

URBAN AND URBANIZATION

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PRESENTATION

I was given the honour of writing about our beloved Prof. Dr. Süha Göney, who is the teacher and mentor of the faculty in the Department of Human and Economic Geography at Istanbul University. He has made considerable contributions to the training of thousands of students and some academicians working abroad.

I would like to share an anecdote with you because this book features papers on the notion of “city” and is dedicated to Prof. Dr. Göney himself. “Urban Geography” as a course was first introduced in curriculum by Dist. Prof. Ali Tanoğlu and Dr. Süha Göney as a result of a conversation between them after he was awarded with “Associate Professorship” in 1972. Back then, no such course existed, but the subject was discussed in the courses within the context of Settlement Geography. This case was realized and problematized by Prof. Dr. Günay, who discussed the introduction of Urban Geography with Dist. Prof. Ali Tanoğlu to Şİİ in this niche. Thanks to this discussion in May 1973, a new course titled “Urban Geography” was introduced in the Program of Human and Economic Geography at Istanbul University and from then onwards it was taught by our beloved mentor Prof. Dr. Günay for 33 years until his retirement. He has supervised MA theses and PhD dissertations of most of his colleagues and he still does. During his service he played a significant and active part in the education and training of thousands of students.

I was entrusted with the task of editing the national book “In Homage to Prof. Dr. Süha Göney”. For long, I have wished to launch the publication of an international book as a tribute to our Professor. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Emin Atasoy for helping me realize my dream. Moreover, I would like to thank each and every one of the faculty in the Program of Human and Economic Geography at Istanbul University for their resilient support. I also would like to express my profound gratitude to each contributor who has taken part in the production of this book.

Editors

CONTENTS

FROM THE HISTORIC TO THE VIRTUAL CITY: THE NEW IDEA OF PUBLIC SPACE:	1
Valentina ALBANESE	
MODELING OF LAND USE DYNAMICS: CASE STUDIES ON URBAN GROWTH IN TURKEY:	11
Nurdan ERDOGAN; Birsen KESGIN ATAK; Engin NURLU	
MEGALOPOLIS TOKYO: THE MOST SAFEST CITY IN THE WORLD —FROM 1600’S TO PRESENT:.....	26
Mitsuru SANO; Yukimasa KATO	
THE TWO LEVEL CITY, THE LAND OF BLACK DIAMOND: ZONGULDAK:	32
Taşkın DENİZ	
POPULATION AND SETTLEMENT FEATURES OF BALIKESİR BETWEEN 1940 AND 2010:	48
İsa CÜREBAL, Recep EFE, Abdullah SOYKAN, Süleyman SÖNMEZ	
URBAN TRANSPORT LOGISTICS OPTIMIZATION – A CASE STUDY FOR BALCHIK MUNICIPALITY, BULGARIA:.....	57
Boyko RANGUELOV	
PRISHTINA, THE ONLY EUROPEAN CAPITAL WITHOUT GIS IN ITS MAIN INSTITUTIONS:.....	79
Florim ISUFI; Shpejtim BULLIQI; Bashkim KASTRATI; Fitim HUMOLLI; Ferat KRASNIQI	
A CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT: URBAN AGRICULTURAL LANDS:	85
A. Esra CENGİZ, Umut PEKİN TİMUR, Aybike Ayfer KARADAĞ, Demet DEMİROĞLU	
EVALUATION OF LIVEABILITY IN RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS IN THE SCOPE OF SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION:	105
Reyhan YILDIZ, Nihal SENLIER, Tayfun SALIHOGLU	
PROPAGATION OF HYPERCONCENTRATED FLOWS IN PROTECTION CHANNELS AROUND URBAN AREAS: EXPERIMENTAL INVESTIGATION; Donatella TERMINI ;	125
Alice DI LEONARDO	
URBAN FORESTS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO URBAN SUSTAINABILITY: 134	
Atilla ATİK; Bülent YILMAZ; Ezgi TAÇORAL; Şah İsmail BAYAZIT; Miraç KILIÇ	
THERMAL COMFORT IN LANDSCAPE PLANNING:	149
Mehmet TOPAY	
CULTURAL HERITAGE IN URBAN PLANNING PRACTICES:.....	165
Nurhan KOÇAN	
EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HISTORICAL CITY FORM AND MODERN GREEN WAY PRACTICES IN THE CASE OF BARTIN CITY :	173
Banu BEKÇİ Çiğdem BOGENÇ Deryanur DİNÇER	

URBAN CHARACTERIZATION BY MEANS OF DYNAMIC FRACTAL PARAMETERS:	183
Jean-François PARROT ; Carolina RAMÍREZ-NÚÑEZ	
INDUSTRIAL POTENTIAL OF BURDUR:.....	192
Osman YILMAZ	
URBAN CULTURE, URBAN IDENTITY AND LIVABLE URBAN PLACES:	209
Erkan POLAT	
AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF CONSISTENCY OF PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH CATCHMENT BASIN BOUNDARIES:	219
Ufuk Fatih KÜÇÜKALİ	
POWER- IDENTITY AND CITY SQUARES: A SOCIOPOLITIC GEOGRAPHY ANALYSIS:	228
Nurettin ÖZGEN	
SEISMIC MONITORING AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS FOR SMALL-SIZED CITIES. PERNIK CASE STUDY, BULGARIA:.....	242
Boyko RANGUELOV	
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION IN ADANA IN TERMS OF URBAN GEOGRAPHY:	256
Tülay ÖCAL	
CITY AND URBANIZATION: URBAN CULTURE OF IZMIR IN THE PROCESS OF MIGRATION:.....	274
Nevzat GÜMÜŞ; Nalan ALTAY	
THE SOUND OF STREET IS CRACKED:	290
Seher KEÇE TÜRKER	
A RESEARCH IN TERMS OF POPULATION GEOGRAPHY: BÜYÜKÇEKMECE: 294	
Kaan KAPAN	
LITTORALIZATION AND RURAL-URBAN DIVIDE IN THE ITALIAN REGION OF THE MARCHES	305
Gian Luigi CORINTO	
USING ANACRONISM FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF CHARACTERS IN ANECDOTES: ISTANBUL AND BEKRİ MUSTAFA:	317
Abdulkadir EMEKSİZ	
THE URBANIZATION PERCEPTIONS OF THE EIGHT GRADE STUDENTS:	325
Bahadır KILCAN; Turhan ÇETİN ; Bülent AKSOY	
CHANGE OF LAND USE WITHIN THE CITY OF PRISHTINA:	343
Florim ISUFI; Riza MURSELI	
THE POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN ÜSKÜDAR:	354
Adem YULU	
SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ARMUTLU IN THE MIDST OF THE 19TH CENTURY (1844):	361
Mehmet BAYARTAN	

CITIES, URBANIZATION, METROPOLISES, AND RELATED PROBLEMS: THE CASE OF TURKEY:	374
Mesut DOĞAN	
SOCIAL DEPRIVATION AND URBANITY AS THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: 381	
Mirek DYMITROW ; René BRAUER	
PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS IN THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS OF URBAN AREAS:	396
Özlem SERTKAYA DOĞAN	
INVESTIGATING THE FEMALE SUICIDES IN KARS PROVINCE IN THE NOVEL “SNOW” WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE NOTION OF AUTHORITY: 406	
Pelin DİMDİK	
EXAMPLES TO CITTASLOW (QUIET CITY) MOVEMENT FROM TURKEY:	416
Zehranur ŞERBETÇİ	
ATABEGS RULE IN AL-JAZİRA REGION AND CITY SETTLEMENTS (521-660 / 1127-1262)	427
Adnan ESKİKURT	
A GENERAL REVIEW ON POLITICAL STABILITY AND CITY SETTLEMENTS IN ANATOLIA (ROME-BYZANTIUM AND SALJUQID PERIODS):	443
Adnan ESKİKURT	
INVESTIGATION OF THE POTENTIALS FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN PATTERN FOR TURKEY:	461
Reyhan YILDIZ; Nihal SENLİER; Ayşe Nur ALBAYRAK	
GEOCULTURAL FRAMEWORK OF TRADITIONAL TURKISH URBAN SETTLEMENTS IN THE BALKANS:	481
Bekir Yüksel HOŞ	
INVESTIGATION OF MUDDY VOLCANOES IN AZERBAIJAN IN TERMS OF GEOGRAPHICAL AND ECO TOURISM:	496
Fatih İMAT; Duran AYDINÖZÜ	
AN EXAMPLE FOR TOURISM ORIENTED URBANISATIONS IN TURKEY: ALANYA (ANTALYA):	513
Erol KAPLUHAN	
PROCESSES and CHANGES IN THE SELECTION OF LOCATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL AREAS: A CASE STUDY OF ADAPAZARI:	532
Zerrin KARAKUZULU; Fatih ARICI; Hatice TURUT	
AN EVALUATION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF DENİZLİ IN TERMS OF ITS POTENTIAL FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT:	546
Erol KAPLUHAN	
SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF TARSUS AND THE CHANGES IN LAND USE:	570
Ersin Kaya SANDAL; Fatih ADIGÜZEL	
ECOLOGY-BASED CONTEMPORARY URBANISM APPROACHES:	579
Demet DEMİROĞLU; Umut PEKİN TİMUR; Aybike Ayfer KARADAĞ; A. Esra CENGİZ	

AS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT KARST HERITAGES OF TURKEY, A RESEARCH OF ILGARINI CAVE IN TERMS OF GEOGRAPHY AND ECOTOURISM.....	601
Fatih İMAT; Duran AYDINÖZÜ; B.Ünal İBRET	
DIPLOMACY AND CITIES:.....	618
Kerim ACARTÜRK	
URBANITE LIFE OFFERED IN ADVERTISEMENTS OF HOUSING PROJECTS IN İSTANBUL:.....	622
Nebiye KONUK	
THE COURSE OF POPULATION GROWTH IN SOUTHWESTERN COASTS OF THE SEA OF MARMARA (BALIKESİR, CANAKKALE) AND ITS SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION:	636
Sümeyra KURT	
SPATIAL AND FUNCTIONAL TRANSFORMATION OF SETTLEMENTS IN PRESEVO VALLEY:.....	653
Arsım EJUPI	
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE: THE CASE OF BURSA METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY:.....	660
Z. Sevgen PERKER	
EVALUATION OF LOCATION SELECTION IN YALOVA IN TERMS OF GEOMORPHOLOGIC FEATURES AND NATURAL RISKS :	673
Sümeyra KURT; Himmət HAYBAT	
THE IMPORTANCE OF OTTOMAN FINANCIAL DECREE LEDGERS FROM THE STANDPOINT OF CITY HISTORY: THE EXAMPLE OF KONYA IN THE 16 TH CENTURY:	689
Rıfat GÜNALAN	
CITTASLOW – SLOW CITIES:.....	670
Onur GÖRKEM; Murat BAYRAM; Serkan BERTAN	
URBAN CULTURE, URBAN IDENTITY AND LIVABLE URBAN PLACES:.....	712
Erkan POLAT	
URBAN RUSSIA AND GLOBALIZATION: PROBLEMS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES:.....	722
Anokhin A. A.; ZHITIN D. V. ; LACHININSKII S. S.	
A SURVEY ON POPULATION GEOGRAPHY: POPULATION MOBILITY IN TURKEY AND EXAMPLE OF UŞAK CITY:.....	732
Erol KAPLUHAN	
CAN KINSHIP IDENTITY BE CONVERTED INTO A CONSENSUS TOOL IN URBAN LIFE?:.....	753
Nebiye KONUK	
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	765

INVESTIGATING THE FEMALE SUICIDES IN KARS PROVINCE IN THE NOVEL “SNOW” WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE NOTION OF AUTHORITY

Pelin DİMDİK

INTRODUCTION

The notion of suicide is not concerned with the cases resulting in death only. Suicidologists generally consider suicide cases as a behavioural pattern. The term, “suicidal behaviour”, has been widely used by scientists. This term means a process and a sequence of behaviours beginning with an idea and ending in death. The notion of “suicidal behaviour” is associated with the actions and plans such as suicide, suicide attempt, and suicidal ideation (Eskin, 2012: 4).

Each act that individuals perform for the purpose of putting an end to their lives and ends in death is called a suicide. However, a person who is prone to suicide is not always able to achieve his intended goal due to the lack of information, the chosen method’s fatality, or the experiences. In some cases, an individual lets others rescue him/her because he/she is not sure whether to commit suicide or due to his/her strategic plans to reach an aim. Therefore, the act does not result in death and remains as a suicide attempt¹. The attempts may or may not be repeated subsequent to an unsuccessful experience. This is usually related to the conclusion of the factors causing the suicide attempt. Solidarity, indulgence, affection, and expectation of forgiveness underlie suicide attempts to a large extent (Ince, 2007: 19). It is regarded as “the idea of suicide” in cases where the desire of death exists in the individual’s mind as a plan and is not put into practice.

Suicide is considered to arise from some sociological, economic, psychological, biological, and physiological causes. In this regard, suicidal behaviours that an individual exhibits may occur as a result of different factors. Nevertheless, “no matter how pressing the cause is, a single experience does not lead man to suicide; association between the present and past experiences and the accumulation of repercussions affecting the personal traits are significant” (Özek, 1968: 88).

Man as a biopsychosocial being has some important needs required by his natural and social characteristics. When these needs are not satisfied, negative emotions such as anxiety, concern, anger, despair, and guilt appear. Threshold of tolerance and methods of overcoming the factors causing tension are concerned with psychological and biological parameters depending on personal differences. The suicide, the rejection of the right to life as the basis of individual rights and freedoms is one of the methods adopted in order to eliminate unbearable and intense stress. Suicide can be regarded as a way out in the face of adversities which seem impossible to sort out in the short run. Whether individuals are mentally healthy or not, the suicide is unfortunately a potential action for those going through monetary and psychological problems.

Prevention of suicides begins with paying attention to early warnings. Research points out that most of the people putting an end to their lives give direct or indirect signals to those around (Eskin, 2012: 19). For instance, individuals, who do not really want to die, display “suicidal behaviour” for various reasons such as communicating messages, drawing atten-

tion, gaining affection, appealing for help, intimidating, expressing anger, suppression, and using his life as a trump in order to satisfy his demands. It has been ascertained that this kind of examples may lead to death “by accident” if people do not take those signals seriously (Kaya, 1999: 32; Alptekin & Duyan, 2009: 56).

Scientists examining “suicidal behaviours” in detail have asserted different reasons for the emergence of the suicidal behaviour in consideration of individual’s tendencies. For example, “suicide is associated with a thick skull and an excess of phosphorus in the brain by the 19th century doctors, with a borderline personality disorder and/or a depression by a modern psychiatrist, with negative cognitive schemes by a psychologist, with instability and aimlessness by a sociologist, with patriarchy with a feminist, with alienated meanings by an anthropologist” (Alptekin & Duyan, 2009: 68). In this paper, suicides in Snow and their relations to authority are studied from a psychological and sociological perspective.

1. FEMALE SUICIDES IN SNOW AND THE VIEWS OF SOME OF THE CHARACTERS ABOUT THESE ATTEMPTS

Ka², the character returning Turkey after twelve-year political exile in Germany, decides to set out on the journey to Kars upon his friend’s suggestion, Taner, writing about politics in the newspaper *Cumhuriyet*. The purpose of his visit to this city is probably to write about girls committing suicides and to follow the municipal elections. However, the main reason for his visit to Kars is his wish to marry his college friend, İpek, who got divorced some time ago.

Ka interviews with many people; the ex-mayor, Muzaffer Bey from the Republican Party; the deputy governor, Umman Bey; the owner of the Border City Gazette, Serdar Bey; the vice chief constable, Kasım Bey; the Islamist militant, Lacivert (Blue), and the relatives of the girls committing suicides. Six families Ka has interviewed with have told that they are so surprised at their daughters’ suicides because they “have never complained about anything” ” (Pamuk, 2006: 18). Nevertheless, it has been found out from the novel that the girls putting an end to their lives have thought of suicide for a long time due to the plights they have faced (Pamuk, 2006: 19). In the second chapter of the novel titled “The Outlying Districts”, the sections about the aforementioned six girls’ lives and suicide methods they have used are as follows:

Case 1: The person in question is forced by her family to get engaged to an elderly teahouse owner. Eventually, the young girl shoots herself with her father’s hunting rifle in his bedroom after a routine family dinner (Pamuk, 2006: 19). In the eleventh chapter of the work titled “Ka with Sheikh Efendi”, there are other suicide cases the government has concealed. For example, the chapter also mentions some girls getting married to men whom they are not in love with just for money.

Case 2: A sixteen-year old girl scuffles with her sisters who want to watch TV channel they like as they do every night, so their father uses physical violence to break up the fight. After this event, she goes to her room and commits a suicide drinking “a big bottle of a veterinary medicine, Mortalin” (Pamuk, 2006: 19).

Case 3: The young woman, who marries the man she loves at the age of fifteen and then has a child, is subjected to violence by “her depressed and unemployed husband”. One day, after a quarrel she locks herself in the kitchen and hangs herself with the hook and rope she has made available beforehand although her husband tries to break the door and yells in

order to stop the suicide (Pamuk, 2006: 19).

Case 4: The young woman marries a man from Batman, spends all day doing housework and is continuously rebuked by her mother-in-law for her failure to bear a baby. One day, she visits her family in Kars. After she stays in Kars for a while, she commits a suicide taking two boxes of sleeping pills in the morning of the day she returns Batman (Pamuk, 2006: 21).

Case 5: A sixteen-year old girl, a relative of the person in the aforementioned case, commits a suicide pilfering sleeping pills from her grandmother's pillbox while the family watches a wedding scene on TV because her teacher reveals in front of her classmates that she is not virgin. The rumour quickly spreads around the city; her fiancé leaves her for this reason; young suitors stop coming, and she becomes depressed owing to her grandmother saying "you will never be able to marry anyway". In the autopsy, it has been revealed that she is virgin (Pamuk, 2006: 21).

Case 6: Teslime (literally someone who surrenders), committing a suicide, is one of the girls attending the Institute of Education who has been prevented from attending the courses in the first place and then from entering the school building by the decree of Ankara (refers to the government) because they refuse to take off their head scarves. The girl, who has to decide between her education and personal preferences, is about to be dismissed from the school, which she has been attending for three years and is about to graduate from, because she chooses her scarf over the school despite the oppressive efforts of her teachers at school and her parents at home. Unlike all other cases, this young girl is able to tell her family and friends about her intention to commit suicide. "When she saw some of her friends giving up and uncovering their heads, and others forgoing their head scarves to wear wigs instead, the girl began to tell her father and her friends that life had no meaning and she no longer wanted to live" (Pamuk, 2006: 22), says Teslime and hangs herself with a scarf to the lamp's hook after performing the evening prayer. There are different rumours about the cause of her suicide. According to the National Intelligence Organization, she was suffering from a broken heart.

The director of the Institute, killed by a radical Islamist, a teahouse owner from Tokat, remarks that Teslime chooses to die after losing her virginity as a result of a sexual liaison with a police officer twenty-five years older than her and due to his confession, "he is unfortunately married and does not intend to marry her" (Pamuk, 2006: 50). Islamist militant Lacivert (Blue) says about Teslime's death, "That girl commits a suicide not because she is allowed to enter the Institute but because of a love affair. An ordinary love suicide..." (Pamuk, 2006: 78-79). Her friend, Hande, tells of the process leading Teslime to a suicide:

"Then one day her father had some visitors from police headquarters; they told him that if he didn't send his daughter to school scarfless, they would close down his grocery store and run him out of Kars. "The father threatened to throw Teslime out of the house, and when this tactic failed he entered into negotiations to marry her off to a forty five-year-old policeman who had lost his wife. Things had gone so far that the policeman was coming to the store with flowers. So revolted was Teslime by this gray-eyed widower, she told us, she was thinking of taking off her head scarf if it would save her from this marriage, but she just couldn't bring herself to do it. "Some of us agreed that she should uncover her head to avoid marrying the gray-eyed widower, and some of us said, 'Why don't you threaten your father with suicide?' I was the one who urged this most strongly. I really didn't want Teslime to

give up her head scarf. I don't know how many times I said, 'Teslime, it's far better to kill yourself than to uncover your head.' But I was just saying it for the sake of conversation" (Pamuk, 2006: 121-122).

The novelist, wishing "to exhibit Kars in a way to represent whole Turkey" (Hakan, 2002: 62), also reflects social facts of the country and recounts the views on female suicides in Kars and Batman. Examples of the opinions of some people and institutions about these suicides are as follows:

Necip, a student of Religious Vocational High School, says: "now she's [Teslime] dead. Or she committed suicide. But we can't bring ourselves to believe that a Muslim girl ready to sacrifice everything for her faith would be capable of suicide.[...] No amount of suffering can justify a believer's committing this sin. [...] When someone's faith is this strong, he'll do anything to keep from committing such a sin—even submit to a life of torture"(Pamuk, 2006: 87). However, the high school student becoming mature after his unpleasant experiences tells of his changing ideas as follows: "I justify the girls committing suicides from now on, [...] I've already said I could commit a suicide" (Pamuk, 2006: 285). Hande, Teslime's friend, says: "Teslime was a devout girl, so I assumed she would never seriously consider suicide. But when we heard she had hanged herself, I was the first to believe it. And what's more; I knew that, had I been in her shoes, I would have done the same thing" (Pamuk, 2006: 122). She explains the reasons leading young girls to suicide: "If a lot of girls in our situation are thinking about suicide, you could say it has to do with wanting to control our own bodies. That's what suicide offers girls who've been duped into giving up their virginity, and it's the same for virgins who are married off to men they don't want. For girls like that, a suicide wish is a wish for innocence and purity" (Pamuk, 2006: 125).

Lacivert (Blue), defining himself as "the prominent Islamist of Turkey and Middle East" (Pamuk, 2006: 227), agrees with this idea: "Suicide is a terrible sin. It's an illness that grows the more attention you pay it [...] Girls who commit suicide are not even Muslims!"(Pamuk, 2006: 78). Although Kadife, "the leader of head scarf girls" (Pamuk, 2006: 346), says: "Well, if Teslime did indeed kill herself, it's possible to say she committed a terrible sin. If you turn to the twenty-ninth line of the Nisa verse of the glorious Koran, you'll see that suicide is clearly prohibited."(Pamuk, 2006: 114), she pronounces "I'm not against the suicide from now on"(Pamuk, 2006: 302) in another part of the novel. Moreover, she says "they'll pass right over the women whose lives have been ruined and instead we'll get pictures of the cautious provincial Islamist simpletons who presume to speak in their name.[...]For this reason I'd be more upset to appear in those papers than not to appear. I pity these men wasting so much effort to gain exposure themselves while we endure so much to protect our privacy. That's why I think it's important to mention the girls who've committed suicide" (Pamuk, 2006: 234-235). She underlines the suicides in the city.

The suicide incidents in Batman have occupied just a small space in Cumhuriyet newspaper, and Turkish media and people have turned a blind eye to the suicides. However, only when German and French journalists who have heard of the incidents visit Batman, make interviews and publish the news in their countries does the case turn into a matter of concern for Turkish journalists. "As far as some government officers are concerned, these attentions and publications encourage some girls to a suicide more" (Pamuk, 2006: 20). Serdar Bey, the owner of the Border City Gazette, says, "The suicide girls issue is exaggerated as in Batman" (Pamuk, 2006: 16).

It is blatantly obvious that silencing the media by downplaying the reasons for female suicides in Batman and Kars as copycat suicides only satisfies the fanatics faithful to traditional criteria and the abusers of these fanatics. People may learn to commit suicide from others, but an individual does not realize “this behaviour until he encounters a stressful life experience damaging his personality” (Eskin, 2012: 90). Therefore, press should be careful about the news on suicide incidents and should publish such news giving their social/psychological causes without the names of the ones attempting suicide. This is supposed to help readers know about the existence of similar people going through similar hard times rather than encouraging them for a similar attempt on their lives. Moreover, as long as the press writes of what to do in similar cases, they will be able to reach out for women in trouble. The precautions the government has taken in order to prevent suicides are of vital importance. In the novel, the governmental actions with the aim of preventing suicides are mentioned as follows: “A committee of suicide experts—including psychologists, police officers, judges, and officials from the Department of Religious Affairs—was already preparing to decamp from Batman to Kars; as a preliminary measure the Department of Religious Affairs had plastered [...] with its SUICIDE IS BLASPHEMY posters, and the governor’s office was to distribute a pamphlet with the slogan as its title” (Pamuk, 2006: 20). However, the deputy governor, Umman Bey, aware of the inadequacy of the precautions, indicates that “these women might be offended if they had to listen to a chorus of male voices remonstrating ‘Don’t commit suicide!’” and “girls hearing of others committing suicide might be inspired to do the same, but also because quite a few might do it out of exasperation with the constant lecturing from husbands, fathers, preachers, and the state” (Pamuk, 2006: 20).

2. INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AUTHORITY AND FEMALE SUICIDES IN “SNOW”

forced engagement or marriage, father-husband-state violence, headscarf issue, oppressive attitudes of parents, relatives, and mother-in-laws, virginity issue, unbearable burden caused by traditional roles are among the characters’ causes of suicide the root of which can be traced back to very ancient times and which has always remained current in Turkish society. In consideration of the suicide cases in “Snow”, it can be observed that the factor predisposing the individuals to commit suicide is the authority itself. “father’s or generally speaking parents’ authority over children” (authority resulting from a notable age difference - Elders’ authority over the young”, “authority of tradition holders”), “Man’s authority over woman”, “Soldier’s/Police’s authority over civilians”, “Senior’s-Supervisor’s-higher rank officer’s authority over juniors, workers, low rank officers/soldiers (Teacher’s authority over students) are among the authority stereotypes in the book.

authority is a kind of power to make individuals obey by controlling their actions, behaviours and judgements. authority which is given the key role in the organization of the social order also functions as an oppressive mechanism because it is of a prescriptive nature due to the policy adopted by the strong to rule over “the other” with a view to pressing down the oppositions even though legitimized by the voluntary votes of the majority. This is what causes the feeling of dominance.³

There is no authority to refrain from punishing the disobedient. Once individuals cease to respect the authority disguised in “the deceptive mask of violence”, this mask falls to reveal the true nature of authority. authorities never avoid wielding power to assume

the responsibility of strengthening and protecting their authoritative dominance (Mendel, 2005: 30). An authority which proposes rules violating rights and freedoms of individuals within its sphere of influence and which expects them to obey these rules without questioning loses its validity and reliability over time. In such cases, authorities of this kind resort to deterrent means, such as physical, psychological, and economic measures to cause fear across society. The primary objective is to intimidate individuals who (are likely to) pose threats, or to eliminate them if need be. What's more, such bodies seek tyrannical means to subdue people to survive forever under the pretext of changing and ordering the society, or to restore the welfare, or to reveal the reality. Aksu describes devastating effect of authority as follows:

“By its nature, authority is the ability to wield the power to kill (to punish), but it cannot survive as it is, because its destructiveness is meant to bring its own end as well. Therefore, from the very first examples of authority onwards the power to kill (to punish) is disguised under constructive elements. On the contrary, each and every authority needs some kind of a show of strength to hint its power to kill (to punish) to its so-called subjects. These shows are intended for both inside and outside of the living space. While the interventions intended for the former are performed via the symbols of brute and pure power to kill (to punish), the others for the latter one are clandestine and always kept under control. (...) Authority is implemented and sustained not only by means of this hidden power-to-kill (-to-punish) but also of voluntary obedience, which underlies the legitimacy of the authority” (Aksu, 2009: 65).

Weber categorizes legitimate authority into three, i.e. legal, traditional and charismatic. Legal authority relies on the premise that authority holders as per legal codes have the right to give orders. Traditional authority is based on the belief that traditions and customs which date back to very ancient times are sacred and the ones wielding the power by exploiting them are legitimate. Charismatic authority relies on the devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him (Weber, 2013: 54).

Actually, it is possible to link many suicide cases with the notion of authority. Because authority brings along several pressure types and imposes limits on human life with its legal, traditional, and charismatic basis, individuals who are tormented by the oppressive burden thereof resort to suicide. This case is a different repercussion of the fatal power of authority.

Originally, authority is masculine because even in the matriarchal cultures where woman is the leader, she is not literally dominant. Even if it seems that authority is held by women in the matriarchal systems, it is established by male relatives indeed (Öztürk, 1978: 57). This so-called matriarchal system was replaced by patriarchal hegemony owing to geographical, economic and religious factors. Even if the patriarchal structure was relatively enfeebled by the advent of modern age, it has not been obliterated yet. It is impossible to overlook the influence of religion on individuals. Studies show that monotheistic religions which scores of people have devoted themselves to in the present age support the survival of patriarchal structure (Aksoy, 2005: 216). As Freud puts it, considering that authority in patriarchal system is entrusted with father, “God is nothing but a psychologically exalted father (Mendel, 2005: 58). The authority of the elder originates from the superiority complex of this creating/managing father who brags about his ability to spawn the new generation. This is true for the traditional authority and its leader because they regard themselves as the

“spiritual father” of the new generation (Kojève, 2007: 35). In this system, elder women are “transvestites” passing down the culture in the traditional milieu as required by this mindset sanctifying the old one over the newcomer (Akal, 1994: 78).

for example, “According to a Lere myth, an old lady advises her daughters to love their husbands as they love God because God has created man different from woman and assigned them with different tasks. When she passes away, her daughters decide to rebel. As they lament for the death of their mother, they steal the men’s weapons and cloths, and dress like them and prove that gender difference does not really matter” (Akal, 1994: 116).

It can be inferred from the excerpt above that as woman bow down to male-dominant mindset, she becomes the supporter of this ongoing system by giving birth to sons [daughters] with the same mindset (Kalkan, 2007: 21). This role of culture transmitter assumed by woman helps her acquire prestige in the patriarchal society. The authority of the tradition determining the social, political and cultural trends is thusly reinforced (Kojève, 2007: 35).

In traditional patriarchal societies, the young are not free to choose their own prospective spouse. Various sources suggest that families play a prime role in determining the grooms-/brides-to-be. Such factors as traditional upbringing, age, and financial dependence on the family underlie the capacity of the families to decide the suitor and youngsters’ obedience to this rule. family members and the people of the community overreact when girls in particular act independently of any power, and therefore they make girls accept the fact that they will be all dependent on their husbands-to-be (Bulut, 1991: 495). In such families girls are encouraged to get married and to start a family. Then, they are required to bear a baby. “Some families and even some men think that women are only meant to give birth to a baby; it is considered that her role, just biological, is to assure the continuity of the patriarchal line by giving birth to and raising a child (preferably a son)” (Daninos, 1973: 48). Maternity is a vicious circle established by patriarchal system to control women. The notion of motherhood is discussed from various perspectives by many theoretical approaches. Whereas some theorists suggest that motherhood results from a biological difference discerning woman from man, for some it is just a role assigned by the society. Patriarchal system seeks to rule over woman by making use of her maternity. Vanguard of woman equality claim that women fall prey to patriarchal order by bearing children (Er, 2004: 5-35-87).

The traditional mindset exalts wives caring and nurturing her husband and children, satisfying their needs and being hardworking and obedient because such women are ideal spouses for men/sons. In this way, the ideal woman for marriage is created. Such an image devised by man and supported by unconscious mothers turn into a tag attached to the woman over time. Indeed, an ideal man or woman exists in our mental background. for example, the ideal woman in man’s imagination corresponds to his mother and should be immaculate just like his mother. A woman having a liaison is no more the ideal (Demir, 2012: 70-71). Therefore, in traditional patriarchal societies female sexuality is associated with “virginity” and “chastity”. The value of woman in a community is determined by her sexual naiveness. for a woman to be valuable, likeable, and marriageable as considered by the society she must be committed to social values (CETAD, 2007: 12-13). On the contrary, men are free to have sexual intercourse, which manifests itself as an intersexual social inequality. Doubtlessly, love has its own ethical and aesthetical values. These notions contain such positive features as good will, integrity, and tenderness. Sexuality with love

is not immoral even if extramarital. Morality is achieved by standing to abuse of any kind, including sexual harassment. All actions and behaviours detrimental to others are immoral, indeed (Yılmaz, 2005: 501).

In traditional societies, violence is a way of disciplining. “Such a stance interfamilially and socially legitimizes the use of violence, which gives way to both its proliferation and clandestineness” (Page & İnce, 2008: 83). Domestic violence is a man-induced problem. Violence against women is a common and prominent matter although sometimes the opposite is the case because women generally resort to violence to defend themselves in the face of male violence. Among the violence cases are “man’s violence against his wife and children, woman’s violence against her husband and children, children’s violence against each other and their parents” (İçli, 1994: 7). Male violence against women appears as follows: physical violence, non-physical or -psychological violence against a person who is unable to protect himself/herself, violence harming or destroying a person as a reaction or on purpose. Individuals generally perform such actions as a reaction to a matter which they oppose to. They resort to such actions when they face people who pose obstacles and are unwilling to or assumed not to bow down to make these problematic people do whatever they want (Kuçuradi, 2007: 9)

It can be asserted that male and female roles shaped by the traditional patriarchal structure have a pathological nature because such societies define female roles for their own good. Therefore, for many the established traditional system refers to “carrying a huge burden on their shoulders”. Hence, women who try to carry out these assigned roles suffer from intense psychosocial depressions (Sürekli, 2002: 84; Kalkan, 2007: 21). Accordingly, it was revealed that the suicide attempts in Case 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 were based on female submission to the oppressive authority imposed on women by means of both men and unconscious women.

Societies relying on traditional family bodies are antidemocratic formations where freedoms do exist. Because majority of the individuals in these societies are predisposed to consider relevant cases in an inhumane and unscientific fashion, i.e. in a dogmatic manner, they lack the ability to empathise. Since the so-called borders of good and bad are established by men, social feedbacks concerning attitudes fall out of the framework of intersexual equality principle. In other words, punishments and sanctions imposed on women are not the same as the ones on men. In such societies life of women and girls are restricted by the prevailing mindset. These individuals are expected to act within the framework of the assigned roles in their “small” worlds. Thus, it is evident from the data in the novel that majority of the suicidal girls are not in touch with their families, imprisoned in the house, and introvert individuals. As a matter of fact, women have equal rights to work, education, and social and political participation. [...] The role of woman in the family should be re-structured in line with the principle of ‘equal rights’. Undoubtedly, the desire of modern culture to make woman more active in social, political, and public milieu supports this suggestion. This is how women become equal to men in the family and have equal rights and roles. The role of woman is not limited to maternity; she turns into an individual able to decide, work, and earn money by her individual means. In other words, she acquires equal rights and assumes equal responsibility in decision making and sustaining the household. The border between male and female roles is becoming fuzzy and patriarchal family type is losing ground” (Canatan & Yıldırım, 2011: 125-126).

From this viewpoint, modernisation process of Turkey has fallen short and failed to

reach out for the masses. The cause of this failure can be governmental administrators' adopting a kind of policy favouring traditional and religious authorities instead of relying on the supremacy of law which is entitled to impose penal sanctions for violence of any kind – economic, psychological and physical violence in particular – and which protects human rights.

CONCLUSION

Issues predisposing female characters in Snow to suicide are both personal and social. Despite all past modernisation efforts, traditional structure in Turkish society resists to survive and is supported by some forces intended to exploit this traditional patriarchal system. By doing so, the state's failure to help its citizens internalize a global morality relying on human rights, freedoms, and honour underlies the familial and social oppression as the primary causes of suicides in Kars.

Even today, young girls and women suffer from such issues as forced engagement or marriage, violence by parents, relatives, husbands, mother-in-laws and (law enforcement) officers. Moreover, issues like headscarf, virginity, unbearable burden imposed by traditional roles persist to exist due to wrong policies.

Thence, the governmental efforts to eradicate the causes of suicides fall short. It is obvious that the state should assume the responsibility to prevent suicides. To this end, courses with legal and moral content focusing on human rights and relationships should be included in the curricula of educational institutions which are the ground for scientific proliferation; more deterrent punishments should be introduced to prevent the felonies of human rights violation; behaviours associated with such felonies should always remain on the agenda of mass media institutions; the legal system should be reformed to be more humane, sensitive, and fast; the welfare and educational level of the citizens should be increased, and practical and solution-oriented policies should be adopted to minimise unemployment. Moreover, more health care institutions should be established and in there people should be offered a cheap psychiatric support offered by well-trained and specialised medical staff.

FOODNOTES

(Endnotes)

1 Suicide attempts are classified as real and fake. For more, see Zuhâl Ağılkaya, *İntihar Girişiminde Bulunanlarda Dini Tutum ve Davranışlar*, (Marmara University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Theology, Program of Religion Psychology, unpublished Ma thesis), Istanbul 2008, s. 16.

2 The novel character whose real name is “Kerim Alakuşoğlu” wants to be called “Ka” as he does not like it.

3 Some researchers are of the opinion that the notions of dominance and violence should not be included in the definition of authority. For them, authority exists only when individuals voluntarily obey orders without questioning them in the presence of zero pressure. This perspective relies on respect and reconciliation (Esgin, 2013: 95). When superficially considered or if it is the scientific authority in question, similar definitions may sound good. When thoroughly investigated on the basis of charismatic, traditional and legal authorities, it can be realized after a detailed analysis that the issue is not as innocent as it is thought.

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