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A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS FROM BIOPOLITICS TO THEOPOLITICS IN TURKEY

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Abstract

In Turkey, the fact that a significant portion of the population, especially pensioners, has been condemned to live below the poverty line in recent years is not coincidental, but rather stems from consciously implemented social policies. In this context, the problem addressed in the research presented in this article is how the government, particularly targeting pensioners and the vast majority of the population, subjects them to both "symbolic violence" and condemns them to poverty and hunger with wages below the poverty line. The fundamental aim is to understand why the government continues to implement necropolitics despite all the reactions from the public and opposition parties, such as "if there is no livelihood, there will be elections." Based on discourse analysis, the research attempts to answer two questions: a) What are the reactions of trade unions, opposition parties, and street movements to the necropolitics implemented by the government in Turkey? b) What does the discourse of the government mean from the perspective of critical discourse analysis? The study findings reveal that the data from the State Statistics Institution (TÜİK), which the government uses as a basis for constructing its wage policies, has lost its credibility in society, and that necropolitics can no longer be concealed and is openly criticized. By setting the minimum wage very close to the poverty line, the ruling party, while asking workers to be patient until the elections, manages to maintain its solidified 30% vote share by suspending workers' dissatisfaction with a rhetoric of gratitude through its security-oriented policies.

Keywords: Biopolitics, necropolitics, thepolitics, discourse analysis, Turkey.

1. Introduction

Understanding Turkey's social structure requires a brief historical background and demographic characteristics, as well as information about fundamental processes such as modernization, urbanization, individualization, and economic and political regime changes.

Relational sociological analyses of Turkey's rapidly changing and unique dynamic social structure reveal its multi-layered and heterogeneous nature rather than its homogeneous nature. Indeed, as Berkes (1973) points out, the Modern Turkish Republic, built in 1923 on the legacy of the six-century-old Ottoman Empire, was

essentially a modernization project. The structural reforms for the transformation from an agricultural Eastern society to a modern Western society were actually initiated by the Ottoman elites during the Imperial period before the Republic. As Gökçe (2013) also states, in the nation-state building process in Turkey, the state attempted to transform education, family, politics, and the legal system through radical reforms with the help of Westernization initiatives. However, as the community resists, as described in Mardin (2025) terminology, the tension between the center and the periphery, or between intellectuals and the people, continues to be experienced constantly. The increased mobility that began with the mechanization of agriculture in the 1950s and the migration from rural areas to cities led to a decrease in the population working in agriculture. Rapid and unhealthy urbanization led to an increase in problems such as housing, health, employment and education.

On the other hand, Turkey's population, which was young until recent years, has begun to age. For example, in Turkey, with a population approaching 90 million, the population growth rate has rapidly decreased since 2014 and has begun to stagnate. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK, 2025), the total fertility rate was 2.38 children in 2001. This number, which was 2.19 in 2014, decreased to 2.16 in 2015, 2.11 in 2016, 2.08 in 2017, and 2 in 2018.

The fertility rate fell to 1.89 in 2019, then to 1.77 in 2020, and finally to 1.48 in 2024. This situation also indicates that the population has fallen below the replacement level of 2.1. The fact that the fertility rate has fallen to 1.4 actually indicates that a "high alarm" level has been reached (TÜİK,2025).

One of Turkey's most important problems is income inequality. Informal and precarious employment is very high in many sectors (Bugra, 2025). The phenomenon of "deep poverty" has increased significantly in Turkey in recent years. So much so that children who are malnourished are starting to grow shorter.

In Turkey, tensions between numerous class, sectarian, and ethnic groups have always existed. Moreover, since 2011, migrants arriving due to the Syrian civil war have further increased the already heterogeneous structure in both the labor market and society in general. Although there are not enough civil society organizations to act as a buffer between the state and individuals, some religious communities and foundations undertake this function (Mardin, 2025). However, in recent years, as in the rest of the world, the authoritarian regime's security-oriented policies in Turkey have led to restrictions on rights and freedoms, while tensions in society are constantly increasing.

In Turkey, the search for rights, law, and justice has been brought to the streets by the opposition, and large-scale protest meetings are held almost every day in all provinces. In this context, it can be said that Achille Mbembe (2003) offers a very useful theoretical framework for analyses to be made in an environment where pensioners, young people, and all segments of society who are poor have become more vulnerable.

Theoretical Framework

Until recent years, the prevailing view was that the social policies of industrialization, urbanization, and modernization, which are now criticized, were fundamentally based on biopolitics, as Foucault (2003) calls it. According to Foucault, the primary goal of capitalists is the health of workers and achieving maximum production with minimum investment. For this purpose, the constant surveillance and control of workers is necessary. The

system called biopolitics, based on anthropology, was initially seen as compatible with the capitalist system. In fact, Foucault considered biopower an indispensable element of capitalism. This is because the conceptualization of biopower, while incorporating bodies into the production process in a controlled manner, views them as populations instead of individuals. Thus, it adjusts population activities according to economic processes and puts them at the service of capitalism. In fact, the concept of biopolitics was first used in the early 20th century by the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellen. In his books in the 1920s, Rudolf Kjellen defined the state as a living organism. According to this organicist view of the state, all social, political, and legal ties arise through the state as a living whole (Cited in Holdar,1992). Thus, politics and biological laws are formed together. This is also the struggle for the existence of states. According to this approach, the state appears as a biopolitics. Therefore, it can be said that biopolitics gained importance for many thinkers until Foucault reinterpreted and re-examined the concept. Foucault, in 1974, first used the concept of biopolitics as follows: "...For capitalist society, biopolitics related to the biological and the body was of utmost importance: the body is a biopolitical reality, medicine is a biopolitical strategy."

According to Foucault (2003), capitalism, which began to develop from the 18th century onwards, first socialized the productive force in labor. This approach tells us that social control over individuals can be achieved not only through ideology or consciousness, but also through the body. This is why the body is more important than anything else in capitalist society. In this context, while the body is a biopolitical reality, medicine (drugs) is also a biopolitical strategy.

On the other hand, in his book "The History of Sexuality," published in 1976, Foucault also speaks of a biopower shaped through biopolitical mechanisms. At this point, approaching a kind of necropolitics, Foucault states that in the 18th century, the power to kill, possessed by authority, transformed into the biopower era, the power to govern bodies and life. His works "The Birth of the Clinic" and "The Birth of the Prison" can also be seen as foundational texts for biopolitics.

According to Foucault (2003), biopower is the mechanism that governs human biological life using new techniques and tools. The first mechanism used to maximize the labor power of the human body is the disciplinary mechanisms that Foucault calls the "anatomopolitics" of the body. Secondly, there is the "biopolitics of population" applied to the human species to preserve and multiply this labor power. Foucault then explains the transformation in this new approach as follows: A second power emerges that is not individualizing but massifying, directed not at the human body but at the human species. According to him, after the anatomo-politics of the human body established throughout the 18th century, at the end of that century, not the anatomo-politics of the human body but the "biopolitics of the human race" begins to emerge (Foucault, 2003, pp. 242-243). Biopolitics emerges not only as the individualization of bodies but also as a transformation towards a broader regulatory framework targeting populations at the species level. This transition from anatomo-politics to biopolitics demonstrates that power extends beyond controlling individual bodies. It marks a significant evolution, reaching as far as managing the life processes of entire populations through biopower. In fact, this transformation also means "biopower."

The methods employed by biopower include oppression, hegemony, and discrimination. However, it does not explicitly advocate or reject bodily violence. Ultimately, limiting an individual's biological life and inherent powers is not very meaningful in the context of capitalist production. Instead, empowering, coordinating, and controlling the body is more feasible. This is why the biopower model has become a positive form of power that supports life and increases the forces produced by life.

In summary, biopower is realized through the mechanisms of the anatomopolitics of the body and the biopolitics of the population. Disciplinary powers aim to educate, develop, and make the individual's body productive through anatomopolitical mechanisms. Unlike the literature summarized so far, a different discourse that has developed in recent years is "necropolitics." For example, Achille Mbembe's seminal work (2003), "Necropolitics," is the best example of this. Here, necropolitics is defined as "the power and capacity of sovereignty to largely decide who can live and who can die." This definition emphasizes the absolute power of the sovereign over life and death. Mbembe defines this as a fundamental characteristic of sovereignty. In fact, what he points to is, "To exercise sovereignty is to control mortality and to frame life as a manifestation of power" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 12). In other words, it is argued that the right to kill is most evident when it imposes death, thus demonstrating the absolute power of the sovereign.

This understanding of sovereignty relies on the power to punish and discipline, using death as a means of controlling populations. In fact, the "right to kill" and the "concept of a fictional enemy" are constantly intertwined (Mbembe, 2003). Here, the sovereign power decides the existence of its people, who can live and who can die (cited in Lazzarato, 2002). These understandings are actually fundamental characteristics of colonialism. Because killing is not a one-off event, but a regulatory principle in the maintenance of the colonial society. Colonial rulers subject the local population to genocide in this way (Wolfe, 2016; Povinelli, 2021). For example, Povinelli (2021) examines the impact of modern sovereignty and necropolitical practices on indigenous populations. This shows how these power structures dictate life and death in colonized societies: how they extend to the bodies of indigenous peoples, defining them as subjects to be governed or eliminated (Povinelli, 2021).

Mbembe (2003) actually describes the workings of biological power, applied by "dividing people into those who must live and those who must die." This division, which also points to a split between the living and the dead, defines the position of the rulers themselves.

Mbembe (2003) draws on post-Foucault biopolitics, discussions of war and race, as well as Fanon's (1965) concept of care (cited in Fitz Gerad, 2022). He explores how new understandings of humanity can emerge. These new understandings guide us in considering the other not as something to be excluded, but as beings/persons with whom we can build a more just world. Mbembe suggests that in building our shared future, we must defend democracy by including even the 'other' we may not want.

"The emergence of Achille Mbembe's **Necropolitics** has attracted considerable attention. In his critique of liberal democracy, Mbembe continues where Foucault left off. He criticizes the concept of the zone of non-being, which the

sovereign power deems appropriate for all populations. Thus, Mbembe not only deals with biopolitics, the politics of hostility, and the state of exception, but also undertakes an important task by drawing attention to the possibility of a global ethic based on transnational resistance. This book allows us to see Achille Mbembe as a leading thinker in the studies of sovereignty, democracy, migration, and war in the contemporary world, while also enabling us to understand more clearly what we are experiencing in a dark time filled with authoritarian tyrannies. On the other hand, as wars have ceased to be the exception and have begun to become permanent, this work, which skillfully articulates daily forms of hostility and hatred, seems poised to become a masterpiece of anti-racist literature.

Mbembe's latest work is, in fact, a significant contribution to political and critical theory.

Necropolitics is essentially written with the aim of shedding light on African Studies by distancing itself from traditional patterns and clichés of political thought, it can also be argued that it possesses the power to form the theoretical framework for the social policies of those in power who, in reality, are powerless, marginalizing and condemning their citizens to hunger.

Achille Mbembe, a new representative of the second generation of critical theory, in his work **Necropolitics**, describes the increasing inequality, militarization, hostility, and terror, as well as the resurgence of racist, fascist, and nationalist forces. Mbembe characterizes the dark side of democracy as a "night body," summarizing its reliance on colonial ambitions and violence. According to him, democracy has been hollowed out, and liberal democratic values, rights, and freedoms have eroded. As a result, a concept of sovereignty that operates by eliminating anyone the state deems an enemy has become widespread in our time. Mbembe provides an extremely important theoretical framework by showing how contemporary societies have moved away from democracy, creating death worlds and a society of discrimination.

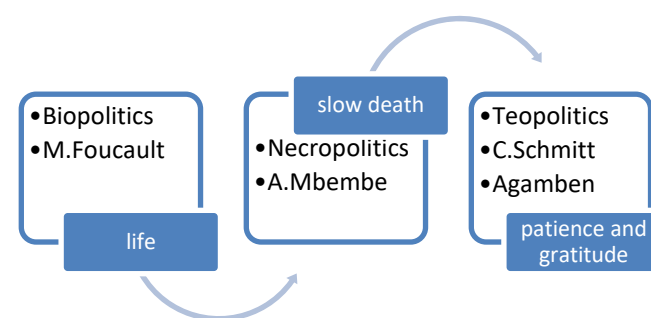


Figure 1. Transformation process of social politics

Recently gaining increasing attention, Theopolitics is used to describe how political powers gain legitimacy through religious discourse. This discourse draws our attention to the fact that modern administrations are often maintained through theological logics. Its theoretical background is nourished by Carl Schmitt (2008) from the political theology literature. For example, the link between the modern approach and tradition and theology already exists in Schmitt's work *Political Theology* (1922). According to him, sovereignty is defined by the power to declare a state of emergency, but this power also implicitly includes a divine power. Thus, Schmitt (2008) demonstrated a century ago that political

powers are exercised not only as a rational-legal system but also as a faith-based regime of obedience.

On the other hand, Giorgio Agamben (1998) has also made significant contributions to theopolitics in the contemporary literature. According to him, the concept of divine rule (oikonomia) in Christian theology is the basis of modern bureaucracy and governance practices. According to Agamben (2011), modern bureaucratic administrations and contemporary powers are often inspired by God's rule over the world. Therefore, the metaphysical foundations of power cannot be ignored. In the context of our topic, it is possible to say that Mbembe also indirectly links theopolitics with necropolitics. Because when sovereignty is defined as the power to decide who lives and who dies, it needs legitimization. This is provided by the theopolitical discourse, which presents it as a moral imperative as well as a sacred mission or divine destiny. In short, theopolitics sanctifies the governance of death while presenting violence as "inevitable," "divine providence," or "fate." In this context, it normalizes and trivializes the exclusion of the poor, the elderly, the disabled, and even immigrants.

Theopolitics is considered not only to explain oppressive forms of power but also in terms of resistance practices. Liberation Theology is an important example in this context. This approach, which developed in Latin America, reinterprets theology not as a tool for establishing power, but as a means for the liberation of the oppressed.

This literature demonstrates that theopolitics can manifest in both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forms. Therefore, it is crucial not to overlook the use of discourses such as "patience" and "gratitude" by both populist and authoritarian regimes. Indeed, this study attempts a critical analysis of how political power is legitimized through sacred discourses and how this leads to the production of obedience, patience, and consent.

The concept of "symbolic violence," developed by Bourdieu (1995) as a sociological concept, is also considered important in this study. This is because large segments of the population, especially pensioners, are condemned to very low wages and are also blamed for not having patience and not knowing how to be grateful. Symbolic violence in Turkey is actually the government's disregard for rights, law, and justice for 25 years. It is its contempt for its citizens, labeling them as poor and destitute. It is its constant policy of favoring the rich, ignoring the poor through tax amnesties or wealth reconciliation. It is giving alms instead of the wages they deserve.

Research Design

In this section, after defining the research problem, the objectives of the research are given in the form of questions. Then, brief methodological information regarding the data collection in the research is presented.

Research Problem: In Turkey, many segments of society, primarily the disabled, the elderly, women, and child laborers, are increasingly deprived of basic living conditions as a result of Türkiye's departure from being a social welfare state. Furthermore, civil servants, workers, and self-employed individuals have lost many of their benefits since 2006 by being unified under a single pension system called SGK (Social Security Institution). In other words, retirement has been transformed into an individual responsibility by moving away from the social welfare state. The

reactions or societal demands against these necropolitical policies in Turkey can be summarized in four main points:

a) Higher salary increases: Especially the equalization of the lowest pension to the minimum wage level. b) Ensuring a decent standard of living: Current salaries are insufficient to cover rising rents, electricity, gas, water, and other bills, and the cost of basic necessities. c) Strengthening social rights: providing discounts for retirees on transportation, accommodation, and other services, access to healthcare, and tax exemptions. d) Demand for justice: The phrase "Not charity, but rights" is considered very important as an expectation of social justice.

The increasing reactions against the conservative government and its small coalition partner, which have been far from solving problems for 25 years, is undoubtedly primarily due to the high cost of living and inflation. The fact that salary increases are calculated far behind inflation is unacceptable. Furthermore, because Turkey has adopted short-term, temporary solutions instead of stable and sustainable choices in social policies, there is significant inequality of rights among workers and retirees themselves. This situation, where there is no equality of rights between civil servants and industrial workers, makes it difficult for many retirees to live and has led to their protests spilling onto the streets.

The low salary increases, especially the minimum wage calculations that remain below the poverty line, which have been the subject of many protests in 2025, are the most blatant example of the government's necropolitics. The fundamental research problem in this study is that the social policies implemented by the government in Turkey subject the vast majority of the population, especially pensioners, to both "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu, 1995) and death by forcing them to work for wages below the poverty line. The real problem is that the government continues to implement necropolitics through theopolitical manipulations despite all the public's reactions, such as "if there is no livelihood, there will be elections."

Objectives: The research questions addressed within the scope of this article are:

- a) What are the reactions of trade unions, opposition parties, new social or square movements, NGOs, and the poor to the government's efforts to determine the minimum wage for 2026 in Turkey?
- b) What does the discourse of the government mean from the perspective of critical discourse analysis?

Method: This qualitative research study was conducted in two stages. First, the discourses of the parties involved, such as trade unions, political parties, NGOs, and New Social Movements, were presented in detail. Secondly, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was performed to achieve the research objective.

Critical discourse analysis was chosen because it requires an ideological socio-political stance and a critical perspective. Indeed, despite some differences, experts such as Norman Fairclough (1995), van Dijk (2001), and R. Wodak (2001) define critical discourse analysis as the uncovering of the conditions and practices that reproduce power and hegemony relations, ideologies, and social inequalities.

This study was developed based on Foucault's (2001) relationship between knowledge and power, Gramsci's (1992) concept of

hegemony, and the views of critical sociologists such as Adorno, Horkheimer, and Habermas, also known as the Frankfurt School.

Furthermore, acknowledging that discourse/text cannot be considered independently of its social context, the context was sometimes social relations (N. Fairclough) and sometimes historicity (R. Wodak). In this study, as the necessary initial stages of both general discourse analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, data selection was limited to news and statements in visual and print media between December 2025 and January 2026, the period in which the topic was most frequently discussed, following the definition of the problem. Then, the selection of meaningful and frequently used words, who produced and circulated them, and the context in which they were used were investigated.

For example, opposing views were shown with quotations at the level of "social practice" as well as at the level of "discourse" between neoliberal and conservative opposition. In this context, themes such as patience, gratitude, increased life expectancy, early elections, and incitement, which were most frequently used in January 2026, came to the forefront.

In this study, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was considered a highly suitable tool for analyzing the discourses of power and opposition regarding necropolitics, social policy, and vulnerable groups. This is because while quantitative methods are insufficient for studies on vulnerable groups (e.g., people with disabilities, pensioners, the poor) in relation to discourses produced by pro-government media and official institutions, CDA offers advantages in understanding and explaining legitimization strategies, exclusion mechanisms, and even normalization processes that are not explicitly stated in the texts.

Unlike general discourse analysis, the ability to make implicit information explicit and critically analyze it, the desire to contribute to social change, and the opportunity for researchers to critique themselves also played a role in its selection.

On the other hand, CDA's ability to allow for process analysis at both micro (linguistic) and macro (social) levels is also satisfactory from the perspective of relational sociological principles.

Most importantly, CDA was chosen because it provides researchers with extensive possibilities for analyzing critical theoretical frameworks such as Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics. For example, the value and contribution of the study are enhanced by establishing the context between the discourse and society being examined, using concepts such as power, hegemony, race, class, ethnicity, inequalities, social structure, organizations, ideology, and conflict.

2. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the reactions to the fact that retirees (pensions) and workers (wages) in Turkey are condemned to live on incomes below the poverty line are examined first through general discourse analysis, and then through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the government's discourse.

In the early days of the minimum wage discussions, the unions initially withdrew from the minimum wage commission. The largest union, Türk-İş, initially did not want to be a party to the determination of the "poverty wage." Unfortunately, the minimum wage announced at the end of 2025 is 28,075 TL. Many reactions were shown during the process leading up to this level.

2.1. Reactions of Unions, Political Parties, and NGOs

The research findings first include the reactions of unions, and then political parties and NGOs as much as possible:

Some union reactions: The official statistics institution of the Republic of Turkey (TÜİK) announces inflation figures at various times each year, based on products whose source it does not always disclose. The statistics released by this organization never reflect the hardships experienced by the public.

The discrepancy between the inflation figures released by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) and an NGO (ENAG/ Inflation Research Group) before the minimum wage (28,179 TL) and salary increases to be implemented in 2026 has sparked public outrage. The Vice President reacted negatively to the higher figures released by ENAG, while HAK-İŞ, a major trade union, like Türk-İş, demanded a change in the minimum wage determination method.

The President of TÜRK-İŞ, one of Turkey's oldest and largest trade unions, did not participate in the Minimum Wage Determination Commission meetings. He stated that the meetings would be meaningless unless the commission's structure changed, because decisions made by a majority vote of five worker, five employer, and five government representatives could not determine a wage that would adequately benefit retirees, the unemployed, and those working for the minimum wage. He argued that only by reducing the number of government representatives from five to one could a wage at the poverty line this year be paid, after compensating for last year's losses in food, rent, transportation, and education, and adding a welfare share.

The minimum wage in Turkey has been set at 28,179 TL, far below the current poverty line of 30,143 TL. Türk-İş denied claims that the Minister of Labor had visited them to discuss their views, stating only that they had informed the commission of their reasons for not participating. They stated they would not be at the table unless the system changed, adding, "Why don't you participate when we don't, and why do you participate when we do?" They responded, "This means the issue is changing the composition of the commission." The Türk-İş President, stating that their current demand is a "living wage," pointed to the "anti-democratic structure of the commission," saying: "It is unacceptable that the minimum wage is set at 28,075 TL according to the official statistics organization (TÜİK) figures, while everything else has increased by 69%, and this justifies their decision not to participate in the commission." Bianet (22.12.2025) <https://bianet.org>haber>asgari-ücret-tespit-komisyonu>. (Retrieved 26.01.2026).

Another significant reaction to the low inflation figures announced by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) came from HAK-İŞ. The President of HAK-İŞ stated that "the structure of the Minimum Wage Determination Commission and the criteria for determining the minimum wage need to be changed." According to him, only in this way could hunger and poverty be combated. (Dünya Gazetesi, December 23, 2025) <https://www.dunya.com>ekonomi>hakis-baskani-arslan-asgari-ücrer-50yıldır-çalışan-beklentilerini-karşılama>. (Retrieved January 26, 2026)).

He emphasized that the minimum wage represents the lowest wage and that more than half of the workers in Türkiye work for the minimum wage. He pointed out that, in reality, the number of minimum wage earners should not exceed 10% of the total workforce.

While criticizing the fact that the number of minimum wage earners is high in the country, thus implying a general wage, he said, "TÜİK's basket doesn't match our basket." The head of Hak-İş, stating that determining the minimum wage based on data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) is "incorrect," said the following: "The proportion of goods and services in TÜİK's basket is separate from the proportion of goods and services consumed by minimum wage earners. For example, food inflation, rent, transportation, and energy are very important for us. The proportions of these in TÜİK's basket are very low. Therefore, the determined minimum wage ceases to be the wage that truly meets the needs of minimum wage earners. We say, let's change the structure of the Minimum Wage Determination Commission, let it be more participatory. Let's set criteria. Not just TÜİK's criteria. TÜİK's basket doesn't match our basket. The proportions in TÜİK's basket are not proportional to the needs of those working for the minimum wage. 50% of our consumption is rent and food." "The minimum wage needs to be determined according to the prices of these and similar basic consumer goods." Hak-İş Konfederasyonu (12.12.2025)

https://hakis.org.tr>haberler.php?action=haber_detay&id. (Retrieved 26.01.2026).

Like Türk-İş, Hak-İş also stated regarding who should be on the Minimum Wage Determination Commission: "The government should not be involved. Who should be? Worker representatives, employers. The government should assume a regulatory role, but never be on the commission."

According to Hak-İş, "A healthy minimum wage cannot be determined from this commission, you cannot achieve it."

"The commission should have two actors: employers and workers." Furthermore, they continued, "Taking family responsibilities into account, the minimum wage could be determined not for a single worker, but based on a married worker with two children. Also, the Turkish economy is growing. The minimum wage needs to share in this growth." "If it receives a share of growth, if inflation is plus a share of prosperity, and if past losses are also compensated, the resulting figure will determine the minimum wage. The wage we have determined is not a minimum wage, unfortunately, but a living wage. Therefore, instead of giving a figure today, we need to talk about the system. If the system is operated properly, we will determine a minimum wage suitable for Türkiye," he says.

The United Pensioners Union, continuing its protests in a similar vein, stated: "For 23 years, the government has been mocking the intelligence of pensioners by targeting TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute) and SGK (Social Security Institution). However, the sole responsibility for the deep poverty experienced by pensioners today lies with the policies implemented and laws enacted by the government." (Evrensel net (10.01.2026) <https://www.evrensel.net>haber> (United Pensioners Union's reaction to the increases (retrieved 26.01.2026))

In the statement, the union, addressing 16.5 million pensioners, emphasized that the institution determining the fate of pensioners is not TÜİK and SGK, but the government. The union's second statement indicated that the inflation rates announced by TÜİK do not correspond to real life. According to official data, the 6-month inflation is approximately 10.75%. With this increase, the lowest pension will rise from 16,800 TL to 18,800 TL. It is being planned. The union, stating that pensioners are being crushed by much higher inflation due to market prices, rent, and utility bills, is

protesting the increases, deeming them insufficient. The statement recalls that a proposal passed by the Grand National Assembly's Planning and Budget Committee granted a flat increase of 30,000 TL to high-ranking public bureaucrats (it should be noted that this was later abandoned due to being deemed unconstitutional), and included the following expressions:

"No resources for pensioners, lucrative resources for bureaucrats! The salaries of the heads of TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute) and SGK (Social Security Institution) will rise to 232,000 TL with this regulation. The loss for pensioners is 55%." "Either Elections or Livelihood"

The United Pensioners Union's statement contained very dramatic expressions:

- "Neither TÜİK nor SGK..."
- "It is the government itself that condemns pensioners to hunger and poverty."
- "The ballot box will come, the suffering of pensioners will end." • "Either elections or livelihood!"

All Pensioners Union Ankara Branches, January 2 In 2026, a press conference was held on Sakarya Street to support the Republican People's Party (CHP) deputies who staged a sit-in in the Parliament's General Assembly to demand an increase in the minimum wage to 39,000 Turkish Lira. The statement was read by Adem Çiftci, the Spokesperson of the Branches Platform and the President of the Çankaya Branch. Çiftci drew attention to the actions they carried out throughout Turkey on January 2, 2026, stating:

"With the actions we carried out across Turkey, we crossed a new threshold, strongly demonstrating the accumulated anger, demands, and will for change of pensioners." Evrensel.net (2.01.2026) Pensioners take action in many cities (retrieved 26.01.2026).

The United Pensioners Union decided to hold an indefinite sit-in to protest the 12.19% increase in pension payments. In a statement made in Kartal Square, they reacted against the 20.00 TL increase in the lowest pension, which will not affect the base pensions, and criticized the government's "look at the juggler" trick, which is being used to distract the public. The issue is that the government doesn't actually provide treasury assistance to those receiving less than the lowest pension; instead, it deducts from pensioners who earned higher pensions while working, based on Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) data, and reflects this deduction onto those receiving lower pensions. The ultimate goal is to equalize all pensioners' pensions to the lowest pension level in the medium-term program."

Reactions from Opposition Parties: CHP (Republican Party) Party Council Member Asiye Ergül, in a press statement, pointed to the minimum wage announced as 28,075 TL and said, "It is impossible to live on this money. These are ridiculous figures, progress was made with small increases. Although TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute) does not reflect the realities, the minimum wage increase rate was announced with its figures. Rents are 25,000 TL and above. The wage is not even enough for food. Moreover, people are social, they can't even afford a cup of coffee anymore. On the one hand, they say have three children. No one thinks about how three children will be educated. We woke up to huge increases of 100% the day after we entered 2026, without the increased salaries being paid. This minimum wage decision must definitely be reviewed. I do not consider these increases

sufficient." News (January 8, 2026) <https://haberler.com>local/CHP-Artvin-Provincial-President-PM-Member-criticized-wage-increases> (retrieved January 26, 2026).

- Leaders of opposition parties, primarily CHP, DEM, DEVA, Future Party, and İyi Party, voiced demands for a higher minimum wage, arguing that it should be at a much higher level, such as 39,000 TL.
- CHP organized protest meetings in Ankara and other provinces, emphasizing the demands of pensioners.
- CHP leaders and many MPs brought the demands of pensioners, such as raising their pensions to the minimum wage level, reductions, and debt restructuring, to the agenda of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. There were heated debates and continuous sit-ins in the Assembly regarding the increase in pension payments. The fact that pension payments remained below the minimum wage was heavily criticized, and this issue remained a constant topic of discussion in both the Assembly and Turkey. The CHP's demands are briefly as follows: (ankahaber (3.01.2026) <https://ankahaber.net>detail>.(retrieved 26.01.2025)

1. Increasing retirement pensions: The CHP wants retirement pensions to be raised to a fairer level and at least equalized to the minimum wage level.
2. New figures they promised when they came to power are also included in their statements: For example, if the CHP government comes to power, both the lowest retirement pension and the minimum wage will be 39,000 TL. Higher targets have also been mentioned from time to time in social media and some CHP statements (e.g., raising the lowest retirement pension to around 70,000 TL). Birgün.net (23.12.2025) <https://www.birgun.net>current>. Private reaction to minimum wage.

As a social democratic party, the CHP only wants the current government to raise retirement pensions in line with inflation and the cost of living. The CHP is not content with merely criticizing the government for not increasing pensions; it is calling for a more comprehensive social justice policy. Because, although the government distorts the statistical figures it uses to try and hide the fact that pensioners' incomes are eroding in the face of high inflation, the truth is known to everyone.

In summary, it can be said that: a) According to the CHP, pension payments in Turkey do not meet living standards and remain at a "poverty" level.

The party advocates for equalizing pension payments with the minimum wage and significantly increasing current pensions.

c) CHP leader Özgür Özel announced that they aim to raise the lowest pension to 39,000 TL under their government. Sözcü Gazetesi (20.01.2026) <https://www.sozcu.com.tr>chp> (retrieved 26.01.2026).

New social protest movements: In fact, similar reactions to the same problems spilled onto the streets in 2025 as well. Indeed, the public took to the streets again at the beginning of 2025.

- On January 6, 2025, pensioners and the public took to the streets in many cities of Turkey.

- In cities like Mersin and Fatsa, pensioners protested the low wage increases and the difficulty of making ends meet, chanting slogans such as "We will not surrender to misery."
- In Mersin, pensioners, as poor elderly people carrying a model of a coffin, called for the government to resign. They were in revolt because they could not meet their basic needs. Okuyorum Gazetesi (January 5, 2026) <https://www.okuyorumgazetesi.com> (retrieved January 26, 2026).

Similarly, members of the Izmir Pensioners Platform marched from Alsancak and made a press statement, protesting the low pensions with slogans such as "We want what is rightfully ours, not charity" and "We want a humane life."

The "Those Affected by the Retirement Age Limit" (EYT) and the Pensioners Federation demanded an increase in the lowest pension amount and a equal pay rise during a protest held in Kadıköy, Istanbul.

Pensioners displayed banners everywhere and chanted slogans for their right to a humane and dignified life. ankahaber (10.01.2026) <https://ankahaber.net>detail>. Pensioners Protest (retrieved 10.01.2026).

Pensioners participated in political rallies wearing clothing with messages criticizing the low pension increases. It is reported in the media that security forces were used during these protests, and even administrative reactions were seen, with one pensioner facing charges of "insult."

In Turkey, the government's planned policy of abandoning workers and pensioners to their fate with low wages and high living costs has led to widespread reactions and strong public criticism, especially in recent years. It is clear that these reactions are not limited to union actions. The opposition also attempted to raise awareness among broad segments of the public through street protests, rallies, and political debates. The deteriorating economic conditions resulting from the government's pro-rich policies, and most importantly, the low wage policy, have gradually become a significant issue for society.

Labor and Democracy Forces: The minimum wage, which union leaders avoided attending, was criticized and protested by everyone when government and employer representatives announced it as 28,075 TL by the end of 2025.

In major cities like Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, citizens took to the streets with slogans such as "We want a humane life," and "Government resign." (Medyascope, December 9, 2025) <https://medyascope.tv>. "I want a humane life" rally. (Retrieved January 26, 2026)

The rallies, organized at the call of the opposition party CHP and labor organizations, protested against government policies. Calls were made for the right to a wage that would cover the cost of living.

In the capital Ankara, labor organizations protested the fact that the Turkish Statistical Institute's (TÜİK) inflation data does not reflect real living conditions, and that the minimum wage is far below the poverty line of 30,143 TL, chanting slogans such as "We are not condemned to this exploitative system." Artı Gerçek (23.12.2025) <https://artigercek.com >politika-asgari-ucret-protestosu> (Retrieved, 26.01.2026).

ENAG / NGO reaction: The debate over inflation figures has intensified before the determination of the minimum wage and pension and civil servant salaries to be implemented in 2026. The discrepancy between the inflation figures provided by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) and the NGO (Inflation Research Group - ENAG) is striking. As citizens and unions have lost confidence in TÜİK's figures, Vice President Cevdet Yılmaz, one of the highest-ranking officials in the government, expressed his concerns, claiming that nobody knows how ENAG calculates inflation and that it doesn't even rely on international criteria. He even went further, stating that the issue is being distorted with statistics that are not subject to scrutiny. (Mezepotamya Agency, December 25, 2025). <https://mezepotamya ajansi35.com.asagari-ücrete-tepki-geçim-artık-imkansız>. (Retrieved January 26, 2026).

Dr. Veysel Ulusoy, an academic and founder of ENAG, quickly responded to the government: "If you provide a suitable email address, I can send you 250,000 daily price data points along with their sources." This response actually reflects the ENAG data... It is a clear statement that the calculations are based on products collected from numerous markets. Retired and minimum wage earners have developed numerous protest statements addressed to the Vice President. For example, one is as follows: "Mr. Cevdet Yılmaz, instead of criticizing ENAG, take a look at the institution called TÜİK. For years, it has condemned us retirees to hunger with its false and inaccurate inflation rates. You have no idea about the markets, bazaars, or markets; you are well-off and you don't care about retirees. But remember, that ballot box will surely come before us one day." Furthermore, it continues: "ENAG tells the truth, TÜİK, unfortunately, is stealing the rights of the people. Of course, they also receive orders from above. For example, before TÜİK announces the figures, the Minister of Finance gives a message. He says that the year-end inflation will be this. TÜİK then reduces the figures accordingly. They take from the people and give to the rich and high-level bureaucrats." (Finans Gündem, 7.12.2025) <https://finansgundem.com>> The TÜİK-ENAG debate is growing (Retrieved) 26.01.2026).

2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis

This critical discourse analysis was initiated from a socio-political perspective, aiming to criticize the government's attempts to legitimize its actions on behalf of those ideologically condemned to hunger and poverty. It is undeniable that the government, in order to implement its neoliberal policies, is deliberately leaving retirees and workers to a "slow death," and that wages and salaries in the country are deliberately kept below the poverty line. Therefore, the research problem and objectives outlined in the introduction are retained in this section.

The issue that power always consciously creates, and which, in accordance with critical discourse analysis, first catches our attention, is the "us-them" distinction (I and my allies and the opposing group). However, it should be noted here that this dichotomous, discriminatory, and othering perspective is incompatible with relational sociology, which is our theoretical guide. Because relational sociology rejects essentialism and dualisms while relying on the examination of processes in everyday life (Kasapoglu, 2016). (See Figure 1)



Figure2. Us and the opposing group /others dualistic discrimination process :Necropolitics.

Table1. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

US/SOVEREIGN'S STRATEGIES OR POLITICS OF EXCUSE-MAKING	OPPOSING GROUPS / OTHERS/ PROTESTS
DISASTERS/ EARTHQUAKE/FIRE/FLO.	RETIRED /PENSIONERS
CONSTRUCTIONS OF ROADS AND BRIDGES (EXPENSIVE BOT SYTEM)	DISABLES
INCENTIVES FOR PRIVATE SECTORS	WOMEN
INTERNATIONAL/ GLOBAL FORCES	CHILDREN
EXPENDITURES FOR SECURITY	NEET YOUTH
HEALTH AND EDUCATION POLICIES	POORS
PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM	FARMERS
MIGRATION AND REFUGEES	CIVIL CERVANTS
AGING POPULATION	BLUE COLOUR WORKERS
LIMITED RESOURCES	OPPOSITE GROUPS
HIGH INTEREST BORROWING	ANIMAL RIGHTS DEFENDERS
LIMITED FOREIGN INVESMENT	ENVIRONMENTALISTS
FAMILY FOCUSED POLICIES	LGBTI+
TAX EXEMPTIONS AND PRIVILEGES	SUPPORT FOR FRIENDS FOR THEIR WHEALTH
LOW INFLATION CALCULATION	STEEL FROM WAGES AND SALARIES
IMPERATIVE OF GRATITUDE	WE WORKED HARD AND PAID FOR
MORAL ACCUSATION OF	WE WANT OUR RIGHTS

INGRATITUDE	NOT CHARITY
ACCUSATION OF PROVOCATION	OUR SALARIES ARE STOLLEN 35% BY TÜİK FALSE CALCULATIONS.
ELECTIONS :2028	EARLY ELECTION : 2026-2027
NATIONAL INCOME IS INCREASED TO 18.000 USA DOLLARS	NATIONAL INCOME DISTRIBUTION IS UNEQUAL : TOP 5% GETS MORE
	MAJORITY IS UNDER HUNGER LINE
	POVERTY IS INCREASED
NECROPOLITICS	
HEGEMONIC PRACTICE: SELF-LEGITIMIZATION / IDEOLOGICAL OPPRESSION	RESISTANCE TO NETROPOLICIES : PROTESTS

According to the CDA, ideological production takes place in visual and written news. In other words, news is not neutral. While dominant powers constantly exert pressure, the public's reaction manifests itself in protests. Therefore, oppression and resistance are sociologically intertwined. Given that power relations are discursive, understanding and explaining class, ethnic, gender, and sometimes age-based inequalities in news is necessary to decipher the misuse or abuse of power. Because sovereignty is of central importance, and the discourse is generally structured by the dominant class. In fact, the dominant power acts to legitimize oppression. In short, the dominant powers are effective in legitimizing discourse and producing a powerful and effective meaning in their favor. They even try to present the issues they impose as natural forms in the discourse they produce. For example, as is often the case in Turkey, a discourse is produced that portrays the opposition as responsible for economic failures. They do not hesitate to claim that every service and benefit is their own doing. They use all the resources of the state, the judiciary, and the security forces to frighten and accuse the opposition. Unable to accept their electoral losses and writhing in a desire for revenge, they ruthlessly use the legal system to produce crimes and criminals through a mechanism of fabricated confessions. For example, in Turkey, the arrest and trial of all elected metropolitan mayors from the opposition is one of the mechanisms widely used by the ruling power to intimidate the public.

In this study, when critical discourse analysis (CDA) is conducted in the sense of challenging the socio-political reproduction of unequal power relations, it is seen that the dominant discourse consciously prefers two fundamental concepts. It is clear that these concepts are brought to the forefront due to their religious connotations in the traditional discourse in Turkey.

Table 2. Comparative CDA analysis of the concepts of patience and gratitude

SOVEREIGN DISCOURSE TR724 (15.1.2026))	CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
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https://tr724.com) (retrivied 2.01.2026)	
PATIENCE PAYS OFF President's statement: "A little more patience, Turkey will be much stronger." "These difficulties are temporary. We are the ones who will overcome these difficulties." "Our retirees, who have dedicated a significant part of their lives to serving our country, are our pride and joy."	The current government in Turkey normalizes the salaries and wages of a very large segment of the population, especially pensioners, which are below the poverty line. Furthermore, by lulling the impoverished population with the promise of uncertain future prosperity, the government evokes Berlant's (2007) concept of "cruel optimism." "Be patient today, prosperity will come tomorrow. There's no need to react today." From the CDA's perspective, patience means neutralizing collective action. It prevents unionized and organized protests, targeting only the individual. Interpreting this from Gramsci's (1992) point of view, hegemony here rests on consent: because the individual who patiently endures as a good believer will win in the future. Similarly, patience also encompasses taming the body. In Mbembe's terminology, patient bodies gradually become accustomed to suffering, hunger, and humiliation, becoming unresponsive. After all, reacting, being impatient, is bad. Therefore, Mbembe's concept of necropolitics can also be used here.
ONE MUST KNOW HOW TO BE GRATEFUL. "Our pensioners, whose salaries weren't even paid in the past, should be grateful. Because even though the salaries are low, they are paid on time." "You are innocent and good, the opposition is bad and inciting you, don't be deceived. We get votes from the poor and needy. When conditions improve, we will do what is	The accusation leveled against all citizens is that they are ungrateful and lack the capacity for both gratitude and patience. The opposition is also accused of inciting innocent people. The government uses a theopolitical discourse, embodied in patience and gratitude, to cover up problems.

necessary again.”

In fact, it's possible to say that the government uses a necropolitical and theopolitical discourse simultaneously: attempting to discipline bodies through patience, and postponing rewards for the future by remaining passive today through gratitude.

In fact, the saying that those who are patient in this world will be rewarded in the next is not a teaching unique to Islam. Protestant ethics also rely on the belief that one should work hard, produce, and accumulate capital, and that one will receive the reward in the future. On the other hand, it can be argued that the advice to be patient given by those in power, while seemingly well-intentioned and moral, is actually used for political purposes. Patience, glorified in mythological and religious narratives, carries the intention of constantly postponing the demand for justice to the future. According to Demir (2025), these discourses are used by the government to legitimize insecurity, lawlessness, and poverty. The government's discourse that dissent is immoral and obedience is a necessity is deciphered here. Because in the production and legitimization of consent, patience is no longer a matter of morality but a political tool. Here, it is necessary to mention some research data that, despite the necropolitical policies openly implemented by the government with harsh measures, make it possible to understand, albeit slightly, why it still maintains its solidified 30% vote share.

According to Demiralp (2025), in Turkey, the state decides who wins and who loses. The impoverishment of pensioners is not just an economic issue; they are also disregarded for political reasons. The government values minimum wage earners and provides them with support because they wait when told to. Therefore, minimum wage earners fall within the government's sphere of influence. In contrast, pensioners, the generations raised by the Republic, have no time to wait and, as they did in the 2023 local elections, they react by not voting.

Therefore, the government does not hesitate to categorize pensioners as losers. Furthermore, pensioners' dignity is undermined; they are not respected. They cannot give their children and grandchildren pocket money during holidays. According to pensioner research, the emotional dimension of the issue is also significant, beyond the economic one. Pensioners are seen as losers and are not valued. Elderly poverty is becoming widespread, and there is undoubtedly a necessity to grant them the right to a life worthy of human dignity.

According to Demiralp (2025), when it comes to the blue-collar workers, they are minimum wage earners and generally support the government. It's necessary to ask what emotions fuel their continued support. Because they are not satisfied with the economy, but their support continues. In fact, they are not happy or enthusiastic at all. In the US, this is called "moral injury" (VanderWeele, 2025). It doesn't turn into deep anger. They don't see any alternatives, so they don't feel much anger. According to experts, anger requires an emotional cost. The individual must first acknowledge the mistake they made previously. Therefore, instead of blaming the government, they blame the retailers and intermediaries. A policy of projecting anger onto external forces is

being implemented. In Turkey, the government promises security instead of economic promises. This framework legitimizes the politics of sovereignty. It is said, "We must stand behind the strongest." They say, "The government couldn't do it in 20 years, the opposition can't do it at all." Increasing the minimum wage doesn't generate excitement. "Even if it increases, the marketeers will seize everything again tomorrow. The minimum wage increase isn't important. Besides, the opposition keeps saying they'll give, but where will they find the resources anyway?"

If they had it, the government would give it." This is the prevailing thought, and those who vote for the ruling party approach their economic problems this way. They continue to vote for them. They are dissatisfied, but they don't hold the government responsible. They prefer to stand behind a strong authoritarian leadership.

On the other hand, there are rising reactions against the "be grateful" rhetoric, which government representatives have been using more frequently lately while wishing citizens patience. Because now, such rhetoric is seen as a theopolitical deception, playing on religious sensitivities (Demir, 2026). Because patience, whether glorified in mythological or religious narratives, leads to the postponement of the desires and aspirations of the oppressed segments of society, especially their pursuit of justice and rights. As Demir (2026) rightly criticizes, the government suppresses and even tries to legitimize lawlessness, poverty, and insecurity by instilling patience. The time has come and gone for the broad masses of people, forced to buy expired food and everyday necessities to meet their basic needs, and expected to be grateful for receiving their meager salaries below the poverty line, to say no to outdated rhetoric like "protest is immoral," and to heed the slogan "if there's no livelihood, there's an election."

The relationship between the fear of crime and necropolitics can be established through the fact that fear is not merely an individual emotion, but a technique of governance where power is established over life and death. In this context, the fear of crime can be considered a necropolitical tool. Because often, the fear of crime functions as a legitimizing mechanism in necropolitical systems. The widespread fear of crime inevitably normalizes security-oriented policies, states of emergency, and harsh police practices under the pretext of "survival." A further step is the labeling and coding of certain groups as "dangerous," "prone to crime," and "not worth protecting."

On the other hand, one might ask, "Whose fear is visible, whose death is invisible?" In the context of necropolitics, the fear of crime is fundamentally asymmetrical: For example, the fear of crime among the middle class → more police, cameras, gated communities. Unfortunately, the violence suffered by the poor, immigrants, young people, ethnic groups, and LGBTQ+ individuals is normalized. As a result, while the fear of some groups is protected, the deaths of others are overlooked and normalized. This ultimately carries the same meaning as Mbembe's concept of "expendable lives."

3. Discussion

There are many examples of necropolitics in various areas in Turkey. It is possible to speak of the government's discourse and actions within the scope of necropolitics not only for pensioners but also for other social groups. Undoubtedly, the public is subjected to what is also described as "exposure to death" during disasters in general, and earthquakes in particular. Early warning and social awareness are extremely important in this regard (Zerrin

Toprak Karaman, 2018). The state's failure to take necessary precautions or its delayed intervention... "Unnatural deaths" can be considered a form of necropolitics based on class. Because the state clearly has a positive responsibility in disasters (Gökalp and Kaplan, 2025). First, more than 30,000 lives were lost in the 1999 Marmara Earthquake, and then more than 50,000 in the February 6, 2023 earthquake. Thousands of people were trapped under the rubble of poorly constructed buildings. A large portion of those who could not be rescued for days died in buildings that benefited from zoning amnesties. Earthquake policies that fail to ensure that the units granting building permits within local governments fulfill their duties, that do not conduct necessary inspections, and that knowingly ignore disaster risks, leaving citizens to die, can undoubtedly be considered necropolitical (Kasapoglu, 2023).

On the other hand, the difficulties in meeting basic needs during the long-term states of emergency and curfews implemented in the country are also a form of necropolitics. The Gezi Park protests (Gezgin et al., 2014), and especially the security-based measures restricting daily life in some provinces and neighborhoods in Southeastern Anatolia in 2015-2016, can be cited as examples. Urban spaces subject to such conflict, referred to as "urbicide," are also studied sociologically (Bekiroğlu, 2023). While Küçükali and Balıkcılar (2019) describe the effects of some violent events on economic life, other studies clearly demonstrate the problems experienced in this regard (Güllüpnar and Fidan, 2017; İnci, 2019).

While the employment of refugees and migrants in precarious jobs and the encouragement of risky escapes by opening borders can also be considered necropolitics, Turkey is not entirely to blame in this regard. The fact that the number of Syrian refugees Turkey has accepted since 2011 has exceeded three million, and that the majority still remain in Turkey even after the war ended, is the most important indicator of this. It is clear that Turkey has been quite patient, especially regarding the issue of bare life, or the necropolitics of migrants. Numerous studies can be cited that describe the experiences of refugees in social and economic fields (Bakioğlu et al., 2018; Adaman and Keyder, 2007; Erdoğan, 2014; Dedeoğlu, 2011; AFAD, 2013).

The area where Turkey's record is worst is the very high rate of workplace fatalities. Particularly in the shipbuilding, mining, and construction sectors, the lack of safety measures leads to a significant number of deaths. Turning a blind eye to deaths for profit and failing to enforce sanctions is a conscious choice of public administration.

The deaths of pensioners who cannot make ends meet due to poverty, falling while working on construction sites, as well as the deaths of very young workers in shipyards, are clear examples of necropolitics. More than 300 miners lost their lives in the Soma mine disaster. Numerous studies can be cited on this subject (Çetin and Karatay Görgül, 2015; Altan, 2012; 2014; Aydınonat, 2014; Cansın, 2014; CNNTürk, 2015; TÜİK, 2014).

Especially in recent years, the suppression of dissidents in Turkey has increased with the aim of spreading fear. Naturally, many seriously ill prisoners are among them. The instances of sick prisoners being left to die by not being brought before a judge in a timely manner have increased significantly in recent years, parallel to the authoritarianism of the regime. It is quite ironic that doctors who have taken the Hippocratic oath are also involved in the

implementation of these policies, as this helps to mask these practices. Mbembre (2003) calls such deaths "slow death."

Unfortunately, necropolitical practices were also observed during the Covid-19 pandemic. While the elderly were not allowed to leave their homes for protection, workers were forced to work continuously to prevent disruptions in industry. The elderly were left to die because they could not meet their basic needs and their treatments were interrupted. Young workers, on the other hand, were exposed to the virus spreading rapidly in crowded places, making them vulnerable. In prisons, the question of who will be protected and who will be abandoned in extraordinary circumstances—such as the elderly, the disabled, and the poor—is a necropolitical issue, alongside the prisoners themselves. (Sagır, 2021; Agamben, 2020; Aykan and Bilginer, Elbek and Pala, 2021; Demertzis and Eyerman, 2020; Sandset, 2021).

In Turkey, the state prefers to support the family rather than taking on many social security and healthcare responsibilities itself. Thus, social inequalities, especially for women, are deepening. The elderly, the disabled, and children are cared for at home by women within the family. In other words, although the number of women working outside the home is increasing, care work is still primarily undertaken by women, and gender inequalities are increasing in all areas. Despite the principle of equal pay for equal work, women are always forced to work in more precarious, temporary jobs with low wages (Ecevit, 1989; 2000). Women are essentially seen as a reserve workforce in terms of social policy (Koray, 2011; Omay, 2011). Furthermore, women's poverty is becoming a significant problem (Ulutaş, 2009).

The exclusion of disabled people from social rights, as well as their poverty, are addressed within the framework of necropolitics. Slow death: hunger, poverty, neglect, and lack of access are the fundamental components of the equation. In his work "Slow Death," Berlant (2007) uses the concept of "deadly everydayness" to describe the exclusion of disabled people from social rights. As is known, necropolitics can be summarized not only as "killing," but also as bringing life closer to death through neglect. Thus, disabled individuals, deprived of social rights, healthcare, care, and access, fall into the category of "bodies allowed to live but not wanted to live" (Mbembe, 2003). In fact, Puar (2017) is among the leading thinkers who best establish the relationship between disability and necropolitics today. In Turkey, the state is increasingly distancing itself institutionally. This is because income tests are required, and consequently, the family's central responsibility for care is increased. The fact that support is only accessible to certain segments of the population is also a major problem (Dolu, 2019).

In Turkey, the denial of rights to disabled individuals with fragile bodies and the resulting structural neglect lead to a decrease in their quality of life expectancy. Therefore, the state's deliberate neglect is undoubtedly necropolitics. In particular, the inability of disabled individuals to access healthcare services and their being condemned to low home care support are unacceptable policies.

4. CONCLUSION

In Turkey, there is a strong social reaction among the elderly and pensioners that can be described as a "pension revolt." This reaction manifests itself as street protests, political demands, media and public debates. The focus of the protests is the inability of pensions to cover the cost of living and, consequently, the demand for a decent standard of living.

Regarding the high inflation rate and the inability of wages to keep pace, many politicians, economists, trade unionists, and citizens who are employed or retired state that real purchasing power has decreased and that current wage levels do not meet basic needs.

Initially, an NGO (Environmental, Economic and Social Research Center) and the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce criticize the Turkish Statistical Institute's (TÜİK) official inflation data, arguing that it does not reflect reality and that the actual cost of living is much higher.

For example, the main opposition party, CHP, and its leader, Özgür Özel, consistently criticize the current situation in a multifaceted way. He insists that both the minimum wage and the lowest pension are "poverty wages," like Devlet Bahçeli, the leader of the ruling coalition partner MHP, and defines them as injustices. According to the CHP, pensions are insufficient in the face of living costs and inflation, and it is unacceptable for them to remain below or very close to the minimum wage. Özel frequently states that the current lowest pension is around 20,000 TL, making it impossible to live on this amount in the face of the high cost of living.

In Turkey, the fact that a significant portion of the population, especially pensioners, has been condemned to live below the poverty line in recent years is not accidental, but rather stems from social policies implemented with conscious choices. These practices, which are increasingly replacing biopolitics and are also called necropolitics, are not unique to Turkey but are quite frequently observed in contemporary societies, as theorized by Achille Mbembe (2019). In today's globalized world, due to inequalities, militarization, corruption, and economic policies implemented with fascist political views, governments prefer discriminatory policies instead of treating their people equally. As a result, a small minority receives almost all of the national income, while the vast majority are left to die on low wages, below the poverty line.

In fact, there is a relationship between necropolitics and the fear of crime (Garofalo, 1981). The fear of crime is an emotional response individuals have to certain symbols. This fear is constructed over time and is related to the perceived threat. We cannot witness the state directly killing, but when it indirectly makes life unsustainable, individuals lose trust in the authorities. For example, retirees and the elderly feel threatened and anxious as their financial losses increase. The constant experience of fear and anxiety gradually becomes ingrained in their minds, and distrust and resentment towards the authority increase.

On the other hand, according to the results of world values surveys, Turkey ranks second among countries with the highest level of distrust or perception of distrust towards others (Arslan, 2016). The government's announcement of a minimum wage far below the poverty line pits the state against broad segments of the population. For those who have experienced better living conditions in the past but whose purchasing power has significantly decreased today, this treatment increases anxieties and undermines trust in the state.

Therefore, there is a close relationship between necropolitics and fears. It is unacceptable that the policies of those in power, favoring the powerful and wealthy, condemn the majority to hunger and misery. However, since the economy, damaged by misguided policies, only allows those in power to open the money taps during elections, the slogan "If there's no livelihood, there are

elections" resonates more strongly among the people. Because the people want to share in prosperity, not die.

In fact, the fear of crime leads to the emergence of spatial divisions through ghettoization, urban transformation, and the construction of gated communities. Thus, safe neighborhoods are created on one side, and dangerous residential areas on the other. Dangerous neighborhoods lack both infrastructure and social services such as education and healthcare, and are more vulnerable to violence from security forces and the police; the term "slow death" in cities is used in the literature to describe this very situation.

In Turkey, the fear of crime is increasing due to economic crisis, gender and ethnic discrimination, lawlessness, physical and symbolic violence, as well as social and cultural uncertainties. Worst of all, while the vast majority of society looks to the future with insecurity, the elderly, the disabled, the poor, the youth, and immigrants are all afraid and pay the price without protection. What is truly unfair is that some pay an even higher price due to necropolitical maneuvering.

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