Turkey as a Simulated Country

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Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

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This book first published 2019

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-5275-1821-3
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-1821-6

This work is dedicated in remembrance of my mother, and to my dear sister Ayşegül Çimen, who refreshes me when the diligence that I can only maintain for two hours at most fails me, who brings kindness, virtue and wisdom to my life, who supported the writing phase of this thesis with her precious guidance, who believes in my photography projects, and who sometimes upsets and sometimes sets me to work with the candid, dignified smile that I haven't sorted out yet, who is the woman 'I have been created from the same rib…'

Hayatımda ancak bir iki saat diri tutabildiğim iştiyakıma serinlik katan, yanı sıra güzellik, erdem ve bilgelik katan, tez sürecime ve fotoğraf projelerime değerli telkinleriyle destek veren, içten, vakur ve henüz hala çözemediğim tebessümüyle insana kah ıstırap verip kah işe koşan, 'aynı kaburga kemiğinden yaratıldığım' sevgili ablam Ayşegül Çimen'e ve rahmetli anneciğimin aziz anısına...

My thanks go to Bülent Somay, who advised me while this project was still a graduate thesis, Sibel Yardımcı, who helped develop my thesis into this book and read countless drafts of my efforts, Selim Süme, who feeds me, by reading documents on the philosophy of photography, Merve Unsal, who helped me to translate this work, Umut Yıldırım, whose *Resistance* lectures extended my horizon with her passionate discussions, Yücel Tunca, who taught me technically how to use synchronized flash in my photography, and my dear friend Rumi Mert, for her great companionship and inner peace. Additional thanks go to Yeter Şahin for her sharp critique. Let me thank my dear father for insistently asking me when this project will finish, despite his doubts on my finalizing my work, and my dear sisters for their patience and favors during the writing process. Finally, my thanks to dear Jason Eskenazi who supported me psychologically during the writing process.

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INTRODUCTION

In his novel *A Mind at Peace*, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar talks about the ethnic and social adventures of the red mullet, until it reaches the dining table, using the concept of fate:

> "Tevfik's epicurean interests have attained the level of a philosophy of history. Just consider, if you will, the centuries-long labor of fate enabling us to eat this mullet together tonight. To begin with, as the poet Yahya Kemal explains, the waters of the Danube, the Volga, and the Don had to reach the Black Sea. Our forefathers had to get up and travel from Central Asia, and eventually settled in Istanbul. Furthermore, Sultan Mahmut II had to exile Nuran's great grandfather for being a Bektashi, from Istanbul to Manastır, where he would in turn marry the daughter of a wealthy major from Merzifon. My grandfather had to buy this manor house with the money earned from a Koran that he'd copied out to console himself after his wife left him, and that he'd offered for sale to 'who knows which' pasha…My young boy, you understand what I'm saying, don't you? The whole of an exalted Koran for the price of seven hundred fifty gold pieces…that is equivalent to this building and the land out back…Then, Nuran's father had to fall ill as a child, and his mother had to bequeath him to the good graces of Aziz Mahmut Hüdai Efendi, so when he grew up he'd be initiated into that patron master's dervish lodge, where he would befriend my father. Nuran had to be born…you, too, would come into this world…"[1]

Needless to say, a photograph's journey to our table is equally layered, seeping through ethnic and social filters. Just like the story of the red mullet with its numerous ups and downs, every photographic image requires a situation, and a historically specific concept. First, the twenty-six-year-old street vendor Muhammed Buazizi will fatally burn himself, out of desperation, in Tunisia. Through a series of linear developments, a domino effect will lead this act of rebellion to resonate in Yemen, Egypt,

[1] Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *A Mind at Peace*, trans. Erdag Göknar. (Archipelago Books: USA, 2008),180.

Libya, Syria, all across the Middle East, igniting the process now recognized as the Arab Spring (if not Arab Winter). In the town of Der'a in Syria, young people will write on walls, influenced by the Egyptian revolution, shouting out slogans against the regime, after the prayers at the mosque. The rebellion initiated by the youths who were tortured under state custody will lead to a civil war in Syria. The river Tigris, born in the land of Turkey, will flow from Turkey to Syria and to Iraq, merging with the Euphrates to become Sattularap. Perhaps one of the largest-scale exodus' of human history will begin. Rivers, mountains, destinies will come together to direct the Syrians in their migration. Some will stay behind in Syria, while some will migrate to Europe, family members will reunite years later, water will flow, and destiny will find its path, for better or for worse. Eric Nour Rehavi, a sixteen-year-old girl, will lose her father when a piece of shrapnel hits his body; she will have to leave their home during a bombardment; she will walk to the border with Turkey at Hatay for days alongside her mother and her siblings. She will work as a seasonal laborer during hazelnut harvesting in Giresun and cotton harvesting in Adana. We will meet in a small shop selling socks, in 2012, on a snowy day, leading to a friendship. She will only let me photograph her in 2014. These events that lead to our meeting with Eric Nour will then lead me to witness with my camera the plight of women under similar circumstances. Thus, the corpse-frame that I have isolated from the continuity of time through the portrait photograph will be transformed into a document of history which will be learned from, and remembered, in the future.

The first group of immigrants to arrive in Turkey from Syria when the civil war broke out was on April 29, 2011, and the immigration has continued in waves of millions of people for the last five years. This situation, which we could define as the largest influx of immigrants in the history of Turkey, with over four million asylum-seekers, has brought with it many changes, both positive and negative. During this process, migration to the city became an object of desire for the immigrants as well, adding to the city's composition of different identities and belongings, leading to increased rents and higher demands for cheap labor. Untaxed child laborers were used in many sectors, various types of illegal activity became prevalent. Diasporic spaces were formed in the parts of the city that were similar to the immigrants' worlds, socio-culturally. Restaurants, small markets, spice markets, call shops, that deal with bureaucratic paper work on housing and which also function as translation shops, became multi-cultural spaces that offered a track for immigrants. The immigrants created 'new fields' for both themselves and the old locals in their new homeland. These new fields were different from previous versions in many

ways, ranging from the color of the sidewalks to the smells in these neighborhoods. This situation, which gave new life to the dying city squares, was considered as something that brought down the level of 'development' in some places. However, this new human condition was forming a new language through a cultural shift, and it was multi-layered.

Numbers, which are narrators of wars, disasters, and major destruction, statistics, and scenes that constitute what Sontag calls 'image-glut' would not suffice to relay this multi-dimensional story. The academic research that grows exponentially over time, news, documentaries, exposés in magazines, and many other media outlets focus on the difficulties that the immigrants suffered in their new homeland, the kinds of treatment they were subjected to, and quotidian practices of life. What motivated my research, and the departure point, is a desire to share the diasporic space and form an intimate testament based on this particular space; a non-constructed testament. The focal point of this testament is Syrian women who are educated, widowed, and on their own (such as a woman who is a chemical engineer, who is washing dishes in a thirty square metre kebab shop, and other such testimonies of daily struggle), because women have always been regarded as the largest group of subalterns in the history of the world. The work you are holding in your hands examines Syrian women who migrated to Turkey, looking at their daily lives, and the subaltern practices that are reproduced in their relationships to the city. In this context, the methods that will give access to the multiple layers in the individual stories of the migrant women have been defined as life-story inquiry, and in-depth interviews.

In the first section, the subject matter has been defined as the areas of living that have been prepared for them in various cities across Turkey, and the experiences of these women in these areas. Syrians try to pursue their lives within the scope of their legal status, and identities which have been re-formed by the states they have migrated to. Even though a set of state-based regulations related to basic needs, such as education, occupation, and health have been established, Syrian refugees are perceived as the primary reason for the current economic crisis. What were the basic motives that made Syrian refugees the subjects of hate and lynching attempts? What made their status sub-political? Within this context, I have studied the results of the non-given legal status in the eyes of society.

First, the term 'asylum-seeker' made way for untaxed trade with Syrians. Then, the term 'guest' was perceived by the locals as meaning

that Turkey was a temporary stopover. Finally, 'temporary protection status' has implied acceptance, as a privilege given by the state.

Addressing questions such as "If men are a reality which reinforces the subalternity of women, is a widow-woman, raised within the Middle Eastern culture ,counted as subaltern twice, or is she counted as a liberated individual? In experiencing another space or culture away from a male profile marking the subalternity of women, are widowed women a subaltern group on their own, in terms of education, work, health, security, etc.? What kind of subalternity do they go through, and how do they look for ways of living and gaining recognition in a big city? What is the unbearable thing that feeds the lynching attempts against Syrian people, and who says the things being said about the women, in addition to the state practices? Whom does the dominant language belong to? A being that exists within the nation, but that is not national, is politically ostracized. The notion of 'long-lasting temporary' transitions from the temporal order, to spatial order. How can we continue to be in a place where we are not? Also, how can we manage to exist partially? How can we not spiritually exist where we are located physically? On the one hand is the community-based structure of the society we are rooted in, and on the other is the 'individual' order that we have discovered and have been subjected to in the process of immigration, and the contradictions of these two orders. This part analyzes the dynamics of dominant-subject relations within the society which have been changed by Syrian immigration. These relationships are considered within the conceptual frameworks of Agamben's naked life, Spivak's subaltern, Scott's resistance policies, and Homi Bhabha's mimicry.

The statistical data that I have used to look at the past three years, and the definitions and forms of existence, have led to situations and notions that have been redefined over time. This situation has led me to update my work throughout the writing process. For example, the form of relationship that James Scott defines as 'hidden transcript' is accepted as a form of putting on a metaphoric mask. However, the transcripts that have been constantly developing over the course of the process have led to what I call a horizontal condition of naturalization, and then replaced by a 'soft challenge' that I will elaborate on in detail later.

Before moving on to the second and third sections, where I think about the philosophy of photography and the photo-biographies respectively, I'd like to acknowledge that this book was made possible through the layered emotional states that the immigrants have evoked. The backbone of this

book is made up of the photographs, and the processes of taking those photographs would easily be the subject of another book. The reader will observe these processes throughout the book. In the process of researching this book over the last three years, there have been major changes in the 'homeland' and 'new homeland' definitions of the photographed women. There were political, social, and legal reasons behind the change. I can say with confidence that all these things were melted in the same pot, through the notion of 'loss'. For example, women who thought they were going to stay in Turkey only for a certain amount of time, and who knew their homes in Syria were not yet destroyed, did not want to be photographed, because they were, most likely, afraid of the intelligence agents who would still be gathering data when they returned. Those who found out that their homes were destroyed, those who were expanding their areas of living in Turkey, or those who were planning to migrate to Europe, started to volunteer to be photographed. Their hopes of returning to Syria were fading. In other words, the adventure of the photographs already corresponded to the destruction in Syria and the new life plans. In a study that was conducted in Fatih, in which I participated as an observer, fifty families were interviewed, and twenty women were interviewed in depth. This photography section includes photo-biographies of fifteen people. The distribution of these fifty families in terms of the cities they come from in Syria are as follows: fourteen from Damascus, eleven from Aleppo, eight from Idlib, eight from Dera, six from Eastern Gouta, and three from Dey Ez-Zor. The average age of the women that I interviewed in-depth is between thirty and thirty-seven. All of them have children, the number of children ranging from two to five. They have all received higher education, and they all have a vocation. The professions include dermatology, engineering, English language and literature, Arabic language and literature, architecture, classroom teaching, psychology. They were almost all working actively in Syria, leaving work only briefly to give birth to their children. Most of them had lost their husbands in war, or they had not received news of their husbands' deaths, but were not able to find traces of their having survived. Four of the twenty-five women have looked for their husbands for years. In the first four years of the war, twenty-two were living in Istanbul and working in jobs that were outside of their professions: assisting hair dressers or tailors, dishwashing in restaurants or manufacturing workshops. Now, of these twenty women, six are in Germany, one is in Sweden, two are back in Syria. Eleven continue to live in Istanbul. I have moved forward through the references that these twenty women gave me. I will relay the new life practices that these women have had to accept to survive, through intra-family, social and

political contexts, articulating and elaborating on the shifting dynamics that affect them.

In the second section, where the definition of what a photograph is, is elaborated on, the reproduction of photography, its documentary nature, its aura, and feelings of nature, are discussed, to lay the groundwork for the section including the photo-biographies. The in-depth interviews that I conducted, and my case studies, could only be complemented by the testament of photography. The photograph presents the viewers with the opportunity to visualize things, while the artist who produces the photographs is able to reveal information about his or her own identity, as well as the historical framework of the time. Furthermore, the experience between the subject and the photographer is also shown, bringing people closer and creating a sort of equality. This section covers the sociological fieldwork, encoding the image of the outside world through text, aiming simply to express reality through images. Barthes's concept of the *punctum* will help us comprehend the socio-cultural connotations of a photograph, while Benjamin's *aura* seeks to keep alive both the personal and the public memories.

Why do we need a selective eye to awaken and evoke feelings of compassion, awareness, responsibility, witnessing? What are the stages of the experience between the photographer and the photographed, and why does this provoke curiosity? How reliable is the reality that we seek within the boundaries of a device and what creates it? The section *Testament of Photography* seeks to look at the multi-layered relationship between the researcher and the images, which is then carried into the various potentials offered by the process of knowledge production. The images that were serviced in media were gathered under the rubric of 'being Syrian', creating an 'image-glut', to use Susan Sontag's term. My work is based on the pre-set condition that the notion of the woman and its cultural framework are always in the foreground. In this framework, the goal was to reach the cultural essence of the individual life, through various methods.

In the third part, the photo-ethnography method has been used as a data collection tool. Limited to well-educated Syrian women who are on their own, this part aims to create a visual and semantic integrity via samples of photo-biography. The main motives behind the work have been surveyed. With the performance of photography, and the ethnographical subject, installation has been made permanent with samples of photography. Adams says that every individual has a two-person biography. The first is

the biography that articulates the self as 'an organism', whereas the second is the 'biography desiring the self'.[2] The women who participated in the project have a right, and claim, to articulate, emphasizing both the subjective and the socio-political positions, which could be defined as photo-biographies about themselves, despite the negative connotations of the relationship between a camera and a woman's privacy.[3]

The most comprehensive method of gathering sociological material is the life story inquiry[4], combined with the women's portrait photographs, and is the most open way of resistance. Through their photo-biographies, the women pierce through the hidden transcripts, and the photographs present them with the opportunity to confront themselves. Thus they question the power of social gender, and their own appearances become immortal. The photographs aim to trigger a reading that transcends the boundaries of the women's lives, beyond their social experiences and knowledge. The construction of the frame is a search for a representation that is simple and direct, relating to the social realities and their visibilities in the city, including visual elements such as night-time darkness, contra-perspective, artificial lighting, distance, city, and planes. These elements, which I will go into in more detail in the testament of photography section, serve the purpose of liberating these photographs from the experience of just turning pages of a catalogue.

Although cultural memory appears to be linked to the past at first, it

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[2] Dan P. Mc Adams, *Power, Intimacy and the Life Story: Personological Inquiries into Identity* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1988), 25.

[3] When Şeyhülislam Mustafa Sabri Efendi found out that a gypsy girl was used *au naturel* for training at the Fine Arts Academy at the beginning of the 20th century, he made a statement saying that one of the worst things that we learned from the West was to photograph and to paint the human body. He said that it all started with photography. In Muslim societies, it is still considered inappropriate for a pregnant woman to walk around in public, to eat ice cream, to laugh, all seen as ethical weaknesses. It is possible to say that progress has been made in this regard since that time, with innovations in technology in the 21st century.
For more information, you can refer to: Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma* [The Development of Secularism in Turkey], 2009.

[4] W. I. Thomas, and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), VII.

updates itself within the ‘now’; it is constructed through remembering and forgetting. In this context, the photo-biographies are important. The book will conclude with self-photo-biographies. The work ends with fifteen photo-biographies of educated Syrian women on their own; just like the angel in Paul Klee’s painting *Angel of History*, while their eyes are metaphorically looking at the past, their bodies are turned towards Istanbul.

PART I

SIMULATED HOMELAND

In the past, I saw you everywhere I looked, now wherever I look, I only see Syrians.

—Text on a wall in Fatih, Istanbul

On 17 December 2010, street vendor Muhammed Buazizi argued with a municipality officer for not having the right paperwork, and went on to fatally burn himself in protest. Millions of people rose up after this event, and thus the process, later called the Jasmine Revolution, began in Tunisia. Buazizi's burning himself instigated movements in Egypt, Libya, and Syria, and Buazizi became a symbol of the Arab Spring. On 8 March 2011, civil war broke out in Syria—it is possible to say that with Buazizi burning himself, countries including Turkey and Lebanon were also affected. Eleven million had to leave their homes in Syria alone, because of the civil war. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), four million of those who left Syria sought asylum in Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq.[1] Between 2011 and 2018, the number of Syrians in Turkey went up to over three and a half million.[2] Furthermore, 80% of those were women and children.

The women who are escaping from the violence in their home countries require different custodianship from men, and this is why women and children are considered to be 'vulnerable'.

There are twenty-two refugee camps spread across various cities in

[1] *Küresel Eğilimler Raporu, Basın Açıklaması* [Global Tendencies Report, Press Release], UNHCR, Accessed: May 31, 2017, http://www.unhcr.org/tr/12402-kuresel-egilimler-raporu.html.

[2] *General of Migration Management*, Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate, Accessed: December 22, 2017, http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik/residence_917_1060.

Turkey, to meet the primary needs of the Syrians, including education, shelter, and health; the Syrians were let in through Turkey's 'open doors' policy. Helen Clark, director of the United Nations Development Programme said that the refugee camps in Gaziantep were the "best refugee camps in the world."[3] However, despite the relatively good conditions at the refugee camps, migration to the cities increased and the refugees sought ways of surviving in cities. UNHCR defined the migration wave instigated with the Syrian civil war as the "largest wave of immigration in near history", and Syria was also declared the country with the highest number of displaced people.[4] However, it is not possible to make the statement that the Syrian civil war led to the largest migration in history. Furthermore, in the process leading up to now, border countries such as Turkey are defined as 'transit' countries.[5] For the longest time, Turkey was where the highest numbers of international migrants came from. Starting in the 1980s, and over the course of the last thirty years, political upheavals, civil wars, and restructurings in the economy led to Turkey's position in the global realm shifting to involve the country in a multi-layered process of immigration.

For the process of immigration in Turkey, one can explain the case of Circassians and Caucasians in the 19th century. Since the war that took place in Crimea and Caucasia, and ended with the Küçük Kaynarca Accord between the Ottomans and the Russians, the public was split into two, through the population exchange, Russian colonization, and economic sanctions. Crimeans and Caucasians started to migrate to Turkey. After the Crimean War, the number of people who migrated to Turkey was up to 369,028 in 1862.[6] Furthermore, Caucasian migration went up to 80,000 in

[7] Selin Girit, *Suriyeli mülteciler dosyası: Misafirlik uzadı mı?* [Dossier on Syrian Refugees: Have they been guests for too long?], BBC News Türkçe, Accessed: October 5 2015
https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2015/10/151005_suriyeli_multeciler.

[4] M. Murat Erdoğan, *Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler: Toplumsal Kabul ve Uyum* [Syrians in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Harmony], (Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015), 1.

[5] William Walters, "Europe's Borders", in *Sage Handbook of European Studies,* ed. Chris Rumford, (Sage: London, 2009), 485-505.

[6] Abdullah Saydam, K*ırım ve Kafkas Göçleri (1856-1876)* [Migrations from Crimea and the Caucasians] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2010), 61-86.

1863, and Circassian went up to 40,000 in 1864.[7] Between 1908, when Austria invaded the capital of Bosnia Herzegovina, and 1914, the number of Bosnians who migrated to Turkey was up to thirty-three thousand.[8]

The nature of the migration is defined, not only by the number of people, but also through the origins of the people who migrated, under what kinds of circumstances the migration took place, and whether migrants were recognized by the state. For example, Turkey signed the 1951 Geneva Convention, which aimed to regulate the administrative aspects of the human element in migration. The conditions of the agreement will help us with interpreting the legal status of the Syrians in Turkey today. According to this agreement, a refugee is someone who is legitimately scared of being persecuted in the country of which they are a citizen, due to their race, religion, ethnicity, membership of a social group, or political thought, who is unable to be protected by their own state for these reasons, or who is not a citizen of the country and not able to return to their country of origin, due to their fear of persecution.[9]

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) clarifies the definition of refugees and migrants by saying that refugees are people who have escaped from their country, due to armed conflict and violence, and who are unable to return to their homes, as it is deemed too dangerous, and who, even if they returned to their own country, would have to be hosted somewhere that is not their home. A rejection of their demand for asylum would have fatal results. The states which signed this Agreement also agreed on the main principles of the 1951 Refugee Agreement, which defined the fundamental human rights of refugees, the most important of which is that the refugees will not be forced to go back to the places where they are in danger and where their freedoms are threatened. The migrant, on the other hand, is moved to improve their

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[7] Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population (1830-1914): Demographic and Social Characteristics* (London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 67.
[8] Nedim İpek, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler* [Migrations from the Empire to the Nation-State] (Trabzon: Serander Yayınları, 2006), 120.
[9] *Mültecilerin Hukuki Durumuna Dair Sözleşme* [Treaty on the Legal Status of Immigrants], Danıştay, 5 September 1961, Accessed: January20,2018 http://www.danistay.gov.tr/upload/multecilerin_hukuki_durumuna_dair_sozlesme.pdf.

conditions of life, rather than by fatal danger, with hopes of education or starting a family; a migrant is someone who has chosen to improve their life conditions. In contrast to refugees, whose return home is dangerous, migrants are not incapable of returning home. According to the UNHCR definition, the Syrians in Turkey have to be considered as refugees, since they left their countries because of armed conflict. Turkey has filed for two amendments to the Geneva Agreement, which states that no one with refugee status can be provided with more privileges than a Turkish citizen. Also, in line with this rejection, is that Turkey would recognize only those refugees who came to Turkey through Europe, while those who came from outside Europe would be considered asylum seekers. Thus, all non-European immigrants have to apply to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for their refugee status.

Stuart Hall says that migration is a one-way journey, and that there is no longer a 'home' to return to.[10] There is no home to return to, but the one-way journey is tolerated only by the paradigm of transnational spaces, where it is said that the migrant, and the process of migration, have undergone a radical transformation. Accordingly, for the definition of migrants, it is no longer enough to use the definition of an individual who has left their motherland behind and settled into a whole new geography. Because of the facilities provided by modern transportation and communication networks, migrants can now navigate both sides of the river with a 'transmigrant' definition, on a real and symbolic level. This area is defined as transnational (multinational), multilingual, multicultural, and dynamic, with tensions at the same time. It speaks of the reciprocal movement of family, economic, political, cultural, religious, symbols, material cultures, social and political movements beyond the national borders of art and literature and various ideological areas, by countries giving and receiving migrants. This is what Said refers to as 'dissonant clusters', some of which are defined as 'third domain'[11], 'rhizomatic domain'[12] and 'diasporic domain'.[13] David Harvey divides this

[10] Stuart Hall, *Minimal Selves* in *Identity. The Real Me. Post-Modernism and the Question of Identity* (ICA Documents 6, London: ICA, 1987), 44.
[11] Homi Bhabha, "The Third Space. Interview with Homi Bhabha" in *Identity, Community, Culture and Difference,* (Lawrence and Wishard, London), 207-221.
[12] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, B.Massumi, (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1987).

space/maker concept into three notions; 'absolute space', [14] 'relative space', and 'relational space'.[15]

Edward Said says that, no matter what: "Refugees, on the other hand, are a creation of the twentieth-century state. The word 'refugee' has become a political one, suggesting large herds of innocent and bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance, whereas 'exile' carries with it, I think, a touch of solitude and spirituality."[16]

It may be useful to talk here about how Said's understanding of the refugee can be shaped by the political name that the country uses, according to society's perception, and which, in practice, leads to various positive-ness conclusions. For this reason, I would like to discuss what it means to have a political name for refugees, and what serious consequences will emerge in practice.

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[13] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (Routledge: London, 1996).
[14] Edward Said, *Figures, Configurations, Transfigurations*, Race & Class, 32, no. 1 (1990): 16.
[15] David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development,* (Verso: London, 2006), 126-128.
[16] Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Granta, 2012), 351.

1

POLITICAL NAME: THE SOCIAL MEANING OF A LEGAL STATUS

Our not feeling at home even when we are at home is part of ethics.

—Edward Said

The legal status of Syrian refugees, who could not be categorized in Turkey for a long time, was a very controversial topic. There were some trials on the legal status of the Syrians who migrated to major cities, and who were not recognized as refugees, creating different expectations and attitudes with regard to their status there. First, the state in Turkey recognized that such a large influx of people could not be classified as asylum seekers, so they labeled the Syrians as 'guests'. However, there was no legal correspondence for this definition of 'guest' internationally. The Syrians received their 'temporary protection' status in October 2014.

In a published report on the situation of Iranian migrant workers who reached Russia from Turkey, it is noted that refugees work in hard-labor jobs, including porterage, agriculture, industrial jobs, and in shipyards. According to the report, "Certain hard and dirty jobs were done entirely by foreign workers. These included cleaning the water channels affected by malaria, [working on] rice plantations, cotton-picking and sulphating grapes."[1]

We can say that today, the state representation of being stateless, fed

[1] Touraj Atabaki, *The State and The Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran* (I.B.Tauris: New York, 2007), 47.

by society's ruling elites, is also preserved. The low wages of native workers, and the jobs they do not like, are given over to Syrians, leaving the Anatolian youth of the local population to go to Istanbul to work; Syrian immigrant families go to Şanlıurfa, Aksaray, Adana, where they find work for 15TL (3.31USD) per day. In interviews with five local and five Syrian families that I have chosen as a control group, with the same (high) education level in the field research of Istanbul's Bağcılar district, the children of the local families did not work, they went to school regularly, and completed high school education at most, while the women worked in offices part-time at desk jobs, and were at a medium-income level. The children of Syrian women were forced to take part-time jobs starting in elementary school, or had to support their mother's home-made production after school. While low-income local women worked in tea service at offices, or as custodial staff, Syrian women who performed the same jobs were paid half, and all of the Syrian women that I interviewed took on side jobs, producing button printing or labeling at home, to generate additional income.

The inability of Syrian parents to find work, forces children to work, and they have to take jobs considered dangerous even for adults. Therefore, child labor is spreading rapidly in the sectors where informality is the highest. Syrian child workers are employed in textile factories, dry fruit factories, shoe manufacturing workshops, and car repair shops, as agricultural labor, at street subway exits and bus stops, or in markets, as street vendors of tissues and water. The addition of a heavy workload to the conditions of civil war in Syria has negative physical and psychological effects on children. Women and children are particularly vulnerable, and are now part of the informal economy, condemned to the most severe conditions in this area. In countries where they are refugees, the lack of a resolution of work permit issues for Syrian refugees, the lack of implementation of national legislation, and the lack of supervision of informal areas and employers, produce ideal circumstances for child labor in these unchecked areas. Particularly in child labor, such as the manufacturing of jeans, knitwear, footwear, bodywork, and plastic, heavy child labor is employed. Child workers, who work 12 to 14 hours a day at workshops alongside adult workers, are generally paid half the wages, and are exposed to chemical and heavy work conditions from an early age. They usually try to protect themselves by wearing masks, but the chemicals they contact with their hands can cause occupational diseases. Silva's mother, a textile worker who lives in Bağcılar, makes 1,000 button prints at home for 8TL (1.79USD). Nine-year-old Silva El Nour works 12 hours a day in a textile industry to get paid a salary which is a quarter of an

adult's (300TL-60USD). Silva, who has asthma, has an increasingly difficult time breathing. On visits to the job site, the boss indicated that Silva has a problem in her physical development, so she was still considered a child, but she was actually 15 years old, saying that heavy chemicals used in branding would not harm her, and she could use a mask if she wanted to. Another example is Seyhmus Mahmood, a six-year-old resident in Yenibosna, who left school to fish with his father, Seyid Mahmood, for 5TL (1.11USD) each day in Eminönü. Father of six children, Ammar İbrahim Jaber (45) had been selling rice and Syrian bread in a six square-meter shop in Istanbul's Fatih district; he was a high-level executive at the airport for 13 years in Kuwait and Syria. The examples are endless; the stateless, who are not named as such, are discredited by the state.

The most shocking story for me was that of seven Syrian women[2] who shared a hundred meter-square apartment, with two rooms. They were meticulously hand-stitching wedding and other special day gowns, with imported stones for 3TL (0.67USD) each. These gowns are sold at somewhere between 7,000TL (1.570,80USD) to 15,000TL (3.36USD) on the market. Their manual labor is one of the most expensive crafts on the market. If there was a rush on an order, they would work through each night, finishing the dress in a week. At a regular pace, each dress takes two to three weeks. As the job requires them to stare at the same spot for long periods of time, their eyesight gets worse over time. As they repeat the same movements with their hands and wrists all the time, their index fingers and thumbs start to lose sensation. The women lose their patience over time. Because of their experiences, before and after their immigration, they are not able to be grateful; they believe that manual crafts, which require patience, are somewhat therapeutic, mending their emotional state. Women are forced to accept these jobs, which could be considered a consequence of being outside politics. Exploitation in labor-

[2] During the interview, the seven widowed women living in Balat said that my taking their pictures was a matter of life and death. If they were photographed, and if they found out that their houses were not destroyed, they would return to Syria. If the intelligence agents found out about these photos, they would be easily identified, and this could be a negative thing. They were scared and did not want to be photographed. They also made it clear that they wouldn't be concerned if they did not have hopes of returning to Syria.

intensive sectors reveals itself as such, and weak minorities, foreigners, stateless people are subjected to exploitation.

Finally, it can be said that the 'temporary' definition of Syrian immigrants, who had been granted a temporary protection status, a state-given legal name granted in October 2014, is a form of civilization that constitutes a suitable ground for possible exploitation brought about by provision and negativity. It can be said that some of the Syrian immigrants who have no place in their country should be making plans to stay, rather than thinking their situation is temporary. In the words of Rancière, this "open-ended subjection of those who are not taken into consideration" is only possible when a political name is given to them.

Political philosopher Jacques Rancière refers to the definition of citizenship, and talks about the notion of having a political name: "The slogan of 1968, saying 'We are all Jewish Germans,' reversed a stigmatizing name, and made identity the principle of open-ended subjectivation of those who were ignored, without leading to any political confusion with the representation of an identifiable social group.". According to Rancière, "this situation is the rediscovery of what a political subject (proletarian or otherwise) is: the manifestation of a wrong, a counting of the uncounted, a form of visibility conferred upon something that is supposedly non-visible, or that has been removed from visibility…".[3] By politicizing the name that was given by others, and which has been politicized, if we are to take ownership of this name as if it were our own, a form of solidarity is possible. The ongoing invasion of rights is transformed into a political name so that it is not subdued politically. For the Syrian refugees, Arab, Syrian, refugee, guest, are all terms interchangeably used both by the state and by the public, an act of not being able to name, which makes them invisible politically. "Objectively, we have no more immigrant people than we had twenty years ago. Subjectively, we have many more. The difference is this: twenty years ago, the 'immigrant' had another name; they were workers or proletarians. In the meantime, this name has been lost as a political name. They retained their 'own' name, and another, that has no other name,

[3] Jacques Ranciere, "The Cause of the Other", in *Parallax*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (1998) 30.

becomes the object of fear and rejection."[4] Rancière adds that the identity ambition is an ambiguous issue that is realized in the body of the other. The other, being staged on the political and heterologous realm, is the mode of civilizing fear by the locals. This is a sign of xenophobia and racism being acted out.

We can also articulate the conditions of the war-victim Syrians using Arendt's definition of 'statelessness'. The largest mass migration movement, between the two world wars, that Arendt elaborates on, is being experienced in a most intense form in Turkey. This articulation of statelessness, which we have seen, even after seventy years, can present a theoretical framework for stateless women and children produced by the ongoing refugee crisis. They are now treated with the 'stateless' terminology in the new geographical region they have migrated to, and despite their various configurations of alternative legal agreements, their assets are recognized and accepted with new nomenclatures and legal statutes. In this case, though, while *de jure,* the thought is to benefit the stateless and create a relatively good plane to operate on, it can be said that the number of *de facto* stateless people is increasing in this process. The legal status of the Syrians, and the lack of a name for them, have caused them to remain sub-political and have resulted in work, education, uninsured, tax-free work, and a rapidly increasing number of child laborers.

Syrian women have become a part of society and the economy that we consider 'informal', in their search for a new family (I'm referring to their families being reduced by losing a member or members), trade, and politics, a trio that they are forced to accept. So far, we have looked at the general picture through short stories about the definition of social area in the context of political name and legal recognition. Through these new definitions, I would like to give a broader and more intimate picture of the scope of illegal activity and the field of production interviews. But first, I will examine the subaltern parallel fate of the victim, which is derived from humanity through *homo sacer* and society-based discursive practices, with the suspension of the law, which is the creator of the human

[4] Jacques Ranciere, "Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization", in *October*, Vol. 61 (Summer, 1992) 63.

narratives themselves. I think that the perspective of biocentricity will provide a further advance in the story of the naked human being who is abandoned to the threshold of progression through the nature of birth, and the structure of the sovereignty between the nation, human, and citizen.

2

HOMO SACER: HOLY PERSON: THE STATELESS OF THE SIMULATED HOMELAND

Giorgio Agamben talks about the holy person, the *homo sacer*, who exists in the ancient Roman era as the 'killable entity', who only exists by being outcast from society, the *homo sacer*, who has the same function in modern politics. In the holy book, the holy person is expressed as *zoē* (bare life). The holy person also exists as a figure that extends to the time before society. The word for 'sacred' has two meanings in Latin: it belongs to the Gods, and it also means tainted, disgusting.[1] The dominant is defined as the person against whom everybody is a potential *homines sacri*, while the *homo sacer* is the person who is seen as the person against whom everyone becomes dominant.[2] Then, who is this holy person? The holy person is seen as the one who can be killed for their sheer existence in society, but who cannot be sacrificed. As *homo sacer* is killable, they are separated from the social space by being able to be killed, and also separated from the sacred, by not being able to be sacrificed. The state of exception can be seen as a state of forbidding, as applied to life.

Agamben brings up this idea to present the nature of the state of

[1] Saime Tuğrul, *Ebedi Kutsal Ezeli Kurban: Çok Tanrılıktan Tek Tanrılığa Kutsal ve Kurbanlık Mekanizmaları* [Eternally Sacred Forever Victim: Mechanisms of the Sacred and Sacrifice from Polytheism to Monotheism] (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 65.

[2] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford University Press, 1998), 42.

exception, which is the backbone of dominance. The *homo sacer*, who is a figure who cannot be sacrificed, but who can be killed, for Agamben, is the perfect symbol of the individual who is faced with the state of exception. The fact that the *homo sacer* cannot be sacrificed, means that he does not have a place in the legal system, that is, he is outcast from society. Thus, the *homo sacer* is excluded, but as exclusion makes him killable, he has become a part of society again, through this negative concept. The modern authority connects life/nature *zoē* to its own legal system, making it sacred, but in the state of exception, life becomes destroyable. This is the contradiction of modern politics. The more modern politics tries to protect life, the more survival becomes the only column that holds up politics. In other words, "the relation of exception is a relation of ban. He who has been banned is not, in fact, simply set outside the law and made indifferent to it but rather abandoned by it, that is, exposed and threatened on the threshold in which life and law, outside and inside, become indistinguishable."[3] Agamben further elaborates, "What has been banned is delivered over to its own separateness, and, at the same time, consigned to the mercy of the one who abandons it—at once excluded and included, removed and at the same time captured."[4]

William Robertson Smith defines people who are separated from the social space to be ones who are deemed unclean: "Evidently *Sacer* was used here in an exceptional sense, and surely in a very ancient sense; for no one will deny that the *homo sacer* is a survival from a primitive age to one of highly-developed civil and religious law. *Sacer esto* is in fact a curse, and *homo sacer* on whom this curse falls, is an outcast, a banned man, tabooed, dangerous.".[5] Robertson Smith, in his work *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites,* talks about the ambiguous power of the sacred and its effect on taboo: "women after child-birth, men who have touched a dead body, and so forth, are temporarily taboo and separated from human society, just as the same persons are unclean in Semitic religion. In these cases, the person under taboo is not regarded as holy, for he is separated from the approach to the sanctuary as well as from contact with other men,

[3] Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life,* 15.
[4] Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 54.
[5] W.Warde Fowler, *Roman Essays and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), 17.

but his act or condition is somehow associated with supernatural dangers, arising, according to the common savage explanation, from the presence of formidable spirits which are shunned like an infectious disease."[6] There is a similar understanding of women in Anatolia. It is believed that women who are on their period cannot make pickles, or cannot touch the pickles that have been made. If they touch the pickles, the pickles will not be fermented properly, and they will go bad. Agamben uses the interwoven contrasts within the notions of the sacred and the sacrifice, and defines this situation as 'the ambivalence of the sacred'.[7] Neither can be approached, because their impact is the same. "The relationship with the sacred is similar to the relationship with the tainted. You cannot touch the sacred, nor can you touch the tainted."[8] He articulates further, "It is the originary structure, in which law refers to life, and includes it in itself, by suspending it."[9]The spatial organization, that makes permanent the state of exception, replaces the city that has been the metaphor for the politics and society of the place for centuries. As Agamben reminds us, the camp is not a concept that can be limited to historic examples; it needs to be considered in a more general way, thinking about it as a site of suspending space, time, and legality. All the sites that combine the bare life with the political field can be considered as campsites.

The biopolitical paradigm of modernity has "carved the matter of birth into the heart of political society." In the first article of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens of 1789, the presence of man must be born for the realization of the expressions "born with unavoidable and irrevocable rights", "freely and equally born and living on the rights", and "the principle of sovereignty is essentially national", in the third article. The implicit fiction here is that birth is directly national (a

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[6] William Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (London: A&C Black, 1927), 153.

[7] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford University Press, 1998), 38.

[8] Saime Tuğrul, *Ebedi Kutsal Ezeli Kurban: Çok Tanrılıktan Tek Tanrılığa Kutsal ve Kurbanlık Mekanizmaları* [Eternally Sacred Forever Victim: Mechanisms of the Sacred and Sacrifice from Polytheism to Monotheism] (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 66.

[9] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford University Press, 1998), 15.