CARFAX PUBLISHING
Taylor & Francis Group

The Donald Robertson Memorial Prizewinner 2001

The Politics of Squatter (*Gecekondu*) Studies in Turkey: The Changing Representations of Rural Migrants in the Academic Discourse

Tahire Erman

Summary. This article aims to develop a critical approach to squatter (*gecekondu*) studies in Turkey and investigates the various representations of the *gecekondu* people in these studies in different periods by placing them in their social, political and economic contexts. It details changes in the representation of the *gecekondu* population from the 'rural Other' in the 1950s and 1960s, to the 'disadvantaged Other' in the 1970s and early 1980s, to the 'urban poor Other(s)', the 'undeserving rich Other(s)' and the 'culturally inferior Other(s) as Sub-culture' between the mid 1980s and mid 1990s, and finally to the 'threatening/*varoşlu* Other' in the late 1990s. It asserts that, while the approach to the *gecekondu* people varies from an élitist one, to one which is sympathetic to the *gecekondu* people, this group, nevertheless, has been consistently the 'inferior Other' for Turkish *gecekondu* researchers.

1. Introduction

There have been a significant number of studies on squatter (*gecekondu*) settlements and their inhabitants in Turkey since the 1950s when *gecekondu* housing made its first striking appearance on the urban scene. *Gecekondu* studies established themselves as part of Turkish social science and were mainly conducted by sociologists, joined also by some political scientists and urban planners/researchers. In the year 2000, at the beginning of a new century and a new millennium, it is time for us, as social scientists, to stand back and consider in a critical light the *gecekondu* studies we have conducted. The representation in academic studies of the *gecekondu* migrant population is worth investigating, especially when approached critically through the relationship between the production of knowledge and power. Foucauldian ideas of power/knowledge and discourse help to illuminate this relationship. Foucault (1980) recognised the key role played by knowledge in modern power relations: discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it. Thus, discourses are embedded in the social relations of power, maintaining asymmetrical social relations (McNay, 1994). Foucault argued that

> Knowledge cannot be produced independently of its use (Foucault, 1980, pp. 109–133).

while knowledge is produced by those upon whom has been conferred the status of saying what counts as true (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). Of course, this does not mean that aca-

Tahire Erman is in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Faculty of Economics and Administrative and Social Sciences, Bilkent University, Ankara 06533, Turkey. Fax: 90 312 266 49 60. E-mail: tahire@bilkent.edu.tr .

demics are primarily and consciously engaged in the production of knowledge to legitimise the prevailing power structure. However, each 'mode of domination' (society) has its own 'regime of truth' in which truth is socially produced in relation to what is socially defined as false, and throughout which interests of domination prevail. Thus, the 'truth' is a social construction which is shaped in the context of the general discourse dominating the society at the time. Consequently, we cannot separate interests from practices in studying representations.

Perlman (1976), in her empirical research with *favela* residents in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, demonstrated that the construction of social categories in theory did not necessarily reflect reality—on the contrary, they might distort reality and hence reproduce power asymmetries in society.[1] This makes it very important to undertake critical analyses of social studies, particularly when the 'subjects' belong to disadvantaged groups.

This paper, which recognises the role of the 'act of naming' in the production of meaning in discourse, aims to develop a critical study of the representations of the *gecekondu* people in academic discourse.[2] The representations of the *gecekondu* people in public discourse are also mentioned in so far as the public discourse may help to define the academic discourse. We consider only the *gecekondu* studies undertaken by Turkish social scientists, and omit the studies by international scholars, since the relationship between the researcher and the researched is critically investigated here with regard to the political and socio-cultural positions of the urban middle classes (to which the *gecekondu* researchers largely belong) and the rural migrant lower classes in Turkish society.

Developing a critical approach to studies of the *gecekondu* should not be taken to imply a denial of their contributions to Turkish social science; many of these studies have provided important empirical data which have helped us to familiarise ourselves with the *gecekondu*. However, these studies have failed in important ways to conceptualise *gecekondu* settlements, and especially their inhabitants, in their diversity and on an equal footing with other urban residents. This article approaches the issue mainly from these two perspectives. While analysing studies of the *gecekondu*, the paper also aims to provide information about the *gecekondu* population (and more generally about the rural migrant population) and the changes taking place there and in Turkish society at large. Thus, studies of the *gecekondu* are examined by contextualising them in the wider social, political and economic realities of Turkish society.

In the paper, four major time-periods are identified in which major shifts in the representation of the *gecekondu* people in the academic discourse can be observed—namely, the 1950s and 1960s ('the rural Other'); the 1970s and early 1980s ('the disadvantaged Other'); the mid 1980s and mid 1990s ('the urban poor Other(s)' versus 'the undeserving Other(s)' and 'the culturally inferior Other(s) as sub-culture'); and the late 1990s ('the threatening/*varoşlu* Other').[3] In the following section, a broad historical outline is presented, linking the shifts in perspectives in the representation of the *gecekondu* population with the wider Turkish political/economic context and international/global interactions.

2. Contextualising Perspective Shifts in Studies of the *Gecekondu* into the Wider Turkish Context

Starting with the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and until the 1950 elections, the Republican People's Party ruled Turkey as the single party in the 'democratic' system. Its major goal was the modernisation of society, taking the West as the model. In this top-down, élitist social engineering project, led by the military and bureaucratic élites, cultural aspects were given priority—namely, the way of life and outward appearance of the modernising élite was presented as the model which should be followed by the rest of society. In particular, Ankara, the capital of the new republic, was

seen as the symbol of Turkish modernisation, and as the cradle of Turkish modernism. When people started migrating from villages to cities in the late 1940s and began to build their *gecekondus*, their presence in the city and their makeshift houses were perceived as highly alarming both by the state and by the urban élites. The élitist view was to regard the *gecekondu* people as a serious obstacle to the modernisation of the cities and the promotion of the modern (Western) way of life in them.

In the 1950s, a number of significant changes took place which challenged the élitist approach dominating the society. Turkey adopted a multiparty political system and the Democrat Party, known for its liberal economic policies, came to power, thus ending the single-party rule of the Republican People's Party. Industrialisation, based on the import of expensive foreign technology and capital, was given priority by the government. Turkey strengthened its economic and political ties with the US, the hegemonic power in the world economy. In brief, Turkish society experienced structural and political transformations in the process of its integration into the capitalist world economy. All this created a sense of optimism and belief in social progress (see, for example, Lerner, 1958).

The 1950s witnessed the rapid urbanisation of society. Structural interventions in agriculture to integrate it into the market, largely supported by the Marshall Plan (for example, the introduction of tractors, fertilisers, irrigation systems and new agricultural products), resulted in a large number of peasants migrating from their villages, in search of a new livelihood. The growing (although still limited) industrialisation attracted many peasants to the cities, and the newly developing road system helped to facilitate their move. Predictably, the housing stock of the cities lagged far behind the housing needs of the newcomers. Thus, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the newcomers, who were mostly young men, first built shanties in and around the city at geographically undesirable sites, preferably close to the jobs available to them.

Their shanties were called *gecekondu*, literally meaning 'built in one night'. Eventually, they were joined by their families and, in growing numbers, by their kin and by fellow-villagers who were encouraged to migrate to the city because they already had contacts there. In the process, their shanties turned into 'shanty towns' surrounding the city. The migrant population and their shanty towns were tolerated by the government and by the private sector as they contributed their cheap and flexible (unorganised) labour to the industrialisation process. Also, the Democrat Party was well aware of the voting potential of this large number of people and, through its populist policies, was able to gain their political support for they were content with the promises of title deeds, and infrastructure and services to their settlements, made by the leader of the political party holding office.

The strengthening ties with the Western world, especially with the US, affected the academic sphere. The dominance of modernisation theory in the West at the time highly influenced Turkish scholars who, by and large, believed in the modernisation of the country following the Western experience. Elitism and the top-down nature of Turkish modernisation, as well as the early Turkish Republic's emphasis on the premises of enlightenment and positivism, also played a role in the attractiveness of modernisation theory for Turkish intellectuals. Under the influence of this theory, Turkish scholars expected the assimilation of rural migrants into the modern urban society ('the rural Other').

The optimism of the early 1950s started to fade away during the later years of the decade, by which time it was apparent that the Democrat Party could not meet its promises of a wealthier and more democratic society. As economic problems intensified, public discontent manifested itself in mass demonstrations, particularly by the university students. This led the government to take increasingly oppressive measures. The violent confrontations between the government and the public ended in a military intervention in May 1960.

The military coup dissolved itself in 1961

after writing a new constitution which was more liberal than the earlier one (i.e. the first constitution of the Turkish Republic). The granting of extensive rights to civil society made it possible for society to organise itself around different political ideologies. Furthermore, the liberal economy of the earlier government was replaced by a planned economy which favoured state intervention in the market. This brought a new economic function to the *gecekondu* population as consumers in the domestic market when the national private sector needed consumers in order to survive—it had failed to compete in the international markets. Due to the growing role of the *gecekondu* population in the economy, the first Gecekondu Act was passed in 1966, legally recognising the presence of *gecekondus* for the first time and presenting measures to cope with the 'problem'. The solution brought by the Act was to improve those *gecekondu* settlements which were considered to be in relatively good condition (i.e. to bring infrastructure and services to these settlements), to demolish those which were not and to prevent further *gecekondu* formation. As a result, starting in the late 1960s, many shanty towns turned into established low-density residential neighbourhoods with infrastructure and some services. Yet the issue of legal title remained unsettled, continuing to make the *gecekondu* people vulnerable to government action.

The civil rights movement in the West in the 1960s, which was critical of the type of economic progress led by the US, started influencing Turkish society in the late 1960s, blowing in the winds of opposition and radicalism. Political groups, particularly the supporters of the Marxist ideology, began to criticise radically the Turkish system for its class inequalities, while also questioning the domination of the West. These groups were sympathetic to the poor and the disadvantaged who were mostly the *gecekondu* people.

The power of modernisation theory in Turkish academic circles continued in this era, yet it started to face some challenges under the influence of the changes in the Western intellectual milieu. The atmosphere of criticism and questioning in the West had its effects among Western scholars who attacked positivism in important ways and challenged its authority in the social sciences—an authority which had become increasingly strong during the 1950s.

By the 1970s, the intellectual influence of the West, combined with more sympathetic images of the *gecekondu* population under the influence of leftist ideology, resulted in the *gecekondu* people being seen in academic circles as disadvantaged ('the disadvantaged Other'). More importantly, the development of dependency theory by Latin American scholars—a significant critique of modernisation theory—affected Turkish scholars who became less eager to use the unilinear approach of modernisation theory in their explanations of social change in general, and rural–urban migration in particular.

When we consider Turkish society in the 1970s, we see that the 1960s had laid the ground for political polarisation and conflict. The potential for political polarisation based on the prevailing political milieu was quickly established during the deteriorating economic conditions of the 1970s. The oil crisis in the Western world in 1973 hit Turkish society hard, and economic problems intensified. The optimism of the 1950s was completely gone. The radical leftist groups organised themselves in society, particularly among the youth (universities) and the poor (*gecekondu* settlements). *Gecekondu* people were the hope of the leftists, and *gecekondu* settlements became the sites of radical politics. Those dominated by the left came to be known the 'rescued regions' ('*kurtarılmış bölgeler*')—terriories into which state forces (such as the police) could not enter. Meanwhile, migration to cities continued, and *gecekondu* housing started to become a competitive commodity in the face of the decreasing availability of land for the newcomers. In this period, we observe that the temporary shelters of the late 1940s and early 1950s, which had increasingly turned into established neighbourhoods during the 1960s, were becoming profitable commodi-

ties. The move of the upper classes out of the city centre, accelerated by the increase in car ownership, played an important role in the increase in the value of the land on which the *gecekondu* settlements were built. Speculation took the upper hand. The making of easy money out of *gecekondu* setlements was tolerated by the governing political parties, who probably saw it as a means of 'bribing' the *gecekondu* population in order to keep them from political activism against the state.

The emergence of the ultra-nationalists as a strong group against the radical leftists in the late 1970s, and the polarisation between the two, led to violent attacks and brought society to political crisis. Weak coalition governments contributed to the crisis. Finally, in September 1980, the military intervened and a new period opened up in modern Turkish history.

The military coup dissolved itself in 1983 after three years in power, having created a more conservative constitution which restricted the formation of civil society organisations, and having imprisoned many members of radical groups. A new government was then elected by the public. Sharing a similar ideology with the commanders of the coup, the new government (the Özal government) adopted right-wing politics, fighting against 'communism' and opening up Turkish society to the Western world through liberal economic policies. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and hence the end of the Cold War, legitimised the neo-liberal economic policies of the government. On the other hand, the attempts of the government to develop a fully liberal market economy shook society deeply, increasing migration to large cities, unemployment rates and hence social discontent.[4] The lower-level jobs in the public sector, which once provided favourable employment opportunities for the *gecekondu* people, became very competitive. The job opportunities in the private sector also became very competitive as companies reduced their workforce and as some small businesses went into bankruptcy. The increasing lay-offs in the private sector and the shrinking of the public sector led to high unemployment

rates and acute poverty in the *gecekondu* population. The widening economic gap between the rich and the poor further intensified discontent in the economically disadvantaged strata, particularly among rural migrants in the city.

Interestingly, in 1984 and 1985, several *gecekondu* laws passed by the Özal government which allowed the construction of buildings of up to four-storeys on *gecekondu* land. This opened wide the doors to the commercialisation of *gecekondus*, which could be interpreted again as the government's 'bribing' those who suffered the most from their liberal policies, thus silencing them by giving them the hope of becoming rich. When the tendency of the 1970s to regard *gecekondu* land as a commodity was backed up by its legal approval in the 1980s, the 'apartmentalisation' of *gecekondus* became a widespread phenomenon. Thus, the once-owner-occupied/owner-built *gecekondus* were being replaced by high-rise apartment buildings in which the owner of the *gecekondu* land owned several apartments ('the undeserving rich Other'). In brief, pessimism was felt deeply by some *gecekondu* people who experienced increasing deprivation, while other *gecekondu* people became economically better-off in a short period of time.

The 1980s and 1990s were the years when society realised beyond doubt that not only could rural migrants/*gecekondu* people rapidly jump up to a higher economic stratum, but also they could shape the city by creating their own ways of life and sets of values, which were surely different from those of the modernising urban élites. Those who became better-off through the commercialisation of the *gecekondu* were leaving their *gecekondus* and moving to apartments, yet they were preserving their own culture ('the culturally inferior Other as sub-culture').

Since the mid 1980s, we have witnessed an increasing politicisation of ethnic and sectarian identities in the political atmosphere of Turkish society. The state powers, including the government and the military, tend to play off one identity-group against another in

their concern to maintain power and the legitimacy of their ideology in society. This illustrates the problem of identity politics in 'post-modern' times. The rise of political Islam and the 'Kurdish problem' in south-eastern Turkey following the military coup of 1980 and, above all, the state's increasing emphasis on its Turkish–Sunni character has split Turkish society and resulted in conflicting, and competing, cleavages.[5] Kurdish and Alevi people, and especially the younger generation of migrants who grew up in the city, feel excluded from the system, and claim recognition and economic benefits—sometimes by engaging in radical actions.[6] The 'secularists', alarmed by the increasing political and economic power of 'Islamists', emphasise their differences— "We are progressive; they (Islamists) are backward"—and this includes Alevis who have been strong supporters of the modern, secular Turkish Republic. The increasing migration from the south-east in the 1990s, to escape terrorism, also created cleavages. The newcomers to large cities, many of whom are people of Kurdish origin, have not been easily accepted into the existing migrant networks, and they have been experiencing social and political discrimination. As a result, they have created their own communities, usually in the most disadvantaged locations, and have ended up with impoverished lives and social stigma, creating a suitable atmosphere for radical action and social fragmentation.

Within this general political atmosphere, gecekondu communities tend to be politicised and radicalised. Alevi and Sunni communities exist side-by-side in gecekondu settlements; their political views and social lives significantly differ and they compete with each other to capture political power in the local government in order to control resources. The commodification of gecekondu land over the years, so that the gecekondu has become more of a commodity than a home to the economically disadvantaged, has played a significant role in this competition among the gecekondu neighbourhoods that are differentiated along ethnic and sectarian

lines. Local politics has become more important than ever in the lives of the gecekondu people. Services to the neighbourhood, the legalisation of gecekondu land by distributing titles and the development of a master plan for the neighbourhood—thus opening the way to the apartmentalisation process and meaning high profits—all depend, to a large extent, on which political party wins the local elections.

In the 1980s, we witnessed not only an emphasis on ethnic and sectarian differences, but also on gender. Turkish women have been increasingly emphasising their gender identities since the 1980s, and they have been active in bringing to public attention the subordination of women in society and demanding social and institutional changes in favour of women. Interestingly, the belief held by the state at the time—that the women's movement was insignificant and had only a limited ability to challenge the status quo—easily opened up a political space for women to organise themselves.

In brief, Turkish society has experienced significant economic and social changes since the 1980s—namely, the Islamisation policies in the 1980s and the Sunnification of the state; the reactions of the Alevis to this; the emergence of radical Islam and the state's perceiving it as a threat to modern secular Turkey in the 1990s; the forced migration of the Kurdish population and the Turkification policies of the state; together with deteriorating economic conditions, growing poverty, increased unemployment and a widening gap between the rich and the poor. All this tended to divide society into conflicting groups and to intensify the power struggle over lebensraum and local identities—also true for other 'globalising cities' (Öncü and Weyland, 1997). Furthermore, there was a discourse shift in the West from modernism to post-modernism which started challenging the hegemony of modernist grand narratives. This led to the emergence of identity politics in Turkish society (a shift from 'the Other' to 'the Others' in the gecekondu discourse). The same tendencies further created the concept of 'varoşlu' ('the

threatening Other') in the late 1990s, which is elaborated in the section on the '*varoşlu* Other'.

In the following sections, the representations of *gecekondu* people in academic studies in particular time-periods are presented.

3. *Gecekondu* People in the 1950s and 1960s: The Rural Other

Early *gecekondu* research was conducted under the influence of the structural-functionalist approach in general and the modernisation approach in particular (see, for example, Öğretmen, 1957; Yasa, 1966, 1970, 1973; Yörükhan, 1968). By adopting modernisation theory as a framework for investigating rural–urban migration and migrant clustering in *gecekondu* settlements, early *gecekondu* researchers implicitly used a bipolar schema, with modern urbanites at one end and rural–urban migrants at the other. In other words, modern urbanites and rural migrants occupied opposite poles of the modernisation continuum. Early *gecekondu* researchers, under the ideological influence of this conceptual model, expected a unilinear transformation of the rural migrant population, who would become like the 'modern urbanites'. They had in mind an ideal image of the city and city residents based on the Western model.

In this unilinear model of 'becoming urban', there was the expectation that the *gecekondu* population—namely, rural migrants in the city—would be assimilated into the modern urban population by discarding their rural ways of life and values. And this implied, among other things, discarding their accents (and their mother tongue in the case of migrants of Kurdish origin) and changing their appearances (way of dressing, turning into Western-dressed women and men; this meant for men shaving their beards, if they wore any, and for women, uncovering their hair). In this group of *gecekondu* studies, the *gecekondu* family was seen as being in-between the rural and the urban family types, and their being in transition was the major theme:

The *gecekondu* family, having one end in the village and the other end in the city, displays the characteristics of a transitional family (Yasa, 1970, p. 10).

Since the *gecekondu* family has not finished its adaptation process and has not yet reached the level of urban families, it faces material and emotional problems (Yasa, 1970, p. 14).

They cannot be considered as urban since they have not yet adapted to the cosmopolitan city life (Yasa, 1970, p. 15).

The *gecekondu* person, while on the one hand tries to grow vegetables and trees in his garden like in the village, on the other hand, hopes to become a worker in a factory in the city (Yasa, 1970, p. 15).[7]

These studies compared the educational levels, fertility rates, crime rates, family size, income levels and participation rates in mass communication (reading newspapers, listening to the radio) of 'rural' families with those of 'urban' families. They also observed the eating habits, hygiene practices and ways of dressing of *gecekondu* families to see where exactly they stood in the continuum between the rural and the urban.

The temporary nature of *gecekondu* families was emphasised. For example, Yasa concluded his article as follows:

When we talk about the '*gecekondu* family', we understand an 'unhappy' family which emerged under the social structural conditions of a particular period and which is expected to disappear after a while, thus its presence will be short-lived compared to the long history of society (Yasa, 1970, p. 17).

When it was realised over the years that this assimilation would not happen either quickly or smoothly (if, indeed, at all), the *gecekondu* people were blamed for not abandoning their rural values.

Some rural values, even though they have completed their functions, remain as fossilised ruins. To pull them out is much

more difficult than the elements of material culture (Yasa, 1973, p. 45).

They were further blamed for ruralising the city:

> In some *gecekondu* areas, those who make their own bread, keep poultry and cows, and grow vegetables in their gardens make a quite large group. This way of life of those who came from the village and the way of thinking they brought, until they are urbanised, ruralises cities, especially when there are large flows of rural people to cities. The Anafartalar Avenue in Ankara, where once the most prestigious stores of the city took place, has become dominated by rural taste (Yörükhan, 1968, p. 11).

Thus, in this approach, *gecekondu* people were those who failed to free themselves from their rural characteristics and who constituted an obstacle to the development of modern cities and, more importantly, to the social transformation of society into a modern one.

In this framework, the *gecekondu* population was seen as a homogeneous group; the major characteristics which differentiated them from other city residents were their rural way of life and rural values which were brought from the village and preserved in the urban context. Thus, the emphasis was placed on the rurality, or at best on the 'not yet urbanised' characteristics, of the *gecekondu* population. Further, the social scientist implicitly, or even openly, defined himself/herself as a modern urbanite and, by doing so, s/he automatically put a distance between himself/herself and the *gecekondu* population which s/he studied.

> This attributed to the *gecekondu* population an 'Otherness', a distinction between 'us' and 'them', and brought out attempts to investigate this 'Other' population with the spectacles of the urban middle classes (Tok, 1999, p. 44).

This is evident in the following quotations:

> Among the *gecekondu* women, we see many of those wearing stockings with village motifs on them. Wearing sweaters on dresses and covering hair with scarves are common. The dominant colour is red. They prefer bright and shining fabric. This fits with the village tradition (Yasa, 1970, p. 1).

> The hygienic practices of the *gecekondu* families resemble in general those in the village. The fronts of the houses are not usually kept clean and tidy. In addition, since they are ignorant of home economics, they need outside help (Yasa, 1970, p. 12).

> The *gecekondu* family has become quite urbanised in terms of its becoming smaller and nuclear, yet it still preserves its rural nature in terms of its composition and its continuing strong ties with relatives (Yörükhan, 1968, p. 21).

Thus, the way of dressing practised by the urban middle classes and their tastes in clothing (mild tones, matching colours, small designs), as well as their family type and composition were taken as the model with which the *gecekondu* family was compared. Interestingly, it was women more than men who became the object of such comparison. In addition, in the *gecekondu* surveys conducted in this period, it was common to ask whether they went to see plays or movies, or attended concerts, in an attempt to measure their level of integration: these social practices were seen as the practices of 'modern' and 'cultured' urbanites which should be emulated by the 'lower classes'. When the *gecekondu* people 'failed' to go to movies, plays, or concerts, this was interpreted as 'failing' to become a full urbanite. Women's using make-up, polishing nails, having their hair short and uncovered, as well as the family's eating at the table instead of eating while sitting around the table set on the floor (Yasa, 1973, p. 44) were further implied as necessary aspects of being urban.

In brief, for the social scientist, while the established urbanites signified 'Us', the *gecekondu* population was the 'rural Other'.

The only way open to the *gecekondu* people to stop being the Other was to discard their rurality, and this meant becoming the same as the urbanites. Only by dropping the 'rural', would 'the Other' lose its validity. It is important to mention here that the city has been regarded as culturally superior to the country in the Turkish context, both in Ottoman times and during the Turkish Republic:

> The term *madaniyyat*—that is, civilisation—in the Muslim culture derives from *madina*, or city" (Karpat, 1976, p. 244).

This brings a portrayal of peasants as ignorant, culturally backward and lacking manners. Thus, the rural 'Other' not only implies an Otherness, but this Otherness also contains a major asymmetry, the rural being 'less than' the urban.

As stated above, the *gecekondu* studies in the 1950s and 1960s were, to a large extent, under the influence of modernisation theory and its bipolar conceptualisation of social change. In these studies, the *gecekondu* population was situated *vis-à-vis* the 'established modern urbanites'. Yet, interestingly, while the *gecekondu* population and their way of life were investigated empirically in many studies, the modern urban population was defined in ideal terms based on the Western model; there was no empirical research conducted on how the modern residents of the city actually lived. Thus, rural migrants were compared with an idealised image of urbanites.

Situating the *gecekondu* population as a homogeneous and abstract category on the rural-urban—modern continuum rendered invisible the different groups within the *gecekondu* population. The diversity among rural migrants in terms of ethnic, sectarian and regional differences was ignored. This tendency in the early *gecekondu* studies of not acknowledging ethnic and sectarian variations might be due to the fact that, during the early processes of establishing *gecekondu* neighbourhoods, rural migrants tended to underemphasise their differences in their attempt to develop internal solidarity among themselves which was necessary for their

survival in the city—for example, in the face of a threat of demolition of their *gecekondus*, or in their bargaining with local government for services to their neighbourhoods. Sharing common interests regarding establishing and improving their *gecekondu* settlements tended to unite, to some degree, *gecekondu* residents—or at least made them not to bring forward their ethnic and/or sectarian differences. A second and even more important reason lying behind this neglect of the varied groups in the early *gecekondu* studies may be the inclination of researchers to regard the *gecekondu* population as the 'rural Other' and their concern to find ways to assimilate it into the urban population. Thus, in the majority of *gecekondu* studies of the time, the *gecekondu* population was studied by constructing an abstract category of the '*gecekondu* person/family' which was different from the 'urban person/family', using it for the whole *gecekondu* population without paying attention to internal variations.

4. *Gecekondu* People in the 1970s and Early 1980s: The Disadvantaged Other

While this unilinear model of the modernisation approach adopted in early *gecekondu* research continued to be used by some scholars, its hegemony in general began to be challenged in the 1970s.[8] Although the major question was still the 'integration' of the rural migrant population into urban society, the simple dichotomy of the rural and the urban was no longer extensively used to study *gecekondus*. There were some approaches which investigated the *gecekondu* phenomenon in the context of the broader social, economic and historical forces (Karpat, 1976; Şenyapılı, 1982). For example, Şenyapılı (1982) noted the *gecekondu* population's changing position in the city as the result of their increasing role in the economy, in both the production and consumption spheres. Once marginal, they had become an indispensable component of the economy, and this was reflected in the physical appearances of *gecekondus*, the shanties being replaced by relatively well-built single- or

double-storey houses. She concluded that, despite their integration into the economy—albeit in an asymmetrical way—the *gecekondu* people were not culturally integrated within urban society due to the exclusionary attitudes and practices of the established urbanites.

The representation of the *gecekondu* people as the 'rural Other' and culturally inferior to the urban population did not completely disappear from the discourse during this period: Türkdoğan (1977) for example, defined the *gecekondu* culture as the 'culture of poverty', stigmatising it as 'fatalistic', 'irrational', 'backward', and the like. However, several studies did stress the disadvantaged positions of rural migrants in their integration (for example, Kongar, 1973; Şenyapılı, 1978, 1982; Sencer, 1979; Eke, 1981). They asserted that structural barriers were preventing the integration of the migrant population within the city—barriers such as the types of job available to them (Şenyapılı, 1982, p. 246) and the inadequate public policies in place to meet migrants' needs (Eke, 1981, p. 67). They claimed that, since rural migrants could not adequately take advantage of urban facilities and services, they were bound to remain 'unintegrated'. This approach is much more sympathetic to the rural migrant population and tends to hold the state responsible for the 'peasantisation of the city'. For example, Eke (1981) and Kongar (1973) say

> Higher levels of absorption are harder to attain. This is not the fault of the migrants, but of the lack of public policies designed to assist them. … [The migrants] participate in the urban functions of the city when opportunities are offered to them. … The migrants use educational and medical services extensively—when they are available. Their use is not inhibited by inherent 'culture of poverty' characteristics but only by badly formulated policies (Eke, 1981, p. 67).

> They are open to using the opportunities in the city, and they do not want to be treated

as second-class citizens (Kongar, 1973, p. 70).

Furthermore, in this period, the *gecekondu* phenomenon was largely seen as produced by the type of industrialisation that 'underdeveloped countries' were going through—namely, 'fast depeasantisation and slow workerisation' (Kıray, 1970)—and by the logic of the system which required the exploitation of the labour provided by the *gecekondu* population. Hence the *gecekondu* population was neither temporary nor marginal. Clearly, it was wrong to call *gecekondu* people marginal when they made up more than half of the urban population (Kongar, 1973). Here we see a shift in the academic discourse from structural–functionalist–modernist explanation to structural–Marxist explanation. Under the influence of dependency theory, there were also objections raised to the use of such terms as 'unhealthy' and 'distorted' urbanisation, and also 'Third World' urbanisation, since that implied a comparison with the Western experience. It was felt that it was misleading and ideological to judge the *gecekondu* phenomenon by the development models of the West (Kongar, 1973). Moreover, past research was criticised particularly for its preoccupation with the 'transformers', neglecting how the 'ordinary people' lived the modernisation process (Karpat, 1976). Some scholars further acknowledged the emergence of a new type of city, containing the characteristics of both Western cities and the Turkish countryside—that is, a type of city

> embodies some of the technological and industrial features of Western cities and also the cultural and communal spirit of the countryside (Karpat, 1976, p. 41).

Such analysis tended to play down the negative attitude of the modernisation approach to the persistence of rural values and communal existence in the city.

Despite these 'positive' changes to the ways in which the *gecekondu* population was being studied, the distance between rural migrants and researchers remained unbridged in

this period. Questions about going to the cinema, plays, concerts and exhibitions were still present in some studies and, in spite of the acknowledgement of the role of structural factors in the 'integration/absorption' of migrants, cultural differences were also identified as reasons for their 'segregation' (see, for example, Şenyapılı, 1982, p. 246). Closed-ended survey questions were used extensively in an attempt to quantify the data and generalise the findings so that 'the *gecekondu* problem' could be structurally solved. There was no attempt to focus on the experiences of rural migrants or to present migrants as individuals who were entitled to their own ways of thinking and living.

5. *Gecekondu* People in the Mid 1980s and Mid 1990s: The Other(s)

In some of the post-1980 *gecekondu* studies, we observe a tendency to replace the 'Other' of the early *gecekondu* studies by the 'Others', thus recognising variations in the *gecekondu* population. These variations were sometimes explained in terms of the number of years migrants had spent in the city (see, for example, Alpar and Yener, 1991); other studies took into account the ethnic, sectarian and regional diversity of the *gecekondu* population (see, for example, Güneş-Ayata, 1990/91; Erder, 1997). In these studies, the *gecekondu* people were no longer exclusively seen as a homogeneous group based on their common rural origins. Instead, they were seen as comprised of diverse sub-groups based on their different ethnic and sectarian backgrounds. As we have seen in section 2, the emergence of identity politics in Turkish society in the mid 1980s was one of the major reasons for this change of approach.

In addition, further *gecekondu* sub-groups emerged in the studies made during this period. For example, *gecekondu* communities became increasingly economically stratified. There were those who owned additional *gecekondus* which they rented out, and those who rented these *gecekondus* (usually young families with very limited incomes). There were those who improved their socioeco-nomic positions—for example, by selling their *gecekondu* land to building contractors in return for several apartments in the building (and additionally for a store in some cases), or by taking advantage of their networks in their clientelist relations. Furthermore, over the years, the children of first-generation migrants became more numerous; they were socialised in the city and they had their differences from their parents.

As we have mentioned earlier, the emphasis on the heterogeneity of the *gecekondu* population rather than on a homogeneity based on its common rural origins was also a result of challenges made to the universalistic claims of grand theories in the West. Today, in the academic world, increasing attention is paid to diversity and difference rather than to similarity and uniformity.

Amongst other things there is a greater awareness of gender. In the early *gecekondu* studies, surveys were almost always conducted with the 'heads of the family', who were almost always men—thus the lives of the *gecekondu* women were rendered invisible. In the 1980s, and increasingly in the 1990s, the *gecekondu* and rural migrant women, along with other groups of women, have appeared in academic studies (see, for example, İlkkaracan and İlkkaracan, 1998; Erman, 1997, 1998a; Bolak, 1997).

While the diversity in the *gecekondu* population was acknowledged in this period, some scholars attempted to identify shared characteristics that made the *gecekondu* population distinct from the rest of urban society. In this context, we can identify two leading approaches: one considers the economic positions of the *gecekondu* population; the other regards the *gecekondu* as a sub-culture. The following sub-sections elaborate on these approaches.

5.1 The Urban Poor Other(s) versus the Undeserving Rich Other(s)

In this approach in the post-1980s, while 'the Other' was replaced by 'the Others', 'the rural' was replaced by the 'urban poor' (Erder, 1995). The presence of second- and

third-generation migrants in the city challenged the definition of the *gecekondu* people as rural. Although 'rurality' was still attributed to the *gecekondu* population in general, 'being rural' was not seen any more as a valid defining characteristic of the *gecekondu* population. Instead, 'the new urbanites' and the 'urban poor' began to be used to refer to the *gecekondu* population. The growing poverty in *gecekondu* districts since the 1980s (World Bank, 1999) has contributed to the emphasis on poverty in the definition of the *gecekondu* population. However, there has been relatively little research into *gecekondu* poverty and, in general, there has been a decline in the number of *gecekondu* studies conducted in this period compared with the period of the 1950s–1970s.

In one of the few poverty studies, Erder (1995) explained the poverty of some groups in the *gecekondu* population in terms of their exclusion from the migrant networks built on common origin. Her empirical research showed that the once-unconditionally-supportive migrant networks had become more selective in the 1980s in the increasingly competitive atmosphere of the city. Thus, those migrants (and interestingly, sometimes urbanites) who were thought to contribute to the political and economic power of the network were included, while those who would 'harm' the network were excluded. The latter were mostly the newcomers (usually Kurdish in origin who migrated in crowded families with many children), unskilled workers, the disabled (including those who were disabled in accidents at the workplace), widows, elderly people and families who had experienced failures in their economic lives and those whose adult male children were unwilling to work (for example, alcoholics) and hence were burdens on their families.

In the same study, social mobility within the *gecekondu* population was also investigated, revealing the presence of those who improved their economic status through their social networks and *gecekondus*. Thus, the research showed that, while acute poverty was escalating in the *gecekondu* population, some *gecekondu* people were becoming better-off.

In parallel with this trend in the academic discourse, the major theme in the public discourse has been that of 'the undeserving rich'. The emergence of a new group of *gecekondu* people who became wealthy in a short period of time led to complaints by the established urban residents who said "Once they built their *gecekondus* in one night, and now they are becoming millionaries in one day". The media, including articles written by the professional élite in newspapers, fuelled this reaction by portraying the *gecekondu* as a means to secure unfair and unlawful gains and as being under the control of the mafia (see, for example, Ekinci, 1993). The ideology of the time (the Özal period) which valued wealth and individual ambition above education, and also the changes in the *gecekondu* laws in the 1980s, which encouraged profit-making from *gecekondu* housing by giving permission for multi-storey housing in *gecekondu* settlements, were largely blamed for the abuse of the system by the *gecekondu* people.

In brief, while a more sympathetic view of the *gecekondu* people as the urban poor, the victims of the competitive urban environment, prevailed in the academic discourse (which also presented information on the routes of social mobility that became available to *gecekondu* residents in the 1980s); in the public discourse 'the undeserving rich Other' dominated, reflecting the hostile reactions of established urban society.

This focus on economic resources (or rather, the lack of them) in *gecekondu* families was characteristic of one of the two main academic approaches of the post-1980 period. The second approach focused on the cultural aspect and defined the *gecekondu* population as a 'sub-culture'. In the following sub-section, this approach is examined in more detail.

5.2 The Culturally Inferior Other(s) as Subculture

In this approach, the *gecekondu* population

was defined as a sub-culture, distinguished by its combination of both rural and urban characteristics. Unlike some of the earlier studies which emphasised the differences between the migrant and urban populations in terms of culture expressed in highly negative terms, the 'sub-culture' approach of the 1980s and early 1990s had a relatively positive, yet highly asymmetrical, view of the '*gecekondu* sub-culture'. This approach has its roots in an earlier conceptualisation of the *gecekondu* community as a 'buffer mechanism' (Kıray, 1968), which was later seen as a means of integration into the city (Tatlıdil, 1989). The more positive *gecekondu* sub-culture approach first appeared in the early 1990s in the edited volume entitled *Gecekondularda Ailelerarası Geleneksel Dayanışmanın Çağdaş Organizasyonlara Dönüşümü* [The Transformation of the Interfamilial Traditional Solidarity in Squatter Settlements to Modern Organisations] (Gökçe, 1993) which was based on extensive empirical research. The introduction to the book states that

> When we have reached the 1990s, the development of *gecekondu* housing has reached the potential to influence directly the social, political and economic structures of society through its specific culture and structure, and through its social, political and economic relations (Gökçe, 1993, p. 3).

Here the emphasis was both quantitative (the number of *gecekondus* and the people living in them) and qualitative (the "new and original *gecekondu* culture") (Gökçe, 1993, p. 4). The *gecekondu* people were shown to be oriented towards the city (having no desire to return to the village), to be willing to integrate into the city, yet having specific characteristics that differed from those of the established city population. These distinctive characteristics fell into three main groups: stronger ties with the village when compared with the established urbanites; membership of the lower classes in the city (low-income, low-skilled jobs, low educational levels, informal housing); and, lastly, the communities

that they formed in the city and their community-centred lives. All these (their rural origins, their economic positions in the job market, and their clustering) created a sub-culture in the city. According to this approach, this sub-culture need not necessarily be seen as failing to 'modernise', since

> even in Western societies where individualism prevails, there exists a willingness to engage in support mechanisms based on face-to-face, informal relations (Gökçe, 1993, p. 359).

However, despite this, defining the *gecekondu* population as a 'sub-culture' itself implies inferiority, particularly if viewed from a modernisation perspective: sub-culture is 'less than' the dominant culture (which is the urban modern culture). The *gecekondu* population has been said to "have been caught between the rural and the urban" (Gökçe, 1993, p. 1). Thus, the asymmetry between the dominant urban culture and the sub-culture of the *gecekondu* population persists. The distance between the researcher and the *gecekondu* population remains unbridged; it may even have widened.

These dual academic emphases on the poverty and sub-culture of the *gecekondu* population prepared a suitable foundation for what was to follow—the highly negative construction of this population as the *varoşlu*, the 'threatening Other'. The next section elaborates on this.

6. *Gecekondu* People in the Late 1990s: The *Varoşlu*/Threatening Other

The terms *varoş* and the *varoşlu* (the people residing in the *varoş*) have been quite dominant both in academic and in public discourse since the late 1990s. This has led to lively discussions in scholarly meetings and conferences regarding their usefulness and correctness. While some academics have adopted the term without much critical reflection (for example, Ayata, 1996), others have been more cautious using these terms, questioning their social and political implications (for example, Etöz, 2000).[9] In the fol-

lowing section, the terms *varoş* and *varoşlu* are elaborated upon as they have appeared in the media—since the public discourse on the *varoş* and *varoşlu* has been largely shaped by the media and since it has been the sudden emergence of the '*varoş*', first in the media, and then in society as a whole, that has greatly influenced the academic discourse.

The term *varoş* is Hungarian in origin and was first used to denote to the neighbourhood outside the city walls. It was later employed to refer to any outer neighbourhood in a city or town. In its Turkish use, the term carries in itself strong negative connotations. The *varoşlu* are the economically deprived (the deprivation may be relative or absolute) and impoverished lower classes who tend to engage in criminal activities and radical political actions directed against the state. They are the political Islamists, the nationalist Kurds, the radical leftist Alevis who challenge the political authority of the state and disturb the social order of society. They are also the unemployed, the street gangs, the mafia, the *tinerci* (those addicted to the easily available chemical substance used to dilute paints) who are mostly street children and, in a nutshell, the underclass.[10] Their tendency is towards destruction and violence, towards crime and chaos. The media, in their search for sensational events, bring forward those cases where *gecekondu* people, especially the youth and children, have contravened the law, or have protested against the political system. The 1 May demonstrations in 1996, during which radical leftist groups were engaged in vandalism, destroying buildings and cars (their attacks on ATMs were the particular focus of the media), and the Gazi episode of 1995, in which an uprising in an Alevi *gecekondu* neighbourhood in Istanbul was put down by the police force, as well as the news coverage of street gangs, including the case of the rape of a young teacher by a group of *tinerci* youngsters, have all helped to reinforce the negative image attributed to the *varoşlu*. Interestingly, the first media use of the term *varoşlu* was following the 1 May demonstrations, after which the term began to be widely used in society.

In brief, the *varoşlu* are defined in terms of both the economic dimension (the poor) and the social-political dimension (the rebellious, the outlaw, the misfit). The *gecekondu* people are not only seen as an obstacle to Turkish modernisation as in earlier periods, but are also seen as a threat to the very existence of the Republic itself. In this construction of the *varoş* as the residential quarters that exist 'outside the city walls' where poverty rules, illegal activities dominate and crime and violence grow, the *varoş* emerges as *contra* the city (Etöz, 1999).[11] The *varoş* is oppositional to the city and is setting itself against the city; it is hostile and antagonistic to the city. The city is besieged by the *varoşlu*. This is a very different view from that of the *gecekondu* as part of an evolutionary process leading towards assimilation as they evolve from the rural end of the rural–urban continuum towards the urban. The *gecekondu*/migrant population is not constructed any more as a rural population that failed to become urban, but as a population that is attacking the city, its values, its political institutions and, more importantly, the very core of its ideology (a secular and democratic society built on consensus and unity) and its social order. They were once kept 'outside the city walls', but they are now inside: inside the city, inside its institutions, inside its political system—and yet they are against these values, trying to destroy them ('inside yet against').

In addition to this construction of the *varoşlu* as a danger to the political system, there is a complementary construction which emphasises the danger of the *varoşlu* to the 'culture' of society. The *varoşlu* are not only those who cannot consume because of their poverty, but they are also those who are 'made by easy money' yet whose lack of education, manners and 'emotional training' prevents them from participation in 'consumption aesthetics' (Etöz, 2000). They are the ones who lack manners, taste and cultural refinement. The inferiority of the culture of the 'Other' (the '*varoş* culture') comes to the fore once again when some members of the 'Other' find their way to wealth and oc-

casionally to public visibility and fame (for example, in the case of the singers who call themselves 'the children of *varoş*'). In brief, the concept of political threat when combined with the concept of cultural inferiority completes the picture of the *varoşlu* at its most negative.

How can we explain this increasingly negative perception of the *gecekondu* population during the 1990s—a period when globalisation processes (economic, political, socio-cultural) have escalated? It is significant that, while the *gecekondu* settlements are stigmatised as the *varoş*, threatening the city with their radically different political views, conflicting social values and inferior culture (or 'lack of culture') and confronting it with vandalism and violence, the upper classes, who are now in the process of integrating into the global economy, in their search for 'unpolluted lives', are moving out of the city to suburbs.[12] By building walls (both physical and symbolic) around their housing estates, they aim to exclude 'the Others'.[13] 'We' are not inside the city, surrounded by the 'city walls', any more, leaving the 'Others' outside. The 'We' and the 'Others' are inside each other, the upper classes living in 'islands' surrounded by *gecekondu* settlements, and the rural migrants ending up living 'inside the city' as the result of the city's expansion towards its periphery and the resulting transformation of *gecekondu* settlements into lower-quality apartment housing. By stigmatising people of rural origin as the 'threatening Other', as the 'dangerous and violent Other' and as the illegal occupiers and holders by force not only of some city space (that is, the *gecekondu* land), but today also of the social, cultural and political space, the upper classes both legitimise and support politically the objective of *gecekondu* demolition while releasing themselves from any responsibility for the deteriorating situation of the *gecekondu* population (Etöz 1999). Behind the labelling of the *gecekondu* population as the *varoşlu* lies the class dimension, which has largely disappeared from discussions in academic circles as a result of the focus on

the variety of the *gecekondu* population in terms of ethnic, sectarian and regional differences, as well as of the focus on the social mobility of the *gecekondu* population, usually by utilising *hemşehri* (fellow-villagers) networks. These emphasise common origins and have blurred the class basis of social stratification.

In brief, by emphasising the threats posed by the *varoş* to the modern Turkish Republic—corrupting the political system, challenging the core values upon which the state is built and which hold the society together (such as secularism and nationalism) and creating flaws in its 'modern culture'—and then by labelling the *gecekondu* people as the *varoşlu*, the economically advantaged deny the mutuality between the poor and the wealthy. Furthermore, the internal diversity of the *gecekondu* population, which has been increasingly recognised since the 1980s, is once again being suppressed by use of the term '*varoşlu*'. Once, the *gecekondu* population was defined as a homogeneous group of rural migrants; now their heterogeneity is being acknowledged, and yet, at the same time, a new category is in use which tends to homogenise in negative terms this emerging diversity under the umbrella term of the '*varoşlu*'. The '*varoşlu*' lumps together the *gecekondu* population in terms of their 'shared' characteristics of 'violence', 'social disorder', 'political radicalism', 'social conflict' and 'cultural inferiority'.

7. *Gecekondu* People in the 2000s: Their Future Representations and Emerging Trends in *Gecekondu* Studies

In the recent literature on Third World cities, poverty, work, gender roles and the environment have been defined as "the four key elements of urban life" (Gilbert, 1994, p. 605). In the 1980s and 1990s, the effects of economic restructuring in the capitalist world on Third World societies which have been forced to adapt to structural adjustment, and particularly on their metropolitan cities which contain the majority of the workforce, have been an important part of the research

agenda. In this context, poverty, the changing employment structure in the city (including privatisation, flexible production and labour casualisation), gender roles (as the result of women's increasing participation in the workforce, especially in the informal sector) and, to a lesser degree, the urban environment, have all been major topics emerging in the literature.[14] This is in line with trends in *gecekondu* research in Turkey. Thus, we can say that poverty and the informal sector (including household survival strategies), as well as political conflict and political struggles and the question of identity (which are overlooked by Gilbert, 1994) are likely to dominate *gecekondu* studies in the near future. The *gecekondu* people will most probably continue to be called either the 'urban poor', which implies some neutrality in terms of their cultural or social positions in society, or the *varoşlu* which implies negativity, emphasising violence and conflict in this population. We can further say that the ethnic, sectarian and gender identities of the *gecekondu* population will be emphasised.

Here it is important to mention a trend in *gecekondu* studies which began to emerge in the late 1990s. This is built upon very different premises from those found in mainstream *gecekondu* research. It argues for investigating the experiences of *gecekondu* people from their own perspectives. By acknowledging the importance of understanding *gecekondu* people's own experiences, it attempts to go beyond their Otherness (see, for example, Erman, 1997, 1998a, 1998b). This approach, which portrays the *gecekondu* people as individuals who are entitled to voice their own experiences, is competing for recognition in the academic domain.

8. Conclusion

This paper demonstrates the importance of studying examples of the academic discourse in their context, and also the relationship between academic research and society as a whole. Academics are members of society who undergo an educational process which gives them certain ways of looking at social phenomena and certain ways of investigating them. They occupy particular social and political positions in society and they enjoy the status of producing knowledge for which they are paid. Having acknowledged this, it becomes necessary to approach academic studies critically, not taking for granted what they say as representing the truth. It is crucial to analyse them by placing them in their political, social and economic contexts, taking into consideration international/global influences. International influences on academic studies are very important in our 'globalising' era: societies are affecting one another more than ever through the internet and through international academic organisations and conferences. In particular, the West and its discourses are penetrating more extensively into the 'Rest'.

When we consider the evolution of *gecekondu* research in Turkey from this perspective, we can make several points. First, academic approaches to the study of the *gecekondu* people are influenced by the historical period in which they occur. At times, the discourse has resonated with élitist tones in its representation of rural migrants (as in the case of 'the rural Other'); at times, it has been more sympathetic (as in the case of 'the disadvantaged Other'). Following from this, we can say that academics, in their production of knowledge and contrary to what orthodox Marxists would expect, do not at all times serve the interests of the *status quo*. However, as members of the élite and of the middle and upper classes, they are not free from the influences of their social and political positions in society. This leads on to a third point. In line with Foucauldian ideas about how the 'subject' is 'produced' in modern times through institutions and practices, academics have internalised a particular way of seeing the *gecekondu* people—namely, seeing them as the 'Other' who is 'less than' and 'inferior to' them. The *gecekondu* people have always been the 'Other' for Turkish social scientists (with very few exceptions), even those more sympathetic researchers who viewed the *gecekondu* population as being the disadvan-

taged social group, exploited and oppressed by society at large. This is particularly true when speaking of *gecekondu* 'culture'. The cultural inferiority of rural migrants/the *gecekondu* people is a continuing theme in *gecekondu* research, ranging from the 'rural Other' in the early studies to the '*varoşlu* Other' in recent studies. The élitist nature of Turkish modernisation and the view created by the modernising state that the 'common people' are ignorant, uncultured and backward, needing to be educated, 'enlightened' and trained/disciplined, as well as the role and prestige given to the academic élite in this process, have been internalised by many Turkish *gecekondu* researchers who, by and large, define themselves as responsible for the 'progress' of society. Their professional positions in the Turkish context as the credible sources of knowledge, as those who have received education to reveal 'social truth' and to guide society, legitimise further their sense of superiority in their relationship with the *gecekondu* people.

In addition to the *gecekondu* people's being the 'culturally inferior Other', another theme emerges in the academic research—namely, that of the 'undesirable Other'. Whether they are presented as 'the villagers in the city', emphasising their rurality—and hence their being an obstacle to modernisation—or as 'the *varoşlu*, emphasising their violence and political radicalism—and hence their being a threat to the political system—the *gecekondu* population has, to a large extent, been seen as the 'undesirable Other'. The construction of the *gecekondu* people as the 'culturally inferior Other' or the 'undesirable Other' helps to serve the vested interests of the prevailing power structure in a number of ways. The political rule and cultural superiority of the modernising élite can be legitimised when rural migrants are constructed in the academic and public discourse as culturally inferior, socially backward (underorganised or disorganised), politically dangerous and individually 'deficient' (irrational, fatalistic). Thus their economic contributions as a source of cheap and flexible (unorganised) labour and as consumers in the domestic market, and their concerns for integration into urban society when they are denied other means of integration, can remain unrecognised and unappreciated (and underpaid). On the other hand, Turkish social scientists, working in the political context of the 1960s and 1970s, first drew our attention to the exploitation and exclusion of rural migrants in the city. Thus, it is necessary to acknowledge here, as Foucault says, the relationship between power and the production of knowledge without underplaying the relative autonomy of the academic discourse from the *status quo*. It seems beneficial to 'read' critically the social categories and concepts used in a piece of academic work by contextualising it in the political and social atmosphere and material conditions of the time.

It is crucial to complement this critical analysis, made in the context of Turkish internal migration/*gecekondu* studies, with similar analyses in other Third World countries. In this way, we can find out those aspects that are particular to Turkish society as well as the similarities shared by other societies. Moreover, we need critical approaches to studies of urbanisation and squatter housing in Third World societies, as employed here, since they inform us about the ideological basis of such studies, and the social, economic and political realities of the societies that produce their ideological frameworks, including the influence of the theories originating in the West. This paper aims to contribute to the field of urban studies in the Third World by encouraging such critical analyses. It has demonstrated that urbanisation and squatter studies cannot be analysed independently of the political, social and economic structures of society and that contextualisation within society as a whole in terms of international/global interactions is essential.

Notes

1. Perlman in her book *The Myth of Marginality* (1976) made a critical analysis of different perspectives in social theory in terms of their conceptualisations of marginality. By applying these perspectives to the case of the

rural migrants living in the city, she identified the attributes that were used in social theory to define migrants as marginal. She then tested the claims of these perspectives regarding the marginality of the rural migrants against her empirical data. In the end, she demonstrated that these people were not marginal but were exploited, repressed, stigmatised and excluded by the social system. Thus, the negative stereotyping of rural migrants/squatters in popular and academic discourse has helped to legitimise their exclusion and subordination in society.

2. Although the term *gecekondulu* is used in some studies to refer to the *gecekondu* population (see, for example, Türkdoğan, 1977; Alpar and Yener, 1991), we have reservations about the term due to the negative meanings attributed to it by society in general, and prefer to use the term '*gecekondu* people' instead.

3. The paper draws upon Tok and Erman (1999), based on Tok's MA thesis (Tok, 1999) which was supervised and sponsored by Erman.

4. The migration inflow to Istanbul reached 63 per cent in 1990. Today, 70 per cent of the population of Ankara, 55 per cent of the population of Istanbul and 50 per cent of the population of İzmir live in *gecekondu* settlements. In 1997 the *gecekondu* population reached around 20 million (Gökçe, 1993).

5. The Sunni are the orthodox Islamic sect in Turkey to which the majority of Turkish people belong.

6. The Alevi are a liberal Islamic sect in Turkey to which around 20 per cent of Turkish people belong.

7. Here the masculine form is used on purpose since the early *gecekondu* studies were mainly carried out with the 'heads of the family' who were almost always men.

8. For example, Kartal (1982) developed a linear model of change which predicted that the migrant population would acquire more urban features as they spent more time in the city.

9. This point was also made by B. Gökçe in a discussion that took place on 22 January 1998, during the meeting of the Turkish Sociological Association at Ankara, Turkey.

10. A similar conceptualisation of the term 'underclass' has taken place in the US academic discourse. The 'underclass' was first defined within the framework of the deserving and undeserving poor, which was followed by the 'culture of poverty' approach, blaming the victim. The underclass was seen as those in "persistent and concentrated urban poverty" (Katz, 1993, p. 21), and the slums, which housed the underclass, as the locations where the socially alien and the politically hostile were concentrated, as "viruses infecting the moral and physical health of the city districts that surrounded them" (Katz, 1993, p. 9). In this way, "stigmas of cultural difference, race and poverty blended" (Katz, 1993, p. 11). Yet, in the 1990s, an increasing number of social scientists acknowledged the useless and ideological nature of the term and recommended that it be abandoned.

11. This is not true any more in geographical terms since some *gecekondu* neighbourhoods are now surrounded by the high-rise housing complexes of the middle classes as a result of the tendency of the middle classes to move out of the central city to the peripheries.

12. In this context, the meaning of 'unpolluted lives' is not restricted to environmental/air pollution; it more importantly refers to cultural pollution (Öncü, 1997).

13. It is interesting to note here that this spatialisation of difference is observed in other contexts very different from the Turkish one—for example, in US cities. The example of Los Angeles is striking: Davis (1992) talks about the "new class war … at the level of the built environment (p. 228); "middle-class residential colonisation" (p. 230); and "spatial apartheid" (p. 230). This may go as far as the building of 'high-tech castles' and 'gated communities' by the wealthy in their concern to exclude certain groups of people, such as Latino and Asian families.

14. In the case of the environment, this has been not so much the result of concerns in the Third World about the damage to the environment as a result of urbanisation, but more the result of increasing concerns in the West about environmental deterioration worldwide.

References

ALPAR, I. and YENER, S. (1991) *Gecekondu Araştırması* [The *Gecekondu* Research]. Ankara: The Directorate of Social Planning Publications.

AYATA, S. (1996) Varoşlar, çatışma ve şiddet [The Varoş, conflict and violence], *Görüş*, pp. 18–23.

BOLAK, H. C. (1997) Marital power dynamics: women providers and working-class households in Istanbul, in: J. GUGLER (Ed.) *Cities in the Developing World*, pp. 218–232. New York: Oxford University Press.

DAVIS, M. (1992) *City of Quartz*. New York: Vintage Books.

EKE, F. E. (1981) The absorbtion of low income groups in Ankara, *Ekistics*, 286, pp. 64–70.

EKİNCİ, O. (1993) İllegal kent: Sultanbeyli [The illegal city: Sultanbeyli], *Cumhuriyet*, 28 December, p. 16.

ERDER, S. (1995) Yeni kentliler ve kentin yeni yoksulları [The new urbanites and the new poor of the city], *Toplum ve Bilim*, 66, pp. 106–119.

ERDER, S. (1996) *Istanbul'a Bir Kent Kondu: Ümraniye* [A City Has Landed in Istanbul: Ümraniye]. Istanbul: İletişim.

ERDER, S. (1997) *Kentsel Gerilim* [Urban Tension]. Ankara: Uğur Mumcu Foundation Publications.

ERMAN, T. (1997) The meaning of city living for rural migrant women and their role in migration: the case of Turkey, *Women's Studies International Forum*, 20, pp. 263–273.

ERMAN, T. (1998a) The impact of migration on Turkish rural women: four emergent patterns, *Gender and Society*, 12, pp. 146–167.

ERMAN, T. (1998b) Becoming 'urban' or remaining 'rural': the views of Turkish rural-to-urban migrants on the 'integration' question, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 30, pp. 541–561.

ETÖZ, Z. (1999) *Gecekondudan varoşa* [From the *gecekondu* to the *varoş*] Paper presented to the *Sixth National Conference of the Turkish Science Foundation*, Ankara, November.

ETÖZ, Z. (2000) Varoş: bir istila, bir tehdit [Varoş: an invasion, a danger], *Birikim*, 132, pp. 49–53.

FOUCAULT, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.

GILBERT, A. (1994) Third world cities: poverty, employment, gender roles and the environment during a time of restructuring, *Urban Studies*, 31, pp. 605–633.

GÖKÇE, B. (Ed.) (1993) *Gecekondularda Ailelerarası Geleneksel Dayanışmanın Çağdaş Organizasyonlara Dönüşümü* [The Transformation of the Interfamilial Traditional Solidarity in Squatter Settlements to Modern Organisations]. Ankara: Undersecretariat of Women and Social Services.

GÜNEŞ-AYATA, A. (1990/91) Gecekondularda kimlik sorunu, dayanışma örüntüleri ve hemşehrilik [The identity problem, solidarity networks and *hemşehrilik* in the gecekondu], *Toplum ve Bilim*, 51/52, pp. 89–101.

İLKKARACAN, I. and İLKKARACAN P. (1998) 1990'lar Türkiyesi'nde kadın ve göç [Women and migration in the 1990s in Turkey], in: O. BAYDAR (Ed.) *75. Yılda Köylerden Şehirlere* [From Villages to Cities in the 75th Year of the Republic], pp. 305–322. Istanbul: Turkish Historical Foundation Publications.

KARPAT, K. (1976) *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

KARTAL, K. (1982) Ankara as the focus of social change in the process of urbanization, in: K. KARTAL (Ed.) *Kentsel Bütünleşme* [The Urban Integration], pp. 123–163. Ankara: The Turkish Society for Social Science Publications.

KATZ, M. B. (1993) The urban 'underclass' as a metaphor of social transformation, in M. B. KATZ (Ed.) *The 'Underclass' Debate*, pp. 3–23. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

KIRAY, M. (1968) Values, social stratification and development, *Journal of Social Issues*, 24, pp. 87–102.

KIRAY, M. (1970) *Squatter housing: fast depeasantisation and slow workerisation in underdeveloped countries*. Paper presented at the *Research Committee on Urban Sociology of the 7th World Congress of Sociology*, Varna, September.

KONGAR, E. (1973) Altındağ'da kentle bütünleşme [Integration with the city in Altındağ], *Amme İdaresi Dergisi*, 6, pp. 58–84.

LERNER, D. (1958) *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*. New York: The Free Press.

MCNAY, L. (1994) *Foucault: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

ÖĞRETMEN, İ. (1957) *Ankara'da 158 Gecekondu* [158 *Gecekondus* in Ankara]. Ankara: AUSBF Publication.

ÖNCÜ, A. (1997) The myth of the 'ideal home' travels across cultural borders to Istanbul, in: A. ÖNCÜ and P. WEYLAND (Eds) *Space, Culture and Power: New Identities in Globalizing Cities*, pp. 56–72. London: Zed Books.

ÖNCÜ, A. and WEYLAND, P. (1997) Introduction: struggles over *lebensraum* and social identity in globalizing cities, in: A. ÖNCÜ and P. WEYLAND (Eds) *Space, Culture and Power: New Identities in Globalizing Cities*, pp. 1–10. London: Zed Books.

PERLMAN, J. E. (1976) *The Myth of Marginality*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.

SENCER, Y. (1979) *Türkiye'de Kentleşme: Bir Toplumsal ve Kültürel Değişme Süreci* [Urbanization in Turkey: A Social and Cultural Transformation Process]. Ankara: The Ministry of Culture Publications.

ŞENYAPILI, T. (1978) *Bütünleşmemiş Kentli Nüfus Sorunu* [The Problem of the Unintegrated Urban Population] Ankara: Middle East Technical University Publications.

ŞENYAPILI, T. (1982) Economic change and the *gecekondu* family, in: C. KAĞITÇIBAŞI (Ed.) *Sex Roles, Family and Community in Turkey*, pp. 237–248. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

TATLIDİL, E. (1989) *Kentleşme ve Gecekondu* [Urbanisation and the *Gecekondu*]. İzmir: Ege University Publications.

TOK, N. (1999) *A critical approach to gecekondu studies in Turkey.* Unpublished MA thesis, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey.

TOK, N. and ERMAN, T. (1999) *Gecekondunun değişen çehresini anlamak* [Understanding the changing face of the *gecekondu*]. Paper presented to the *Sixth National Conference of the Turkish Social Science Asssociation*, Ankara, November.

TÜRKDOĞAN, O. (1977) *Yoksulluk Kültürü: Gecekonduluların Toplumsal Yapısı* [The Culture of Poverty: The Social Structure of the *Gecekondu*]. Ankara: Dede Korkut Publications.

WORLD BANK (1999) *Migrant women's participation in the labor force in urban Turkey.* Report prepared for the World Bank. Washington, DC: World Bank.

YASA, İ. (1966) *Ankara'da Gecekondu Aileleri* [The *Gecekondu* Families in Ankara]. Ankara: Ministry of Health and Social Services Publications.

YASA, İ. (1970) Gecekondu ailesi: geçiş halinde bir aile tipolojisi [The *gecekondu* family: a family typology in transition], *The AÜSBF Journal*, 25, pp. 9–18.

YASA, İ. (1973) Gecekondu ailesi mozayiği [The mosaic of the *gecekondu* family], *Amme İdaresi Dergisi*, 6, pp. 41–46.

YÖRÜKHAN, T. (1968) *Gecekondular ve Gecekondu Bölgelerinin Sosyo-kültürel Özellikleri* [The Socio-cultural Characteristics of the *Gecekondu* Areas and Their Residents] Ankara: Ministry of Development and Resettlement Publications.