emanate primarily from concern about economic underdevelopment and poverty. The Turkish political elite at the time sought to strengthen the country's territorial and national unity by incorporating the marginalized Kurdish region into the national economy. In other words, in the case of Kurds, development was not considered a problem in and of itself but rather a part of the broader issue of national security and politico-economic consolidation (Yegen 2003).

With the emergence of the PKK in the late 1970s and Kurdish mobilization's rapid evolvement into a mass movement, the Kurdish issue took a new turn. Considering it a threat to national security, the Turkish state took strict military measures and enacted a state of emergency in the Kurdish region in 1987. To buttress its counter-insurgency war efforts, the state also established a local militia to assist the Turkish army in the region.

While the Turkish state associated the Kurdish question with secessionist terror, basing its resolution primarily on military measures, the problem's socio-economic aspects have also remained high on politicians' agendas. Close examination of government programs has attested to this dual approach to the Kurdish issue since the 1980s. With the exception of the first two AKP governments (2002-2007), all Turkish governments since the 1980s have spared some space for the discussion of the Kurdish question. Although the words "Kurd" or "Kurdish" have never been mentioned in these discussions (because of the systematic denial policy of the Turkish state) it is clear that economic problems of the Kurdish region (referred to as "southeastern and eastern" regions in government documents) have been a significant source of government concern. It is clear, though, that post-1980 were still following in the footsteps of their predecessors in their approach to the problems of regional disparities and underdevelopment. The context in which these issues were raised by governments of the era

reveal that references to underdevelopment and regional disparities were always embedded within the framework of national security and prevention of terror. More significantly, almost all government programs associate regional disparities between the West and the East with unrest in the region – the former being a primary cause of the latter. The 55th government's program is a good example of this approach, as it identifies the Kurdish question with socioeconomic disparities and regional underdevelopment, thereby deeming them major threats to national security.

Composed of the center-right *Anavatan Partisi* (ANAP, Motherland Party), the *Demokrat Türkiye Partisi* (DTP, Democratic Turkey Party), and the Kemalist, center-left *Demokratik Sol Parti* (DSP, Democratic Left Party), the 55th government came to power in 1997, an era during which counterinsurgency war culminated in the region. In the lengthy section allocated to discussion of the Kurdish question (one of the lengthiest sections among all government programs since the 1980s), the ANAP-DSP-DTP government defines the issue primarily as a socioeconomic one, completely denying its ethnic character:

"The problems of Southeastern Anatolia do not stem from ethnic reasons but rather from social, economic, and geographical reasons; the feudal structure of the region; and ploy and sedition of external forces." (TBMM 1997)

Having identified the problem as such, they proposed an action plan that suggest the deployment of socioeconomic measures as part of their anti-terror strategy:

"the serious security problem in the region shall be assessed in its entirety, together with the social and economic solutions and international relations, and in this framework the necessary policies shall be devised and resolutely executed." (TBMM 1997)

The program then provides a comprehensive list of policy measures meant to resolve the region's "security problem". These policies comprise a wide array of socioeconomic

measures including massive infrastructure projects such as the *Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi* (GAP, or Southern Anatolia Project); the provision of subsidies for the improvement of agriculture, husbandry, and industry; the creation of new employment opportunities; and new investments in education infrastructure. This list suggests that almost all socioeconomic measures taken to improve the region were also an integral part of a counterinsurgency strategy, at least in the eyes of the 55th government.

Further evidence from parliamentary proceedings indicates that the association of Kurdish unrest with socioeconomic backwardness extends beyond government programs to policy-makers in general. Parliamentary debates on laws regarding national security since the 1980s reveal that 11 of the 17 debates make at least one direct reference to the connection between socioeconomic factors such as underdevelopment and poverty and Kurdish unrest. A good example of this is the debate on Law no 4325 ("Law on Job Creation and Incentives to Encourage Investments in the State of Emergency Region and Regions with Development Priority"), which was legislated in 1998. The law was presented as a measure meant to alleviate regional disparities, primarily in the regions where state of emergency rule was in effect (i.e. the Kurdish majority regions). The law introduced a grand policy proposal which included tax incentives, free public land for newly established enterprises, lower social security premiums, and many other incentives for entrepreneurs to stimulate investments in the Kurdish region. The law was supported by the opposition, and lengthy discussions were held on the evils of underdevelopment and the immediacy of socioeconomic incentives for national security. In his introductory speech on behalf of the government, Zekeriya Temizel, the Minister of Justice at

the time, strongly emphasized the socioeconomic causes of terror and the necessity of taking economic measures in the fight on terror:

> "As you know, a particular part of our country has been under the state of emergency rule for more than ten years. Security forces put up an extraordinary fight to dry up the sources of terror, and they made quite a progress, but eradication of the sources of terror cannot be restricted to the struggle of the military forces. Economic problems, which are the primary source of terror in the region, should also be eradicated, and this is one of the fundamental duties of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. For years, they talked about the economic sources of terror, they talked about millions of unemployed youths who are sitting in coffeehouses all day long, and how all these fed the terror, but no concrete steps have been taken. Taking no concrete steps and expecting the army to eradicate the terror is like building a castle in the air, and Turkey had done this for a long time." (TBMM 1998, Law no.4325).

According to Temizel, the aim of this law was not simply to alleviate economic disparities between regions. Rather, this was a law designed specifically for prevention of terror through economic means:

> "Dear congressmen, this bill is not about providing economic incentives [to underdeveloped regions]. I repeat, the bill we proposed is not a bill that encourages investment all across Turkey. (…) Yes, far-reaching legal regulations should be made to encourage investment in the country, but the bill we proposed to you is not a bill that encourages investment in the regions with priority in development. It is, as befits the name, a bill about the state of emergency region. What we proposed in this bill is to eradicate the economic sources of terror and contribute to the struggle of security forces in their fight against terrorism." (TBMM 1998, Law no.4325)

MPs from opposition parties also emphasized the importance of taking economic measures against the fight on terror. Saffet Arıkan Bedük, an MP from the center-right *Doğru Yol Paritisi* (DYP, True Path Party), stated that:

> The general purpose of this law is to rapidly develop those regions which have remained the most underdeveloped, and for that reason, have been subject to all kinds of political exploitation. Developmental

> inequalities and income disparities in this region directly relate to peace and security. If we properly analyze the origins of the terrorist events that have taken place in the State of Emergency Region we can see that low levels of income, employment, and development have led to the acceleration of these events and their continuation into the present (TBMM 1998, Law no.4325).

The center-left Kemalist *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (CHP, or Republican People's Party) and the Islamist *Refah Partisi* (RP, or Welfare Party) also supported the law, which, as they suggested, would "eradicate unemployment and economic sources of terrorism" (TBMM 1998, Law no.4325). Nonetheless, CHP and RP representatives proposed that the law should cover other eastern and southeastern provinces where the PKK was not especially strong. RP representative Aslan Polat was especially vocal about this point. He suggested that in the absence of economic incentives provided by the law, these cities would remain underdeveloped and poor and hence attract terrorist activities. Under such circumstances, according to Aslan, residents of these cities would "end up migrating to the west, crowding the slums," and thereby becoming a source of unrest in these urban centers.

In sum, Turkish politicians believed that one of the main causes of separatist terrorism was the underdevelopment of the southeast. Because the very existence of Kurds was denied, economic underdevelopment of the region was the only way to explain unrest in southeastern Anatolia. The idea that the lack of infrastructural investments and industry was the main cause of the problem in the region was inherited from state discourse of the 1960s and 70s. According to this perspective, regional underdevelopment was "the swamp" that bred separatist terrorism in the region. Separatist terrorists, it was claimed, fanned the flame, deceived southeasterners who were fed up with poverty, pitting them against the state. Any effort

ignoring underdevelopment as the prime cause of the problem would fall short of drying up "the swamp" and would therefore eventually fail.

Thereby, in an effort to "dry up the swamp," Turkish governments coupled military measures with socioeconomic ones. However, the character and scale of these economic measures have demonstrated significant changes over time. While the 1980s and early 1990s paradigm of socioeconomic intervention centered on huge regional development projects, this large-scale territorial approach to development has gradually lost its dominance, as individual-scale governmental programs (like social assistance) aimed to improve the wellbeing of the population have gained popularity among policy circles. The following discussion focuses on this shift in Turkish governments' socioeconomic measures targeting the region and explores its relationship with the transformation of the Kurdish movement.

From Regional Development to the Well-Being of the Population: Shifting Scales of Political Containment Through Socio-Economic Means

In the 1970s, the most ambitious regional development project in Turkish history, *Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi* (GAP), was launched as a huge infrastructural investment project consisting of the construction of a series of dams, hydroelectric stations, and irrigation canals in the Tigris-Euphrates River Basin. As discussed above, this was a time when the Turkish state reframed the Kurdish question as a matter of "regional backwardness," and for state authorities, the GAP was not only the single most effective remedy to the long-lived underdevelopment of the "east" (Özok 2004), but also a practical tool designed to handle the Kurdish issue without acknowledging its ethnic and political aspects. It is no surprise, therefore, that almost all post-1980 governments[iii] proposed to invest in the GAP, extending its activities

as a solution to “separatist terror” in the region.

With the PKK’s declaration of a guerrilla war in 1984, the Turkish state used the GAP as a means of territorial control in the Kurdish region. In the first years of the armed conflict, the Turkish military remained ineffective in sustaining control over the territory. Having been stationed at either military bases or remote posts, and lacking the necessary agility to quickly navigate the territory, Turkish armed forces maintained only a nodal presence across the Kurdish region (Özcan 2017). This rendered them incapable of responding to the hit-and-run tactics of the PKK guerrillas, who had extensive topographic knowledge of the region and good logistical support from locals. In the face of this military disadvantage, the state changed its military strategy, training its troops in counterinsurgency tactics while simultaneously inventing more effective ways of controlling the territory. It is for this reason that the GAP acquired a new spatial function in serving national security post-1980; this function was to reconfigure the landscape by constructing dams to restrict guerilla movement (Jongerden 2007, 2010).

The GAP’s significance for the containment of Kurdish unrest, however, was not restricted to its spatial-military function. In line with the shifting dynamics of the Kurdish conflict in the late 1980s and early 1990s, governments reconsidered the GAP’s socioeconomic significance and reutilized it as a non-military means of political containment, focusing on population rather than infrastructural investment. Various social development components, ranging from education and health services to projects targeting poor women in the region, were incorporated into the GAP (Özok 2004). Signifying a shift in the state’s approach toward implementing social projects meant to improve the well-being of the population, this transformation took place in a historical context marked by two strategic developments: a

historic shift in the PKK's mobilization strategies and the intensification of the Turkish state's counterinsurgency war in the region.

By the end of 1980s, the PKK embraced a new strategy called "Serhildan" (revolt), similar to the Palestinian Intifada. As part of this strategy, they called hundreds of thousands of Kurds to armed and civil disobedience. The rebellion in Nusaybin, a town near the Syrian border, marked the beginning of Serhildan, and the riots quickly spread to other Kurdish cities. The longstanding popular unrest in urban centers was accompanied by the escalation of guerilla activity (Figure 1), rendering the PKK a serious threat to the Turkish state. As a response to this growing unrest, Turkish military forces intensified their activity in the region, deploying aggressive counterinsurgency tactics which targeted Kurds as a whole. Forceful displacement became the most widespread counterinsurgency method used by the Turkish army as a means of territorial control. Over the course of a couple of years, armed forces depopulated rural areas and forcibly displaced millions of peasants and deployed paramilitaries to seize these areas.

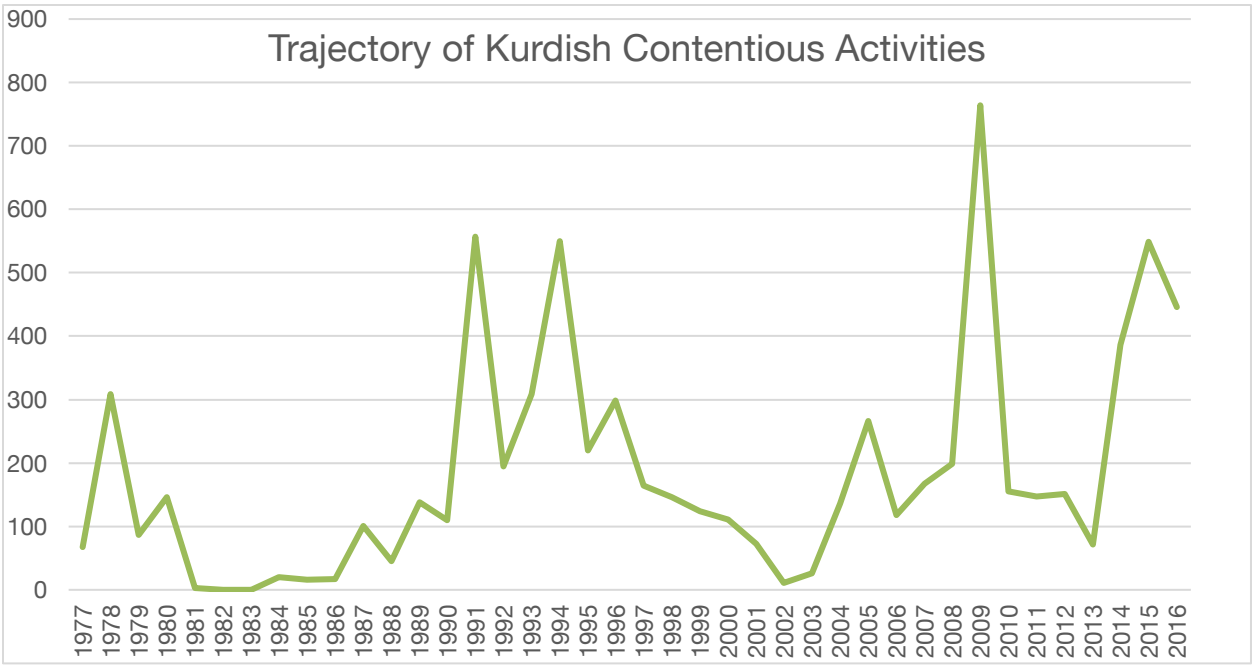


Figure 1: Number of Kurdish-led protests in Turkey (1977-2016). EMW Protest Database[iv]

Although counterinsurgency strategies such as forceful displacement had been "successful" in maintaining territorial control over rural areas, they had nonetheless engendered another problem: a growing number of Kurdish immigrants. In just a few years, millions of Kurdish peasants flooded into cities where they were mostly incorporated into labor force as unskilled informal proletarians (Göçder 2001, Yörük 2009). In sum, the internal displacement has proletarianized the Kurds, while giving a significant Kurdish ethnic color to the working-class neighborhoods of big Turkish cities (Yörük 2012).

In the 1990s, the dispossessed and newly-urbanized Kurdish population began to form a political threat to Turkey's status quo. After the end of the Cold War, the PKK underwent another significant transformation in its ideological stance, organizational structure, and political strategies. Gradually abandoning the logic of national liberation and secession, the

organization articulated a new language of politics grounded in idioms of rights, democracy, and constitutional citizenship (Özsoy 2013, Ercan 2013). In line with this transformation, various political parties, NGOs, and grassroots organizations were formed, constituting the legal wing of the "Kurdish Political Movement." Kurds organized around these urban-based, legal, left-wing political parties, gaining unprecedented associational capacity. Becoming one of the main participants in grassroots political activism in urban centers, displaced Kurds both posed a potential threat to the Turkish establishment and provided a popular support base for various political parties. Throughout the 1990s, these urban Kurds became increasingly radicalized, carrying out massive protests and uprisings in both the Kurdish region and in western metropolises of Turkey.

Close examination of government documents and parliamentary proceedings of the 1990s reveal that poor immigrant populations constituted a significant concern for Turkish authorities. Without exception, governments of the latter half of the 1990s referred to migration and immigrants as one of the top burning issues of the country, and their programs underlined the importance of taking socioeconomic measures to "embrace" these (immigrant) populations who had lost all economic means of survival (TBMM 1995). Parliamentary proceedings regarding anti-terror laws shed further light on Turkish state authorities' reasons for concern regarding these issues. During the parliamentary discussions on law 4325 in 1998, for instance, RP representative Aslan Polat argued for the provision of economic incentives in state of emergency regions:

> Let's, by all means, promote industrialization and stop migration from Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. Look, according to research, those who migrate from these regions head mostly for Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa, and Antalya. So, the

> main source of all problems in these provinces is migration from the East. (TBMM 1998, Law no.4325).

Center-right ANAP representative Necati Güllülü made a similar point with respect to the evils of migration from the "East" to "West" and urged the parliament to take measures to ameliorate the region's poor economic conditions as a way of preventing "social explosion" in both the east and the west:

> I want to draw your attention to something; I observed that the MPs of Western provinces were calm and content. This law is considered a measure to prevent migration to big cities [in the West], so it constitutes an obstacle to our people who migrate from the East and Southeast to the West. We always complain about the emigrant provinces. As such, the provinces in the West, the immigrant-receiving provinces feel uneasy about this. Why? Because of the services related to infrastructures, because of cultural erosion, and because immigrant-receiving provinces had been politically and economically affected from this influx of people more so than the emigrant provinces. And this is a social fact! In this respect, this draft law should be acknowledged not only as a measure for curbing migration from Eastern and Southeastern provinces, but also as a crucial measure of preventing social explosions and social events in our developed regions. (TBMM 1998, Law no.4325)

Once considered a regional problem concerning "eastern and southeastern" Turkey, the Kurdish question evolved into a nationwide problem concerning the population as a whole, the term "social" gaining renewed significance in policies targeting the region. As previously stated, this trend first manifested itself in the transformation of the GAP from a huge infrastructural investment project into a "social" development project aimed at improving multiple spheres of life including those immediately concerning the wellbeing of the population; such concerns included improvements in health and education, as well as the empowerment of women and youth in the region (Özok 2004). Over years, this highly politically-motivated concern about the wellbeing of poor Kurdish populations would mark the welfare policies and result in an unprecedented expansion of social assistance programs in Turkey.

The Kurdish Question and Expansion of Social Assistance in Turkey

The historical trajectory of Turkey's social assistance programs demonstrates interesting parallels to the evolution of Kurdish politics. Turkey's first formal and most extensive social assistance program, Yeşil Kart was launched in 1992 – a critical year for the Kurdish movement, as it marked the peak of Kurdish protest activities over the years (Figure 1).

Yeşil Kart provided free healthcare insurance for the unemployed poor. When DYP leader Süleyman Demirel introduced Yeşil Kart during his election campaign in 1991, more than a decade had passed since the trend of enacting neoliberal economic policies began in Turkey. Structural adjustment programs following the 1980 coup d'état had rendered the developmentalist promises of the Turkish state impractical. The state had abandoned its mission of becoming the main provider of employment opportunities. The new export-oriented, neoliberal economic model required the private sector to cut down on labor costs and social security, leaving many without any hope for formal employment and thereby in need of social assistance. Under these circumstances, Demirel's promise of a free healthcare program attracted widespread attention, contributing to his success in the elections.

But Demirel had also made other promises during his election campaign. As an experienced Turkish politician, he was well aware of the growing political threat in the Kurdish region. So alongside the promise of incorporating the poor into the social welfare system through Yeşil Kart, Demirel's public speeches also included a fervent pledge to wage an uncompromising war in the Kurdish region (Aljazeera Turk 2015). Winning the election in 1991, Demirel did keep his promises. The Turkish military began a comprehensive counter-insurgency

campaign targeting Kurds as a whole. Interestingly enough, Demirel's other, more benevolent, promise, Yeşil Kart, had some common characteristics with his belligerent promises.

Yeşil Kart was first enacted in the "eastern and southeastern" regions of Turkey, where the counterinsurgency war displaced and dispossessed millions of Kurds. However, Yeşil Kart's commonalities with military measures targeting the Kurdish region were not limited to their geographical focus. As explained above, Turkey had witnessed one of the biggest population movements in its history, over a span of just a couple of years during the 1990s. This displacement resulted in the mostly-rural Kurdish population's dispersal across the country. Under these circumstances, social assistance programs served as an effective mechanism of tracking and gathering information on these people. As a means-tested program, Yeşil Kart also provided state authorities (including social assistance officials, police, and gendarmerie) with new mechanisms of collecting detailed information about applicants and beneficiaries – a process that renders these populations more governable (Foucault 1991, Ferguson and Gupta 2002, Gupta 2012, Yoltar 2009). Seen from this perspective, it is not surprising that anti-terror laws of the 1990s include specific clauses regarding the provision of social assistance to the displaced (Laws no. 3713, 4131, 4325, 4404, 5233, 5562).

While Turkish social assistance programs emerged in the 1990s, their scope remained somewhat limited until the 2000s. Coming to power in 2002 in the aftermath of the devastating 2001 economic crisis, the AKP drastically expanded means-tested social assistance and free healthcare programs for the poor, sharply increasing the number of beneficiaries and the share of allocated government budgets. This included dramatic increases in free health care, conditional cash transfers, food stamps, housing, education, and disability aid for the poor.

The AKP emerged from a long Islamist political tradition of *Milli Görüş* (National Vision), which has historically organized in the slums of urban centers. The party embraced a neoliberal economic agenda by relaxing financial markets, accelerating privatizations and layoffs, limiting agricultural subsidies, and liquidating the social rights of private and public formal sector employees. Its main agenda has been to dismantle economic statism so as to attract international capital, as well as to loosen political secularism in order to gain the popular support of Muslim masses. Despite diverging from its predecessors' radical anti-capitalism and embracing a neoliberal economic agenda, the AKP continued to appeal to the poor masses, including the Kurds (Tuğal 2007, 2009).

The 2000s was also a turning point in the history of the Kurdish movement. Following the Turkish state's 1999 arrest of its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK immediately declared a unilateral ceasefire that continued until June 2004 and transformed the Marxist-Leninist party model into a "Democracy Congress." Over a couple of years, the Kurdish movement turned toward radical democracy in an effort to render the state ineffective in the region (Jongerden and Akkaya 2012, Ercan 2013, Ozsoy 2013). Since 2005, the movement has restructured itself, becoming a societal organization which aims at presenting an alternative to the capitalist nation-state model. To this aim, various assemblies, political parties, NGOs, and grassroots organizations have been founded, all seeking to organize different segments of society in order to achieve political, cultural, and economic autonomy.

Throughout the early and mid-2000s, Kurdish political parties enhanced their political influence. Winning many municipal governments in the region with the slogan "We will manage our cities and ourselves on our own," Kurdish political parties gained access to unprecedented

human and material resources (Watts 2010). These municipalities and civil society organizations have also undertaken numerous activities with the purpose of alleviating poverty. These activities include the creation of job opportunities, in-kind assistance and healthcare services for the poor, the establishment of laundry centers in poor neighborhoods, and collective solutions to various local problems. Social assistance, hence, became a battle ground between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state.

In line with transformations in the Kurdish movement's strategies, the AKP developed a unique approach to the Kurdish question. Unlike previous Turkish governments which associated the issue with regional backwardness and terrorism, the AKP openly referred to Turkey's "Kurdish question" in its government program, defining the problem in terms of democratization, cultural rights, and integration. This represented a major break in Turkish political discourse, as it indicated a shift in the framing of the issue from a territorial question (regarding regional development and national unity) to a governmental problem (regarding political, cultural, and economic integration of the population).[v]

The shift toward governmental strategies regarding integration of the Kurdish population also manifested itself in the socioeconomic domain. Making social assistance an integral part of the Turkish welfare system, the AKP was also the first Turkish government to explicitly identify social assistance as a means of resolving the Kurdish question. As Yörük (2012) has demonstrated, the AKP era's social assistance programs are disproportionately directed to the Kurdish minority and region. His findings also show that during the mid-2000s, shares of the Kurdish-populated southeastern and eastern regions in total social assistance expenditures have largely increased, while all other non-Kurdish regions' shares have constantly shrunk.

AKP deputies' speeches in the parliament and addresses of government representatives also evince the AKP's new social assistance strategy for dealing with the Kurdish question. In 2004, the Law on Compensation of Harms due to Anti-terrorist Struggle (no. 5233) issued social assistance provision for the internally displaced people and those civilians who lost their financial resources during the armed conflict between the state and the PKK. Deputies from both the governing and opponent parties considered the law an effective strategy in the fight on terror and extended it in 2006 (Law no. 5562). During the debates on the law in 2006, the AKP representative Osman Aslan defended the law proposal as a mechanism to undermine the social and economic bases of "ethnic terror." Counter-insurgency function of the law was emphasized in Aslan's words: "The only way to finish terrorism is to undermine its social base, that is, to keep those people whom the terrorists manage to attract in the legal ground. The thing to do is not oppression, provocation or discrimination but a faster integration of these people into the society. [...] This law was born out of a search for ways of separating the people from the terrorists and garnering the support of the people against terrorism" (TBMM 2006, Law No. 5562). He concluded his words by stating that the original 5233 law was a success as it improved the trust of Kurdish people to the state. Another AKP deputy, Naci Aslan also placed an emphasis on the counter-propaganda function of the law and said that it undermined the terrorists' claims that "the state does not regard [Kurds] as first-class citizens" (TBMM 2006, Law No. 5562).

The strategy of using social assistance to quell Kurdish unrest gained a renewed significance in the early 2010s with the escalation of the armed conflict between the PKK and the state. In July 2012, the PKK intensified its guerilla activity and gained a de facto control over

the countryside of Hakkari province bordering Iran and Iraq. Coupled with the organization's call for revolt, these developments accentuated the worries of the Turkish public about a possible Kurdish Spring following in the footsteps of the Arab Spring. In a live TV show that the Prime Minister at the time, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan joined, a journalist asked him about the turmoil in the Kurdish region: "It is a reality that in eastern regions Kurdish people support the PKK. This is what helps the PKK survive. How do you think this support can be cut?" Erdoğan's answer was telling: "We are in the Ramadan month and six ministers and many deputies are in the region. They are surveying the region. Ramadan is the month to help the poor and we have distributed 350 thousand packets of food aid across the country" (www.ntvmsnbc.com, August 5, 2012).

Such efforts of containing Kurdish dissent by providing state aid also marked the recent expansion of social assistance programs in the region following the military offensive against the Kurdish strongholds in 2015 and 2016. Once again, this strategy found its expression in former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu February 2016 speech where he declared his government's new counter-insurgency action plan. "We will bandage all the wounds of terror," Davutoğlu begins. Continuing, he announces, "God willing, we will heal the wounds of each individual of this nation who were forced to migrate. We will wipe away their tears, embrace them, and prepare them for the future. Do you think we will leave our citizens in Sur, Cizre, Silopi [Kurdish strongholds that became the main targets of the offensive] to the mercy of villains? We made all the arrangements beforehand. We are now starting our Family Social Support Program (*Aile Sosyal Destek Programı*), first in the [Kurdish] region. We will meet every need of every poor family." (Cumhuriyet 2016). A statement that puts flesh on the bones of

famous motto which AKP representatives pronounce at every opportunity: “Showing benevolence to the people while fighting terror with force” (“Halkımıza şefkatle, teröre kudretle davranacağız”) (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, 2016)

The use of social policy and particularly of social assistance as a counter-insurgency to contain the Kurdish unrest has been a strategy pursued by Turkish governments since 1990s. Our analysis of official documents from the 2000s illustrated that the AKP government is the one that has institutionalized, systematized and extended this strategy to the outmost extent so as to cover millions of Kurds in the eastern and western parts of the country alike with extensive social assistance programs.

Conclusion

Over the last couple of decades, the Turkish state has expanded social assistance programs to an unprecedented extent. The existing literature on the Turkish welfare system change has been largely limited to structural explanations, describing the shift toward social assistance as an almost automatic response to economic and demographic changes in Turkey that transformed the forms of social need for welfare. These structural explanations have considered rising poverty, growing financial constraints, aging and declining dependency ratios as the main causes of welfare system changes but have overlooked political factors that mediate and translate these pressures into policies. Drawing on an earlier tradition of scholarship which placed a strong emphasis on the role of grassroots politics in welfare policy making, this article examined the emergence and expansion of social assistance programs in Turkey in relation to the shifting dynamics of the conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement.

We have shown that Kurdish issue has long been considered as both a national security concern and an economic backwardness problem in Turkish state discourse, and various socioeconomic measures have been coupled with military ones to resolve the problem. However, when we examine these socioeconomic measures, we observe significant shifts in their form and scale: An approach that previously focused mainly on territory (a military-cum-regional development approach) was complemented with policies whose main target was population (military-cum-social assistance). We have argued that this shift, which is also a driving force in the expansion of social assistance in Turkey cannot be properly understood without thinking it with the coeval transformations in the character of the Kurdish conflict as well as the strategies of the Kurdish movement. As the Kurdish movement evolved into a mass movement supporting democratization and political, cultural, and socioeconomic rights, the Turkish governments have expanded social assistance and directed it to Kurds with an explicit intention of containing the Kurdish unrest.

Political exigencies which led to the emergence and expansion of Turkish social assistance programs are not unique to Turkey. Radical popular movements that organize around various political, ethnic and religious grounds exist in many countries in the Global South and it is likely that political concerns like containing these movements have been effective in shaping macro-level changes observed in welfare systems of these countries. Therefore, investigating such political dynamics through both quantitative and qualitative analyses would shed further light on the recent welfare state expansion in the Global South.

References

Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi. (2016). Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi Grup Konuşması.

Akkaya, A. H., & Jongerden, J. (2012). Reassembling the Political: The PKK and the project of Radical Democracy. *European Journal of Turkish Studies. Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey*, (14).

Arrighi, G. (1990). Marxist Century, American Century: The Making and Remaking of the World Labour Movement. *New Left Review*, (179), 29–63.

Ballard, R. (2012). Geographies of development: Without the poor. *Progress in Human Geography*, *36*(5), 563–572.

Ballard, R. (2013). Geographies of development II: Cash transfers and the reinvention of development for the poor. *Progress in Human Geography*, *37*(6), 811–821.

Ballard, R. (2015). Geographies of development III: Militancy, insurgency, encroachment and development by the poor. *Progress in Human Geography*, *39*(2), 214–224.

Barrientos, A., & Hulme, D. (2008). *Social protection for the poor and poorest in developing countries: reflections on a quiet revolution*. Manchester: Brooks World Poverty Institute.

Başbakan Terörle Mücadele Eylem Planını Açıkladı. (n.d.). *İhlas Haber Ajansı*. Retrieved from http://www.iha.com.tr/haber-basbakan-terorle-mucadele-eylem-planini-acikladi-533393/

Bebbington, A. (2007). Social Movements and the Politicization of Chronic Poverty. *Development and Change*, *38*(5), 793–818.

Brooks, C., & Manza, J. (2006). Why Do Welfare States Persist? *Journal of Politics*, *68*(4), 816–827.

Buğra, A. (2017). Social Policy and Different Dimensions of Inequality in Turkey: A Historical Overview. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 1–14.

Buğra, A., & Adar, S. (2008). Social policy change in countries without mature welfare states: The case of Turkey. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, *38*, 83–106.

Bugra, A., & Candas, A. (2011). Change and continuity under an eclectic social security regime: The case of Turkey. *Middle Eastern Studies*, *47*(3), 515–528.

Buğra, A., & Keyder, Ç. (2003). New poverty and the changing welfare regime of Turkey. *Ankara: UNDP*, S1–56.

Buğra, A., & Keyder, Ç. (2006). The Turkish Welfare Regime in Transformation. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *16*(3), 211–228.

Burgoon, B. (2006). On Welfare and Terror Social Welfare Policies and Political-Economic Roots of Terrorism. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *50*(2), 176–203.

Davis, M. (2004). *Planet of Slums*. Verso.

Davutoğlu'ndan 10 maddelik Terörle Mücadele Eylem Planı. (2016, February 5). *Cumhuriyet*. Retrieved from http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/475978/Davutoglu_ndan_10_maddelik_Terorle_Mucadele_Eylem_Plani.html

Dorlach, T., & Savaşkan, O. (2017). The Political Economy of Economic and Social Policy in Contemporary Turkey: An Introduction to the Special Issue. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 1–7.

Eder, M. (2010). Retreating state? Political economy of welfare regime change in Turkey. *Middle East Law and Governance*, *2*(2), 152–184.

Ercan, H. (2013). Talking to the ontological other: armed struggle and the negotiations between the Turkish state and the PKK. *Dialectical Anthropology*, *37*(1), 113–122.

Farnsworth, K., & Irving, Z. M. (Eds.). (2011). *Social Policy in Challenging Times: Economic Crisis and Welfare Systems*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Ferguson, J. (2015). *Give a man a fish : reflections on the new politics of distribution.* Durham ; London : Duke University Press.

Ferguson, J., & Gupta, A. (2002). Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality. *American Ethnologist*, *29*(4), 981–1002.

Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, P. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Göç-Der. (2001). Göç-Der Araştırma Raporu 1991-2001.

Goldberg, G. S., & Rosenthal, M. G. (2002). *Diminishing Welfare: A Cross-national Study of Social Provision*. Westport, Connecticut - London: Auburn House.

Goode, J. G., & Maskovsky, J. (Eds.). (2002). *The New Poverty Studies: The Ethnography of Power, Politics and Impoverished People in the United States*. New York: NYU Press.

Gough, I., Wood, G. D., Barrientos, A., Bevan, P., Davis, P., & Room, G. (2004). *Insecurity and Welfare Regimes in Asia, Africa, and Latin America: Social Policy in Development Contexts*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gupta, A. (2012). *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India* (2012 edition). Durham: Duke University Press Books.

Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. R. (2008). *Development, Democracy, and Welfare States: Latin America, East Asia, and Eastern Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hemerijck, A. (2012). *Changing Welfare States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hong, L., & Kongshoj, K. (2014). China's Welfare Reform: An Ambiguous Road Towards a Social Protection Floor. *Global Social Policy*, *14*(3), 352–368.

Huber, E., & Stephens, J. D. (2001). *Development and Crisis of the Welfare State: Parties and Policies in Global Markets*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. Retrieved from

Iversen, T. (2001). The Dynamics of Welfare State Expansion: Trade Openness, Deindustrialization and Partisan Politics. In P. Pierson (Ed.), *The New Politics of the Welfare State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Izady, M. (1992). *The Kurds: A Concise History And Fact Book* (1 edition). Washington: Taylor & Francis.

James Ferguson, author, & Akhil Gupta, author. (2002). Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality. *American Ethnologist*, (4), 981.

Jongerden, J. (2007). *The settlement issue in Turkey and the Kurds : an analysis of spatial policies, modernity and war*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.

Jongerden, J. (2010). Dams and Politics in Turkey: Utilizing Water, Developing Conflict. *Middle East Policy*, *XVII*, 137–143.

Keyder, Ç. (1993). *Ulusal kalkınmacılığın iflası* (Gnl.2. bs). Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları.

Li, T. M. (2007). *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press Books.

Maskovsky, J., & Goode, J. G. (2001). *The New Poverty Studies: The Ethnography of Power, Politics, and Impoverished People in the United States*. New York, London: New York University Press.

McDowall, D. (2004). *A Modern History of the Kurds* (3rd ed. edition). London: I.B.Tauris.

Offe, C. (1984). *Contradictions of the Welfare State* (Mit Press edition). Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Özcan, Ö. (2014). Yüksekova'da Sınır Deneyimleri: Bir "Sınır Kacakçılığı" Hikayesi ve Barış Süreci. *Toplum ve Bilim*, *131*, 162–185.

Özok, N. (204AD). *Social Development as a Governmental Strategy in the Southeastern Anatolia Project*. Boğaziçi University, İstanbul.

Özsoy, H. (2013). Introduction: The Kurds' ordeal with Turkey in a transforming Middle East. *Dialectical Anthropology*, *37*(1).

Pierson, P. (1994). *Dismantling the Welfare State?: Reagan, Thatcher and the Politics of Retrenchment*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pierson, P. (2001). *The New Politics of the Welfare State*. Oxford University Press.

Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. A. (1971). *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Sanyal, K. (2013). *Rethinking Capitalist Development: Primitive Accumulation, Governmentality and Post-Colonial Capitalism* (1 edition). London: Routledge India.

Saraceno, C. (Ed.). (2002). *Social Assistance Dynamics in Europe: National and Local Poverty Regimes*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Seekings, J., & Nattrass, N. (2015). *Policy, politics and poverty in South Africa.* New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Silver, B. J. (2003). *Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalization Since 1870*. Cambridge University Press.

Soss, J., Fording, R. C., & Schram, S. F. (2011). *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race* (Chicago Studies in American Politics edition). Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press.

Stokke, K., & Tornquist, O. (2013). *Democratization in the Global South: The Importance of Transformative Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Taydas, Z., & Peksen, D. (2012). Can states buy peace? Social welfare spending and civil conflicts. *Journal of Peace Research*, *49*(2), 273–287.

TBMM. (1995). Türkiye Cumhuriyeti III. Çiller Hükümeti Programı. Retrieved from https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/hukumetler/HP52.htm

TBMM. (1997). Türkiye Cumhuriyeti III. Yılmaz Hükümeti Programı. Retrieved from https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/hukumetler/HP55.htm

TBMM. (1998). TBMM Tutanak Dergisi 36. Cilt Fihristi. Retrieved from www.tbmm.gov.tr

TBMM. (2006). TBMM Tutanak Dergisi 126. Fihristi. Retrieved from www.tbmm.gov.tr

Teror magduru ailelere 500 tl bayram harcligi dagitildi. (n.d.). *Www.Ensonhaber.Com*. Retrieved from http://www.ensonhaber.com/teror-magduru-ailelere-500-lira-bayram-harcligi- 2016-06-27.html,

Trempe, R. (1983). The Struggles of French Miners for the Creation of Retirement Funds in the Nineteenth Century. In A.-M. Guillemard (Ed.), *Old Age and the Welfare State* (pp. 101–115). Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Tugal, C. (2007). NATO's Islamists. *New Left Review*, *44*, 5.

Tugal, C. (2009). *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism*. Stanford University Press.

Wacquant, L. (2009). *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity*. Durham NC: Duke University Press.

Watts, N. (2010). *Activists in Office: Kurdish politics and protest in Turkey*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Yeğen, M. (2003). *Devlet söyleminde Kürt sorunu.* İstanbul : İletişim Yayınları, 2003.

Yoltar, Ç. (2009). When the Poor Need Health Care: Ethnography of State and Citizenship in Turkey. *Middle Eastern Studies*, *45*(5), 769–782.

Yörük, E. (2006). *Social Relations of Production Within the Workshop System in Istanbul's Apparel Industry* (Master's Thesis). Bogazici University (Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences), Istanbul.

Yörük, E. (2009). Labor Discipline in the Informal Economy: The Semi-formal Professional Code of Istanbul's Apparel Urban Factory. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, *53*, 27–61.

Yörük, E. (2012). Welfare Provision as Political Containment The Politics of Social Assistance and the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey. *Politics & Society*, *40*(4), 517–547.

Yörük, E., & Çemen, R. (Forthcoming). How Riots and World Bank Recommendations Shape Global Social Assistance Provision. In *Social Protection in the Global South: Understanding the Role of External Actors*. Palgrave Macmillan.

[i] We identified social assistance and counterinsurgency related legislation by browsing all issues of the Official Gazette since 1980. Then we downloaded the bills, their preambles and minutes of the parliamentary sessions as well as all national and regional development reports and special reports on social policy-related issues. We also reached government programs and speeches made at AKP's weekly party meetings. We uploaded these documents to NVivo and created a systematic coding structure to categorize the selected quotations from documents by legislative era, political party, represented province as well as designated topics. Our coding technique is based on in-depth reading of the texts as well as word searches with an extensive list of keywords, complemented with analyses with cross coding queries.

[ii] It may be claimed that this disproportionate targetting is in fact caused by the relatively higher rates of poverty and informality among the Kurdish population in Turkey. Nothwithstanding the fact that the Kurdish region and population have historically been economically marginalized and excluded from formal employment-based social security networks in Turkey, statistical analysis shows that Kurds' chances of receiving social assistance benefits are higher even after controlled for poverty and informality (Yörük 2012).

[iv] The protest dataset is based on the coding of protest-related news articles in daily Cumhuriyet for the period between 1970 and 2017. For details, please see emw.ku.edu.tr

[v] AKP's bringing in the question of population and governmentality does not mean that previous concerns about territorial sovereignty and national security totally lost their significance.