

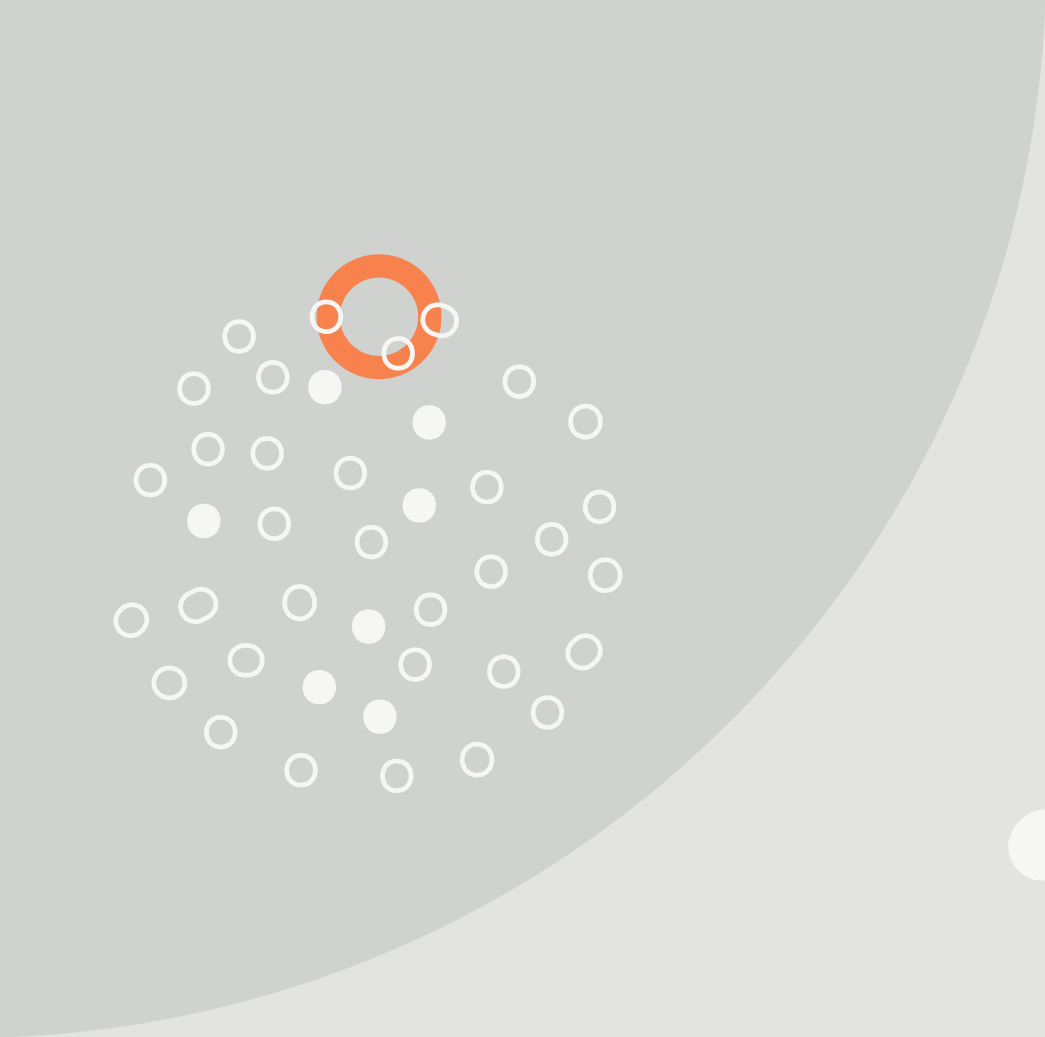
MONITORING REPORT:  
**THE POVERTY  
AGENDA IN  
THE MEDIA**

JANUARY-AUGUST 2022



**DEEP  
POVERTY  
NETWORK**







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The **OPEN SPACE ASSOCIATION/DEEP POVERTY NETWORK** is a non-governmental organization that aims at

- creating awareness about social, economic and urban problems;
- acting in solidarity with groups that face social exclusion and have difficulties in accessing their rights and needs;
- empowering these groups through diverse activities; supporting their access to public rights and services;
- reducing the obstacles that prevent these groups' access to basic human rights, including the rights to education, health, employment, and social security.

**Definition of deep poverty:** OSA&DPN perceive poverty in a multi-dimensional frame, as a phenomenon that not only restricts people's access to basic rights and needs, but also prevents them from attaining their economic, social, political and cultural rights.

**TURKEY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG ASSOCIATION (2001)** endeavors to support and motivate initiatives and activities which strive to empower democratic actors, protect human and minority rights, work on ecology and sustainable development, and develop global and regional security policies. With its central office in Istanbul, the Turkey Representative of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association has, for 20 years, supported civil society initiatives that adopt the above listed principles and strive for the protection of a democratic social order that is based on the principle of rule of law, regardless of people's gender, ethnicity, religion or color.

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## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Ever since we have started our activities as the DPN, we have aimed to bring into view what poverty does to and create in people's lives, through researched reports, daily human rights stories and the Absent Stories.

It was crucial that deep poverty was conceptualized, and that poverty was thematized in the context of people's access to their rights. However, as we analyzed 'how' this agenda was set and what was put in the focus, we observed that a perspective based on economic indicators, discriminating and blaming the poor was incorporated into the news in various forms.

Even if their target audiences vary, print and digital media channels alike shape the perception and opinion of their readers. In the last years, parallel to the augmented poverty due to the pandemic and the economic crisis, the amount of news about poverty and methods for alleviating poverty have also increased.

It was exactly in this period that we started monitoring the media for poverty-related news stories to analyze which prejudices were maintained, how the idea of being 'poor' was depicted and what discourse strategies were deployed, all while seeking to represent good examples.

## POVERTY IN MEDIA - ANALYSES FROM THE WORLD

Before we present our monitoring analysis, it would be appropriate to share some findings from other research about poverty discourse in media.

**Research titled “Poverty in Media: Being Seen and Getting Heard” that was carried out in the UK in 2009,<sup>1</sup> notes society has a restricted perception about poverty.** As a social and political issue that represents the daily hardship of millions of people, poverty is not being adequately reported about in the press, on radios and TVs. When it comes to poverty, media also has very often a tendency to judge, label and sensationalize through stereotyping. A simple poverty story is not newsworthy for the media. However, if the experiences of individuals living in poverty would be reported effectively and sensibly in the media, people’s understanding of poverty could be more developed.

**A guide that was prepared for media professionals to report about poverty in 2020<sup>2</sup> emphasizes holistic narration.** It has been observed that some news about poverty focuses exclusively on statistics, whereas others only emphasize what people living under poverty conditions narrate. In some news, it is observed that only the systemic reasons of poverty are given weight. This guide, however, states that news stories should contain all three elements, and represent them in a balanced manner. It can be said that news that omits the contribution of people experiencing poverty, data-based reports, or an explanation of systems that cause these circumstances, are inadequate.

**Martin Gilens found poverty was disproportionately described in the American media as a problem of “black” people in his study about poverty portrayals in the media,<sup>3</sup> where he analyzes the news magazines between 1988 and 1992.** According to the figures, black Americans make up less than one third of the poor, yet media reporting consists of news, which could make people believe that two out of every three poor people are black. In addition, it is also observed that especially the poor among the black community are not represented sufficiently in the news magazines. According to the 1996 figures of the CPS, which is the primary source for employment statistics of the American population, black people constitute 27% of the poor, while news magazines publish news that make people believe blacks constitute 49% of the poor. On the other hand, whites constitute 45% of the poor, but are shown in 33% of media stories on poverty. News magazines sustain and reinforce the tendency to see the share of black people among the poor as higher than the reality. Representations of poverty in media are significant because they influence public opinion. This situation increases stereotypical beliefs of white citizens about black citizens and reduces their support for the welfare system. Public opinion has a noteworthy effect on public policy, hence, when attitudes about poverty-related issues are driven by false and stereotypical portrayals, policies preferred by the public as well as the political elite may recede from adequately tackling the real issues of poverty.

**Within the scope of the study “The Representation of Poverty and the Poor in Mainstream Media in Turkey”<sup>4</sup> which was conducted in 2010, news stories about the poor that were published in four newspapers with the highest circulations were analyzed.** The findings of the study illustrate those



representations of the poor in media can be classified under four titles: phobic (arousing fear and hate), pathetic (arousing pity), pseudo-objective (claiming objectivity) and the representation of the poor through symbolic wipe out. In a phobic representation, groups referred to as “street kids”, “glue-sniffers”, or pickpockets” are conveyed as the source of fear and crime. The pathetic representation refers to a reporting style, which is defined by a sentimental discourse, and emphasizes tragic patterns. Under the title pseudo-objective news, poverty is reduced to statistical figures and systems of disregard. In the representation of symbolic wipe out, the emphasis on poverty becomes obliterated within dramatic stories. Within the framework of the study, a form of discourse and presentation was detected which otherizes and marginalizes poverty and the poor. It is indicated that the poor are either criminalized by being labeled as the source of crime and violence, or that the poverty they live through is narrated with a sentimental discourse.

## METHOD

Between January and August 2022, news published in print and digital media were compiled through the following methods:

- **News that included the terms “woman + poor”, “child + poor” and “deep poverty” in local and national print and digital media were compiled through a local agency.**
- **The terms “deep poverty”, “starvation line”, “food from trash”, “woman+poverty”, “child+poverty”, “exclusion+poverty” and “we can’t make a living” appearing in news on digital media were compiled through google alert.**
- **Digital editions of the newspapers Yeni Şafak, Yeni Akit, Sabah, Hürriyet, Bianet, Birgün, Gazete Duvar, Cumhuriyet, Evrensel, Artı Gerçek, and Sözcü were scanned by volunteers on a daily basis.**

As a result of the scans a total of 11,309 news reports were compiled. From within this compilation, 6,027 news reports were detected that encompassed issues directly related to poverty, such as rights violation, inflation and social support. Considering the distribution of subjects, sources, and dates, 270 news reports were selected for being included in the qualitative analysis. These 270 news reports were analyzed through the qualitative media analysis method by Altheide<sup>5</sup>, and the critical discourse analysis method by Van Dijk<sup>6</sup> and Wodak<sup>7</sup>. The analysis centered on the discourse strategies that were used, as well as the poverty representations that were created, meaning how people living under poverty conditions were represented. The qualitative analysis revealed four discourse strategies (romanticizing, arousing pity, sensationalizing, distortion) and four poverty representations (impostor, criminal, needy and opposer). At the same time, the analyses disclosed four thematic news items, which were frequently used in media and were distinctive regarding the representation of poverty. The relevant news articles were analyzed within themselves. These articles were titled “**Baby Nisa**”, “**Waste collection Circular: Good or bad news?**”, “**Inflation: They are worse than us**”, and “**Social supports: Grace, or right?**”

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# DISCOURSE STRATEGIES

## SECTION CONTENTS:

DEFINITION

WHAT CAN IT INDUCE?

EXAMPLES

When we analyzed the discourse of news articles about poverty that we monitored between January–August 2022, we specified four main strategies that were adopted: **“Romanticizing”, “Arousing pity”, “Sensationalizing”, and “Distortion”**. While these discourse strategies prevent the readers from obtaining objective and comprehensive information about the underlying causes of poverty, the effects of poverty on people’s lives as well as the struggle of people against poverty, they also frame their perception about people living under poverty conditions.

# ROMANTICIZING

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## What is it?

**Distancing a theme, an event, an issue or person from its/his-her own reality and depicting it/him-her better than the actual situation.**

## What can it induce?

- **It may curtail reality**
- **It may hide annoying aspects of reality**
- **It may detract the issue from the responsibility of social/political actors**
- **It may cause the objectification of individuals by ignoring their privacy.**

## EXAMPLES

### 1. NEWS

#### ***A mum is a mum everywhere! Moving scene.***

***The footage of a paper-collector woman in Istanbul, recorded by an amateur cameraperson, moved viewers.***

*Moving images of a paper collector woman in Istanbul beat the sharing record.*

*She put up a swing on the containers for her daughter!*

*A mother who collects paper as her daughter rode her on a swing, which she built between two trash containers to make her child happy.*

*The happiness, which the little girl and her mother found under harsh conditions, moved the viewers.*

*(Yeni Akit, April 2022) (Yeni Akit Gazetesi, Nisan 2022)*



#### **What happens in this news?**

- A private moment between a woman and her daughter turns into a commodity that “beats sharing record”; it is objectified.
- While the act of the mother who built a swing for her child is romanticized, the responsibility of authorities that are in charge of protecting the child from poverty and enabling its development in a secure space is ignored.
- While the story of a swing built between two trash containers is being romanticized, the conditions of poverty, such as the child spending time in garbage which is harmful for their development, or the lack of secure playgrounds are made invisible.
- According to our observations as the DPN, a person who makes a living by collecting solid waste walks on average 7–9 hours a day. 89% of solid waste collectors earn less than 2,000 TL per month. Women, especially single mothers have to take their children with them while they collect waste, since nursery facilities where they could leave them do not exist. Romanticizing this reality as a “happiness found by the little girl and her mother under difficult conditions” normalizes the rights violations caused by poverty.

## 2. NEWS

### ***Game of paper collector father and his daughter on Fathers' Day was touching for viewers***

***The soap bubble game a paper collector father played with his daughter on the street came to the fore on social media.***

*Fathers' Day, which is celebrated every year on the third Saturday of June, fell on the 19th of June in 2022. Millions of people, young and old, celebrated Father's Day.*

*Struggling with economic crisis in Turkey, some congratulated Fathers' Day with a phone call, some with a message, and those who could afford it with a small present.*

*This video shared on social media on Fathers' Day, however, made one think, "Oh world, is this your justice!"*

*Footage of the paper collector father and his daughter playing touched viewers.*

*(Yeniçağ newspaper, June 2022) (Yeniçağ Gazetesi, Haziran 2022)*



### **What happens in this news?**

- A private moment between the father and daughter becomes show material for others. Without the subjects' consent, it is commodified.
- Poverty is romanticized through a private moment between the father and daughter; it is shown as better than it is, and the fact that poverty makes rights and needs inaccessible is obscured.
- While the interpretation, "Oh world, is this your justice!" connects poverty to injustice in the world, it disregards the responsibility of political actors who oversee protecting people from poverty.

### 3. NEWS

## Nameless heroes of recycling

*Recycling workers, who collect an average of 140 to 160 kg waste per day, put paper, cardboard, metal and plastic waste into the sacks of their pushcarts. The shift, which starts at 6 am, is spent separating waste after a certain point in the evening hours. Whenever they see somebody leaving a container, they don't pass and look out of the habit. We have spent one day wandering in Ankara with recycling workers.*

*In their climb to life, it is the hills that challenge the waste collectors the most. Especially in winter, when those hills become icy with snow and rain, the weight of the wheelbarrows on their shoulders get even heavier. Their biggest luxury in this 17-hours shift, which covers up to 45 kilometers a day, is the Sunday siesta. Which means that they start working two hours later. During weekends, when millions of people take a rest, they long for Monday to come. Because, without knowing about the "Monday syndrome", they expect to collect more waste on that day. Yeni Şafak spent a day with the waste collectors, who call the waste bins their "destiny", making their living from waste.*



## Every container is a hope

*Their hard shift starts even before the roosters' crow. They start with the dream that they return with jam-packed pushcarts, which they pull in the winter dark. When they're lucky enough, every step made, every container searched is a point that adds 1 TL to their daily bread. Recycling workers make their living by roaming the roads and streets to collect and sell paper and board, plastic and metal thrown in garbage bins. Those who could save a bit to buy a vehicle are the lucky ones. They also make an important contribution to national economy. Waste collectors summarize their job in one sentence: "Every garbage bin is a hope for us".*

*Seven workers, who we accompanied for a day, live in a squatter house in Dikmen. They have no general health insurance. Despite working actively during the two-year pandemic, none of them had coronavirus, they told us. These seven workers work in the districts of Balgat, Öveçler, Huzur, Dikmen, and 100.Yıl. And they do not go out of these regions. The workers walk an average of 40 to 45 km per day and earn between 5,000 and 5,500 TL per month. The workers' pay a rent of 700 TL for their house in Dikmen, each person 100 TL per month. (Yeni Şafak newspaper, April 2022) (Yeni Şafak Gazetesi, Nisan 2022)*



## What happens in this news?

- By relying on a heroism narrative, the "nameless hero" discourse whitewashes the working conditions of waste collecting, such as the lack of social security and regular income as well as the physical security risk. Enduring these working conditions that violate economic and social rights is being romanticized with the "heroism" discourse.
- Expressions such as "every garbage bin is a hope" and "morning siesta", make the hard-working conditions of waste collecting look better than they actually are and lessen the visibility of the difficulty of these conditions.
- The information that paper waste collectors earn an average of 5,000 to 5,500 TL per month is another example of making the reality appear better than it actually is. According to the figures obtained by DPN, only 4% of the people who make their living as paper waste collectors have a monthly income of 3,000 TL and above. 39% of them earn between 500 and 1,000 TL per month, and 22% earn between 1,000 and 2,000 TL. Furthermore, specifying the monthly income as a total amount obliterates the fact that the earning is daily and precarious.

# AROUSING PITY

## What is it?

**Arousing feelings of pity and sadness by displaying someone as weak/helpless**

## What can it induce?

- **By pointing at individual misfortune or weakness as the reason of why actors go through difficulties, it may hide the actual causes.**
- **It may portray actors as passive people who need the “help” of charitable people.**
- **It may cause a charity-based hierarchical relation between the reader and the actors of the news, instead of a solidarity-based relation among equals.**
- **Discourses that arouse feelings of “pity” among the reader put them into a position of “watching the pain of the other”. They may cause the reader to put emotional and physical distance between him/herself and the hardships s/he witnesses, which holds them back from acting and hence pacifies them.<sup>8</sup>**
- **It may lead to the personalization of rights violations and to the detachment of such violations from their political and social context.**

8. Hannah Arendt, “On Revolution”



## EXAMPLES

### 1. NEWS

#### ***That heart-wrenching moments on the streets of Urfa***

***The images of a Syrian mother and her two daughters, searching in the garbage container in the Haliliye district of Şanlıurfa were heart wrenching for attenders.***

*Low-income families and Syrian women in Şanlıurfa earn 30-60 liras per day by selling paper and plastic, which they collect from garbage, to recycling facilities. The number of people who make their living this way is increasing day by day. Children are also led around in wheelchairs amid garbage for long hours under difficult conditions.*

*These women who roam every single corner in Şanlıurfa set forth in the early morning hours and work despite the 40-degree heat to collect wastepaper and sell it to junkyards.*

*A Syrian mother who lives in the Bahçelievler neighborhood of the Haliliye district contributes to the family budget by collecting waste from garbage together with her two daughters.*

*The mother and her two daughters searched in the garbage containers on the streets of Bahçelievler and collected plastic bottles. Citizens nearby who recognized the situation got upset and have photographed what was going on with their mobile phones. The mother and her two daughters have put the plastic bottles that they collected here into their wheeled bags and walked away.*

*(Şanlıurfa Agency, June 2022) (Şanlıurfa Ajans, Haziran 2022)*



#### **What happens in this news?**

- A slice of life of people living under poverty conditions is conveyed with the heading “heart-wrenching” and with wordings such as “citizens were upset”, which arouses pity among the readers, and builds a hierarchy between the subject of the incident and the reader who witnesses it.
- Rights violations such as not being protected from poverty, or precarious working conditions are made unseen within a narrative of individual misfortune. A particular slice of life is decontextualized.
- Publishing pictures of people without their consent or turning the lives of the subjects into show material without their permission, violates the right of people to be forgotten as well as the principle of protecting personal data.

## 2. NEWS

### “Sometimes we wake up hungry, sometimes we skip meals”

**Rising food prices and poverty hit the children. Parents who bring their children food during lunch break at school have a single variety on their table. Coming across fruit is impossible.**

*Food prices, which rise through price hikes every other day, also hit children in adolescence. Parents of pupils of the Yavuz Selim Primary School in the Körfez district of Kocaeli gather every day in the Dostluk Park across the school to bring their children food for lunch. As the parents are not allowed to enter the school building due to the pandemic, tens of parents wait for their children during the lunch break; with the food they brought in storage boxes. The boxes are opened and the food is*



*eaten hastily. Generally, the menus are single course: bulgur rice, pasta, yogurt, fried potatoes, cucumber, or just bread. Each of the listed items is on separate tables. One cannot find a single fruit on none of the approximately 30 families' tables. Some of them don't allow us to take pictures, or react by saying, "Don't record our situation".*

### “Can this be healthy eating?”

*To our question 'Are your children eating healthy?', a parent who could only bring rice in a lunch-box replies with a question: 'Do you think this is healthy eating?' and adds: 'Given the high cost of living, it is impossible to buy meat, vegetables, fruit.' Another parent, who said that her name is Neslihan, clarifies that her husband works in a supermarket, which makes it possible for them to eat fruit and vegetables. She says that most of the people in the neighborhood can't afford buying fruits and vegetables.*

## “How am i supposed to explain this lack to the child?”

*One of the parents named Seher says that she does scarf-work for 2 liras but can't buy one single bread in return. “I don't remember the last time I bought fruit. To be honest, I can't go to the weekly market. What shall I say?” Seher says that she can't afford buying something from the school canteen for her child, and saddened by the fact that she can't explain this to the child, she adds, “How can I explain? They request money from the school for activities and trips. Until now, I couldn't send my children to any of them. I live in the basement. It is damp and stinks. I am a tenant for two years; my natural gas was cut because I couldn't pay the bills. “When Seher talks about how their income does not suffice, her eyes get wet, she turns her face away”.*

## “We postpone the wishes; my kid doesn't believe me anymore”

*On every table in the park, the situation is almost the same. The biggest despair of the women is the reflection of this poverty on their children. Hatice, who says that she can only bring yogurt for her child, talks about their situation with crying eyes: “My husband works at a construction site and earns daily wage. But now he is unemployed. We get 4 breads a day and 300 TL monthly support from the municipality”. She points at her child eating yogurt and says: “My child doesn't believe me anymore. Because we always postpone their wishes. When we cannot buy something, my kid says ‘You are a liar mama’. I keep telling my children that it is going to be better but our children do not believe this”*

*(Evrensel newspaper, May 2022) (Evrensel Gazetesi, Mayıs 2022)*

## What happens in this news?

- Instead of the solidarity established among parents and the solution they've found for feeding their children, elements of victimhood and helplessness are emphasized; an active agency is presented through a narrative that portrays the actors in a rather passive way.
- Expressions such as “Some also oppose being recorded in those circumstances”, “When Seher talks about how their income does not suffice, her eyes get wet, she turns her face away”, “The biggest despair of the women is the reflection of this poverty on their children” do appear in the news in ways that enact feelings of sadness, pity and mercy in the reader. Emotions based on mercy bear the risk of arousing a sense of distance based on hierarchy instead of solidarity, and push the reader into a passive position in the face of rights violations.

### 3. NEWS

## ***An old man wanting to buy breads for 1 lira less, tragically died on the way back home***

***In Denizli, the 55-year-old Orhan Atmaca headed out with his bicycle to buy 1 lira cheaper bread. On his way back Atmaca was dragged for meters after he was hit by a car while crossing the road, and could not bring the breads home.***

*In the traffic accident that occurred in the Honaz district of Denizli around 8:30 in the morning, 55-year-old Orhan Atmaca set off (sic) with his bicycle to buy bread from a bakery, which sells it 1 TL cheaper than the grocer. Orhan Atmaca, who bought 7 breads from the bakery, which is about 2 km away, wanted to cross the road on the Ankara-Denizli highway on his way back home. Choosing not to use the traffic lights one kilometer ahead, Orhan Atmaca tried to cross the road while carrying his bicycle in his hand.*



## ***Breads and his bicycle scattered around the road***

*In the accident the bread that Orhan Atmaca bought from the bakery to bring to his home, and his bicycle were scattered across the road. Atmaca's sons who arrived at the scene as soon as they received the grim news, shed tears over their father's dead body.*

*(Türkiye newspaper, July 2022) (Türkiye Gazetesi, Temmuz 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- Although the “wish for buying bread for 1 lira less” is mentioned in the headline, the underlying structural poverty conditions are left out in the news.
- The expression “Atmaca could not manage to bring the breads home” and the selected image arouse feelings of pity and sadness among the reader by portraying the person as helpless, through which a hierarchical relation based on mercy is built between the reader and the actor of the incident.
- In the headline and the content of the news a traffic accident is narrated as to arouse pity by using expressions such as “he was halfway through”, “breads and his bicycle were scattered on the road”, or “he died horribly”.

# SENSATIONALISM

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## What is it?

**In order to attract the reader's attention, a striking aspect of the news is being cut off from its context and highlighted with a tabloid style.**

## What can it induce?

- **Reporting about rights violations in a tabloid style can cause insensitivity among the readers.**
- **It may obscure the extent of rights violations.**
- **It may objectify people's lives and turn them into show material.**



## EXAMPLES

### 1. HABER

#### “Accident in Gaziantep makes you think, ‘shall I laugh or rather cry’”

***According to the information and claims that reached our news center, a person called Ahmet O. (27) who is said to be collecting waste paper in Gaziantep, lost his balance and fell into an underground recessed garbage container while trying to collect waste paper from it. The person who fell into the recessed container was rescued by firefighters while a cell phone camera recorded those moments!***

*The accident occurred at the underground recessed garbage container on the 104<sup>th</sup> street in the Seyrantepe neighborhood of Gaziantep, in the afternoon hours.*

*(Gaziantep’in Habercisi.com, July 2022) (Gaziantep’in Habercisi.com, Temmuz 2022)*

#### What happens in this news?

- A violation experienced by a person who tries to generate income under precarious and unhealthy conditions turns into an accident that makes people laugh.
- Sharing his full name, age, and the exact address where the incident has occurred disrespects the person’s honor, privacy, and the right to be forgotten.
- Recording and sharing videos of the rescue moment turns the violation of a right into a catchy sensational material.
- Actually, the focus of the news should be the fact that the person must collect recycling material from the garbage container, the unhealthy working conditions, and the work accident. However, by means of the recorded videos it turns into a ridiculous or pitiable show material.

## 2. NEWS

### **“Slack-jawed by what 6 women and 1 man did: Poor worthless asshole!”**

***A fraud gang in Izmir that defrauded thousands of citizens nationwide through telephone calls by introducing themselves as lawyers was brought down by a police operation. In phone calls, the gang called citizens and said: “I am calling from the law office. Your shipment has arrived. You didn’t pick it up. There is an execution file about this. You didn’t make a payment. You have insurance debt. You have a former insurance debt. You visited an illegal betting site. You will pay fine”.***

*A total of 7 gang members, 6 of them being women, were detained by police teams. The investigation revealed that the woman gang members own Mercedes and Volvo brand vehicles worth 1.7 billion liras. Teams of the Anti-Crime-Proceeds Bureau confiscated the luxury vehicles. It showed that woman gang members took notes about the people they could not trick for money, writing things like “Poor, idiot. Worthless. The asshole hangs up. Just said, thank you.” All seven members of the gang were arrested and sent to jail.*

*(Sabah newspaper, July 2022) (Sabah Gazetesi, Temmuz 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- The headline chosen for news that reports about a fraud method, creates other impressions about the content of the news. It can’t be understood why the expression “Poor worthless asshole” was picked out in the headline.
- The gender emphasis on gang members causes discrimination.
- A tabloid aspect is created and emphasized in the news, whereas it could have been possible to write it to inform the readers about this recently very much used fraud method.

### **(How could it be different?)**

People we interviewed as the DPN told us that they often receive similar phone calls too, claiming that there were execution or seizure files on their names, and that they didn’t know how to find out the truth. Based on the principle of “disseminating correct information”, which is one of the essential principles of journalism, it could have been possible to create a different news content which explains how readers could query about the alleged execution files against them, their rights to object, and the frequently used methods in such phone calls.

### 3. NEWS

## **Children were habituated to beg by their grandmother!**

**Teams of the Düzce Municipality Police Department carried out an operation in the city center against beggars, who were exploiting citizens' religious sentiments.**

*While everyone was surprised by the words of the little child, who apparently was forced to beg as the inspections by the Düzce Municipality Police Department teams revealed, it came out that it was the grandmother who accustomed the children to begging. The teams give no respite to the beggars, who dwell in crowded spots of the city center, such as mosques, highways and traffic lights, in order to exploit the feelings of the citizens.*

*The police department of the Düzce Municipality and teams of the Provincial Directorate for Family and Social Services (sic) launched an operation against beggars in the city center. Routine controls and operations also revealed interesting real-life stories. The story of a little child who was forced to beg illustrated once again the importance of parenting.*

## **“We don't have pockets; our sister takes the money”**

*The words of the little girl, who was brought to the municipal police station after the beggar operation that was carried out together with the experts from the Ministry of Family and Social Services, surprised the listeners. The little girl said that her mother sends them back to begging, after she takes the collected money, and also noted that it was her grandmother who accustomed them to begging. Stating that she came to Düzce from Tekirdağ and Adapazarı, the little child said that they give the collected money to their sister as they themselves have no pockets, and added: “We didn't know this job before, our grandmother taught us”. Teams of the municipal police department of the Düzce Municipality and the Ministry for Family and Social Services went into action to access the families of the children who were supposed to continue their education at school. (Sabah newspaper, June 2022) (Sabah Gazetesi, Haziran 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- A tendency for sensationalism and decontextualization is observed; instead of emphasizing child poverty, which is part of the content of the news, the attention of the reader is called by the expression “The grandmother accustomed the children to begging!”
- Although no evidence is mentioned about the people who are allegedly “begging by exploiting citizens' religious sentiments”, an impostor image is created.
- Expressions targeting the subjects of the news, such as “an operation was carried out” or “teams of municipality police give no respite”, criminalize the poor and poverty.
- In addition to reporting about poverty as “interesting life stories”, using photos that were taken during the incident involves sensationalism for rendering the rights violation attractive.
- While the responsibility of parents is underlined by the sentence, “The story of a little child who was forced to beg illustrated once again the importance of parenting”, the agency of institutions that comprise structural mechanisms is being ignored.
- Even though an impression is created that the family and children will be monitored by stating that action is being taken for “reaching the parents of the children who are supposed to continue their education”, no information is given about whether the necessary monitoring has been done prior to the incident.



# DISTORTION

## What is it?

Using headlines that do not reflect the content of the news directly, or that attribute the content of the news to the minister, or spokesperson who made the announcement.

## What can it induce?

Regarding poverty, this is the most common strategy we are confronted with in news articles, which announce social supports that are provided through public resources. Therefore,

- Headlines that do not identify with the content may misinform the readers who want to stay up to date just by reading the headlines.
- Social support may be instrumentalized for the sake of propaganda.
  - a. Since it is about public support, it can create the impression about a comprehensive effort.
  - b. Bringing up routine implementations as new regulations may create the impression that under the existing economic crisis conditions public authorities fulfill their responsibilities thoroughly, and take all necessary steps.
  - c. The emphasis on the quantitative aspect of support and on data, which reflect the total, may avert questioning the effectiveness of poverty policies.

## EXAMPLES

### 1. NEWS

#### **“Flash decision of rent aid and credit support!”**

***Rent aid in the amount between 715 and 1,150 liras up to 18 months, and also 160,000 to 400,000 liras credit support is provided”***

***Good news from the Ministry for Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change! Those who want to transform their buildings on their own will be given credit support. ‘The limits of interest supported***



***credits have increased. Herewith, citizens who want to transform their buildings will be given 160,000 liras, and in credits for house construction, house acquisition, workplace construction and workplace acquisition, credits can be provided up to 400,000 liras.***

***An announcement was made for all citizens who are homeowners. With the Ministry doubling its support for citizens who transform their own buildings, the urban transformation awareness increased. Here are the details.***

***(Takvim newspaper, May 2022) (Takvim Gazetesi, Mayıs 2022)***

#### **What happens in this news?**

- During a period when housing rents and sales prices were rising rapidly in May, the news with the above cited headline was conveyed as a housing support to tenants. Yet, going into the detail of the news reveals that it is rather a practice for landlords in the apartments that will be demolished and rebuilt through urban transformation.
- The news article creates an impression of a support provided through public resources, although it reports about an incentive for reconstructing a building through indebtedness.

## 2. NEWS

### **“Retirement salaries will increase” Minister Bilgin said. He will declare the good news today**

*Last Tuesday, Vedat Bilgin, Minister of Work and Social Security said, “We will have some good news in July, the lowest retirement salary will increase. I will declare the details on May 1.” Following these words, eyes have turned to the good news that Minister Bilgin will announce today.*

*30% increase in retirement salaries were made in New Years’ Eve. With the inflation rate exceeding 60%, citizens expect a new raise.*

### **How much is the lowest retirement salary?**

*Pensioner and civil servant salaries were increased with the social welfare regulation in January 2022. Through the regulation, the lowest retirement salary was increased to 2,500 TL, while the increased rate for civil servants and retired civil servants was raised to 30.95%.*

### **Lowest retirement salary will be 4,500 liras**

*With the inflation data of the remaining 3 months being declared, eyes have turned on the salary rise in July again. Economists expressed that the 6-month inflation difference would be 34.62%, so that according to calculations, the lowest salary among civil servants will increase from 6,429 liras to 8,622 liras. The lowest pensioner salary for civil servants will increase from 4,289 liras to 5,753 liras, for craftsmen and tradesmen from 2,948 liras to 3,969 liras, and for SSK pensioners who retired before the year 2000 from 3,292 liras to 4,432 liras.*

*(Yeni Akit newspaper, May 2022) (Yeni Akit Gazetesi, Mayıs 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- The routine increase in retirement salaries that occurs every six month is conveyed as good news from the Minister, as a surprise and a grace by using a hierarchical style.
- The headline states that the lowest pensioner salary will be 4,500 liras, however it is understood from the content of the news, that this is an expectation. As a matter of fact, the lowest retirement salary for 2022 remains 3,500 liras.
- While the abovementioned increase rates are conveyed as good news, the poverty conditions of retired people and the difficulties they undergo to make ends meet, as well as actual poverty/hunger lines are ignored.
- The declaration mentioned in the headline was not made on that day.

### 3. NEWS

## **Insurance for 400,000 children ready: A saving of 1 billion in less than a year**

**With the changes made in May last year, PRI (Private Retirement Insurance) contracts for participants under 18 years were started to be made by 15 retirement firms, with 30% state support. Already, before one year passed, 400,000 participants under the age of 18 entered the system, and the total asset value of the fund reached almost 1 billion TL.**

*(Türkiye newspaper, May 2022) (Türkiye Gazetesi, Mayıs 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- What is mentioned in the news as insurance for 400,000 children is actually the private retirement system for which parents regularly make payments on behalf of the children, and the saving increases with 30% state support.
- To retrieve the state contribution accumulated in the system, one either needs to stay in the system for at least 10 years or be 56 years old. Thus, the expression “the assurance of 400,000 children” is misleading, while in the content of the news lack of information stands out.
- The PRI does not create a direct insurance for children. The expression “A saving of 1 billion in less than a year”, creates a perception of the extent of the fund, although the amount of individual savings cannot be calculated.

### 4. NEWS

## **Minister announced the good news to the young! It will be free**

**Muharrem Kasapoğlu, Minister of Youth and Sports announced that they would distribute the Museumcard WYL to all young people aged between 18 and 25 years, with which they can visit all museums and archeological sites.**

*Minister Kasapoğlu made a speech at the publicity meeting of the “What do the Young Love” platform, which is implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports to provide equal opportunity for young people from all across Turkey to access cultural, artistic, sports and travel activities and to support their socialization.*

*“From the far east to the far west, from the far north to the far south, we are proud of each and every one of our 17 million young people. Their achievements in sports, art, education, technology, entrepreneurship and in many other fields is a source of pride for us. To this day, we have considered producing for our young as the greatest service and supporting them with all available means while the young prepare themselves for the future, as the biggest duty. Under the leadership of our dear President, we have prioritized the youth in social policies throughout the last 20 years. Because, if the youth is strong Turkey will be strong; if the youth is ambitious Turkey will be ambitious. We are very well aware of that. We carry on our work with this understanding.”*

## **“We built the largest student dormitory infrastructure of the world”**

***Minister Kasapoğlu said that with the investments made in the last years, they have made Turkey the country with the world’s best infrastructure with regard to student dormitories.***

*Expressing that the number of student dormitories is increasing every day, Kasapoğlu said: “We built the greatest student dormitory infrastructure of the world. Annually, 750,000 students benefit from our approximately 800 student dormitories that are serving in 81 provinces and 215 districts. Day by day, new investments add to the number of our dormitories and our bed space. Again, we implemented the world’s biggest state-provided stipend and education support loan. We achieved equality of opportunity in education. We opened the doors wide to anybody who wishes to go there, regardless of one’s city of birth, homeland and socio-economic status. We ensured that young people take part in decision-making mechanisms, and that their thoughts and ideas directly affect policy approaches, the functioning of institutions, and all issues. We, so to say, conducted mobilization for the social, cultural, artistic, educational and athletic development of our young.” (Haber7.com, July 2022) (Haber7.com, Temmuz 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- The news headline does not contain any information about which Ministry will offer which free service.
- A practice, which is planned for “ensuring equality of opportunity among young people in their access to cultural, art, sports and travel activities, and supporting their socialization”, again, turns into good news given to the young as the Minister’s grace.
- While mentioning that something will be free in the headline of the news arouses interest, in the rest of the content it is seen that only one paragraph of information is given about the free WYL Museum card, and that the news is turned into a means of propaganda through the quotations from Kasapoğlu, Minister of Youth and Sports.

## 5. NEWS

### **Minister announced the good news! 3.125 billion TL will be put into accounts**

***Derya Yanık, Minister of Family and Social Services said that due to the Eid al-Adha payments of social aid programs 3.125 billion TL will be put into accounts.***

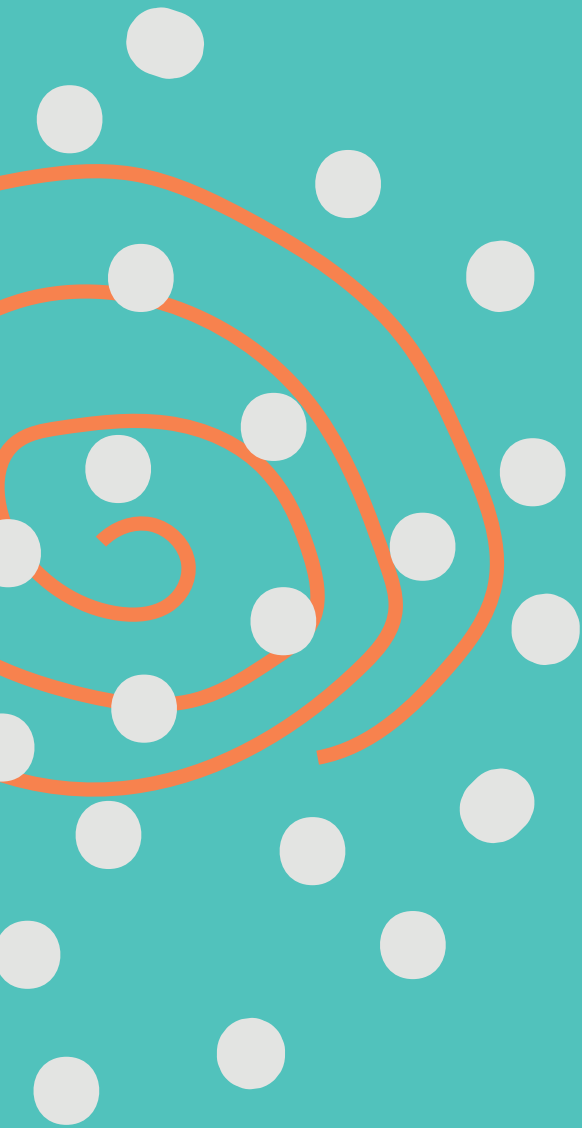
*Minister for Family and Social Services Derya Yanık announced that due to Eid al-Adha, the payments of social aid programs would be made today. According to the news in Anatolian Agency, in her written statement Minister Yanık gave information about the old age and disabled pensions as well as home-care aid and payments of socio-economic support (SES) for July.*

*Indicating that they will pay approximately 835 million liras for old-age pensions in July, Yanık also noted that they were going to transfer approximately 658 million liras of disability pensions to the beneficiaries' accounts. (Akşam newspaper, July 2022)*

*(Akşam Gazetesi, Temmuz 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- Payments that are already part of the existing social aid programs of the Ministry for Family and Social Services are presented as if they were novel news, again with a good news-giving style.
- The fact that the emphasis is on the total amount of provided support does not open a realm of discussion about the quality and adequacy of the support individuals receive.
- The payments mentioned in the news for “old-age pension” is 1,684 TL, home-care aid is 2,354 TL, “disabled pensions” vary between 865 and 1295 TL according to the disability of the person, and the “social and economic support” varies depending on the level of education the child continues between 629,99 and 1,611 TL.
- The fact that only the economic aspect of the support is visible, renders the multidimensional structure of poverty unseen, and reduces people’s access to basic rights and needs to economic indicators.
- For instance, although the aim of the Social and Economic Support program is to move away children who cannot continue their education due to poverty from the risks they face, to monitor their education process, and to increase their school attendance, such news don’t contain any information about the education monitoring system.



# POVERTY REPRESENTATIONS

## SECTION CONTENTS:

### DEFINITION

### WHAT CAN IT INDUCE?

### EXAMPLES

In the news stories that we have analyzed for the time period of January–August 2022, we have seen that people living in poverty conditions are represented under the titles “**imposter**”, “**criminal**”, “**needy**”, and “**opposer**”. Even though the news sources, the accompanying images, the discourse and context of how the content is conveyed do vary, representations that rely on generalizations may produce stereotypes about people living in poverty conditions, reinforce negative judgements and become grounds for excluding people from society.

## THE “IMPOSTOR POOR” REPRESENTATION

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### What is it?

- It is the type of poor representation produced through news that argue that people who talk about their economic hardships, express their poverty, and beg are not poor “in reality”.
- In such news, discourses involving the words, “game”, “tactics”, “trick”, “role-play” and “fraud” appear, and the subjects of the news are defined by attributes such as “shameless”, “role player”, “impostor”.

### What can it induce?

- It reinforces the perception that the evident poverty is “fake”, bearing also the risk of reinforcing the tendency to ignore poverty.
- It strengthens the perception that people living in poverty conditions and making these conditions visible are impostors, leading to generalizations and prejudices.
- It legitimizes the intervention of security forces against beggars, or waste collectors.



## EXAMPLES

### 1. NEWS

#### ***She said “no job, we’re hungry!”, turned out she has car and land***

***It turned out that Elif Yılmaz, who told CHP deputy Gürsel Tekin “No job, no food, we’re hungry!” receives retirement pension, owns a vehicle worth of 300,000 TL, as well as 80 acres of land.***

*The Istanbul deputy of CHP, Gürsel Tekin, has visited a marketplace in Aksaray, together with some party members. A citizen named Elif Yılmaz (67) approached him and said: “We don’t die of war; we die of hunger. There is no job, no food, our situation is very bad. I have a sick kid, cannot bring the kid to the doctor. My son has no job, I can’t find a job. People kill their wives and children out of hunger and indigence. We are in a very difficult situation. Let them come, I’ll show them the hungry.” Later, Tekin shared these words on his social media accounts with the note, “The words of the aunt from Aksaray will tear you in two: ‘We don’t die from war, we die from hunger. They say there are no hungry people. Let them come, I’ll show.’”*

#### ***Her children live abroad***

*However, the reality about Elif Yılmaz who complained to Tekin about her troubles turned out to be completely different. It was reported that the woman was a mother of 10, whereby 3 of her children were working abroad, 4 in Istanbul, and the rest in Konya and Aksaray. It was also recorded that Yılmaz retired in 2013 and was a Bağkur<sup>9</sup> pensioner herself, who owns 80 acres of land and has a vehicle worth of 300,000 TL registered on her name. It was also revealed that Yılmaz’s disabled grandchild is given a monthly home-care salary to the tune of 2,354 TL. (Sabah newspaper, June 2022) (Sabah Gazetesi, Haziran 2022)*

#### **What happens in this news?**

- The personal information (name, surname, age) of the subject in the news is used openly against her will; she is targeted on the grounds of not providing correct information.
- By ignoring the fact that most of the retirement salaries are below the poverty line, the impression that people who receive a pension cannot live under poverty conditions is created.
- In a similar vein, the home-care aid is presented as evidence that refutes the fact that one lives in poverty, although it is not a sufficient amount to be considered to meet the needs of a disabled person, and is a social support mechanism as it is given to people who take care of disabled people at home.
- We come across cases where many people living under poverty conditions are not able to benefit from social aid, because of scrap vehicles registered on their names, or old houses/lands which bring no revenues, are not habitable and cannot be sold. A poverty measurement, which only considers quantities on paper, ignores the multidimensional structure of poverty.
- This news, which is based on refuting the statements of a person who demonstrates the conditions of poverty, aims to negate poverty and represents people who report violations caused by poverty as an “impostor”.

<sup>9</sup> Social security organization for artisans and self-employed

## 2. NEWS

### **Threw herself in front of the cars and faked fainting! Shameless beggar caught on camera**

*A beggar was spotted on a cellphone camera in Şişli, where she threw herself in front of vehicles in motion, faked fainting and collected money by exploiting feelings. The beggar, who pretended to faint by throwing herself in front of the vehicles in Şişli, was caught on the cellphone camera like this. The incident took place on the Halaskargazi Street in Şişli the other day. Allegedly, a beggar who was waiting on the street to make a move, threw herself in front of a driving car and then pretended fainting. Citizens who came to help the person lifted her up and carried her to the pavement. The beggar, who said she fainted, was sick and in need of money, asked those around for help. It turned out that the beggar who pretended fainting was coming there all the time and did the fake fainting act to beg. Those moments were recorded second-by-second by a motorcycle driver who was driving by.*

### **“First passes out, then asks for money”**

*Fatih Armanlı, who is a shopkeeper on the same street said: “We have that kind of beggars, such people passing out very much around here. I mean, we consider it normal now. Generally, most are not convincing and not real. People shouldn’t believe them. They shouldn’t take account of them. They come and beg here. They throw themselves on the road. They always malign. There are so many of them. They pass out and then ask for money. They say they’re ill. Apart from that, they beg. We have so many of these people here. And citizens see them and put money in their pockets, and they of course do agitate. Every now and then such incidents happen here, we see.”*

### **The beggar’s fake passing out was recorded moment by moment**

*A cell phone taped the beggar, pulling at people’s heartstrings in the traffic. The footage shows a person throwing her on the road, faking a passing out and citizens coming to help and carry her to the sidewalk.. (Yeni Akit newspaper, April 2022) (Yeni Akit Gazetesi, Nisan 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- The alleged acts of “fake fainting” or “exploitation of feelings”, which are mentioned in the heading and the content of the news, solidify the “impostor” discourse generated about poverty. An explicit example in this regard can be seen in the statement of the shopkeeper, who says, “These people shouldn’t be taken seriously”. A generalization about a begging person, and the discourse generated around this causes labeling and stigmatization of people living in poverty.
- The expression “shameless beggar” does not only include an element of insult to the beggar, but also provides the basis for possible hate speech directed at the poor.
- The news points solely at the subject of the event as being responsible for the emerged poverty. Instruments of the system that are responsible for the poverty conditions the person is living in, are not mentioned at all.

- The expression “caught on the cell phone camera” not only induces the “impostor” discourse, it also invites the perception that the event has a criminal aspect. The news discourse that is based on generalization and prejudice reinforces the tendency to ignore and normalize poverty, as can be seen in the expression of the shopkeeper, who shared his views on the beggar, saying “I mean, we consider it normal now”.

### 3. NEWS

## **“I am no beggar; I am waiting for my neighbor” she said: Truth has been revealed while collecting money!**

*An interesting incident occurred in Elazığ. Municipality police teams, who were carrying out an inspection at the traffic lights and in front of the mosque, caught a beggar as a citizen tried to give her money. The woman beggar refused to take the money saying, “I am no beggar”, but she couldn’t deceive the municipality police and was fined.*

*The deception of the beggar, who said, “I am waiting for my neighbor”, when caught by the municipality police in Elazığ during a stop at the traffic lights and in front of the mosque, was revealed when another passerby woman gave her money. Although the woman beggar refused the money by saying, “I am not a beggar”, she could not deceive the municipality police and was punished. During the operation, which was carried out by the Elazığ Municipality police teams in multiple spots of the city, legal action was taken against 15 beggars. As a result of the undertakings based on the incoming complaints, beggars, who especially prefer mosques, traffic lights and areas heavily visited by people, were taken one by one. Some of the beggars who saw the municipality police vehicles ran away, while some were caught after being chased.*

## **Saw the municipality police and said, “I am no beggar”**

*When the beggar was confronted with the municipality police teams, who were carrying no uniform, she tried to convince them by saying, “I am no beggar, I am waiting for my neighbor”. At that moment, a bypasser tried to give the beggar money, and the beggar responded saying, “I am no beggar”, but that didn’t save her. Following the inspections, 15 beggars who were caught by the teams were brought to the (Municipal Police Directorate. The money found on the beggars was confiscated there, and each of them was fined in accordance with the Law of Misdemeanor. (Akşam, January 2022) (Akşam Gazetesi, Ocak 2022)*

### What happens in this news?

- The headline of the news as well as expressions in the content, such as “the fraud was revealed while collecting money”, or “couldn’t deceive the municipality police” ignore the poverty conditions in which the begging person lives, and create a perception of an “impostor”. This also intensifies desensitization and distancing from a situation caused by poverty.
- Expressions such as “in the operation”, or “caught one by one” criminalize the person, while ignoring the responsibility of structural systems that push the person into poverty.

- The expression “Some of the beggars, who saw the municipality police vehicles ran away while some were caught after being chased” not only connotes a criminal aspect. It also legitimizes an intervention by security forces against a person in poverty conditions.
- Defining the incident as “interesting” and using footage of people while being put in the municipality police car, involve both the sensationalism of poverty as an interesting thing, and the violation of the right to be forgotten.
- Contrary to the situation that we have encountered in many news reports about begging people, emphasizing the sex of the involved person includes a discriminatory discourse.
- The statement “punished” with regard to the subject of the news points to a second punishment by non-authorities, connotating the idea that “one gets what one deserves”.

## 4. NEWS

### ***Impostor beggars on camera in Karaköy***

#### ***Beggars pretending to collect and eat bread from garbage in Karaköy were caught by municipality police teams.***

*Beggars pretending to collect and eat bread from garbage in Karaköy were caught by municipality police teams.*

### ***Beggars deceiving people were caught***

*The incident occurred in Karaköy the other day. According to the information received, beggars begged for money from citizens while they were sitting next to a garbage container, holding their children and pretending to eat bread from the garbage. The Beyoğlu Municipality police teams gave the show of the beggars, who deceived people helping them as they thought the woman and children were eating from the garbage, away. The teams arrived at the scene upon complaints and caught the beggars. Those moments of feelings-exploiting-beggars were videotaped while taking money from citizens. It was learned that the same beggars were caught and fined before for begging with the same methods. (Yeni Şafak newspaper, June 2022) (Yeni Şafak Gazetesi, Haziran 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- While statements that appear in the news text, such as “impostor”, “pretends to collect and eat bread from garbage”, or “deceiving people”, determine the authenticity of the incident without relying to any evidence, they also narrate a form of poverty with the “fake” image. However, our research and field observations as the Deep Poverty Network demonstrate that people collect food from supermarket waste or from the garbage on streets.
- In addition to being generalizing discourses that we come across very often, “exploitation of feelings” or “the beggars cheat” are expressions that augment desensitization against poverty.
- The expression “was caught by municipality police teams” both legitimizes the intervention of security forces and causes begging to be perceived as a “criminal” act.
- Parallel to the wording of the news, the accompanying images intensify the “imposter” perception and casts the reason of poverty on the begging person alone.


# THE “CRIMINAL POOR” REPRESENTATION

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## What is it?

- It is a representation of poor people created by news reports written with a discourse that present the poor as disrupting to a functioning society, without paying attention to the violations people living under poverty conditions have to face, such as inequality or social exclusion.
- To define the subject living in poverty conditions and their actions in this news texts, expressions such as “suspect”, “operation”, “capture”, “crack down” and “no passing” are used.

## What can it induce?

- Makes it difficult to discuss poverty as a form of rights violation; bears the risk of displaying poverty as crime.
  - Reinforces the assumption that subject who render the state of poverty visible are “criminal”; deepens the already existing exclusion they are confronted with.
  - Survival strategies of people are being criminalized on the grounds of “not conforming to societal order”. Security forces imposing penalties without fair trial is being normalized.
- 

## EXAMPLES

### 1. NEWS

#### ***Beggar operation in Adana: Tens of people given fines***

***In Adana, 80 people wiping car windows of halting vehicles at traffic lights and asking for money were given fines a totaling 22,160 liras.***

*A total fine of 22,160 liras was imposed on 80 people who annoyed drivers by wiping their car windows and asking for money at junctions and traffic lights in Adana. While being taken into the police car, one of the suspects, A.Ö said, “We went to pilgrimage and came back 4 times. Ask the uncle if you don’t believe”.*

*According to the information obtained from DHA, teams of the Directorate of Public Security Branch of the Provincial Police Department performed operations against people annoying drivers at junctions and traffic lights by wiping car windows and asking for money. Throughout the city, 148 teams were positioned on main arterial roads to chase the suspects. 80 people who were caught by the teams were imposed a fine of 22,160 liras.*

*A.Ö, who was wiping car windows on the Karataş Boulevard in the district of Yüreğir, too, was caught and taken into custody. While he was being taken into the police car, A.Ö. told the journalists who were filming him, “We went on pilgrimage 4 times. Ask the uncle if you don’t believe”.*

*(Akşam newspaper, June 2022) (Akşam Gazetesi, Haziran 2022)*

#### **What happens in this news?**

- Through the expressions “stakeout of suspects” or “caught and arrested by the police”, the actions of the security forces against one state of poverty is being legitimized. Further, with the preferred discourse itself, the subjects of the news are being “criminalized”.
- Using the “anti-beggar operation” discourse against subjects in poverty conditions to define the operation of security forces, augments discrimination.
- The role of authorities, who are responsible for the poverty that people live in, is not mentioned.
- The statement “an action against disturbing people” confirms the ongoing perception of discrimination against people living in poverty conditions”.

## 2. NEWS

### ***No respite given to paper and scrap collectors with vehicles***

#### ***Enforcement by the teams of Kayseri Provincial Police Department Patrol Teams Headquarters against suspects collecting paper and scrap with barrow-type vehicles***

*The Kayseri Provincial Police Department Patrol Teams Headquarters arrested suspects collecting paper and scrap with barrow-type vehicles.*

*According to the information received, Patrol Teams Headquarters of the districts Melikgazi, Kocasinan and Talas made enforcements against suspects who collect paper and scrap with barrow-type vehicles. Eventually, 67 persons were interrogated and 53 vehicles were controlled. As a result of the enforcement, 2 wanted persons and one military-service dodger were arrested, and a seized motorcycle was captured.*



*(Karaman Habercisi.com, March 2022) (Karaman Habercisi.com, Mart 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- The expression “no respite is given” appearing in the headline, directly targets paper and scrap collecting people with the impression of them being “criminal”. Prejudices against people who earn their living by collecting solid waste are nurtured by generalizations.
- With the expressions “enforcement against suspects”, or “interrogated, vehicle controlled” the emphasis on being a potential criminal is reinforced. Also, the practices of the security forces are approached on a legitimate basis.
- The news discourse incites readers to normalize and maintain the exclusion of solid waste collectors.

### 3. NEWS

## ***No passing for child beggars!***

***Teams of Kocaeli Provincial Police Department undertook operations against child beggars, whose numbers began to rise with the start of the month of Ramadan. During operations over the last week, 23 child beggars were identified.***

*The Kocaeli Provincial Police Department is uninterruptedly continuing its operations for forestalling child beggars, whose numbers have risen especially with the arrival of Ramadan. During the inspections and controls carried out province-wide between April 11 and April 17, 2022 in this context, 23 children were identified as begging on the street. The children were taken from the cold and insecure streets and roads and were handed over to their families after necessary warnings were made and legal actions were initiated. It was stated that the police will continue with similar operations.*

*(Sabah newspaper, April 2022) (Sabah Gazetesi, Nisan 2022)*

## **What happens in this news?**

- That the survival strategies that children in poverty conditions are facing are being reported with the “no passing” discourse, leads to their perception as “criminal” subjects.
- That the news report about child poverty refers to “rising numbers of begging children on the streets”, by mentioning only their families and ignoring the agency of other subjects, disguises the responsibility of structural systems.
- Mentioning police operations that were launched for “forestalling the growing number of child beggars”, but not stating why children live under begging conditions leads to the fact that poverty conditions become banal in the eyes of society and leads to indifference.
- The news states that there is no passing for child beggars, but no information is given about how the children are supposed to overcome their hunger. Solution recommendations are not mentioned. Instead, a language is used which provokes the reader against the begging children.
- In the statement, “necessary warnings made, legal action started”, there is no information given on whether this behavior towards children has a pedagogical dimension.



# THE “NEEDY” POOR REPRESENTATION

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## What is it?

- It is the poor representation reflected by news that display people living under poverty conditions not as subjects who have rights, but as needy individuals who depend on the support of others, and emphasize the dependency of people instead of their strong sides.
- This representation is generally formed with the romanticizing discourse strategy.
- In this news, discourses of “needy”, “dependent”, “wretch”, “orphan, all alone”, “must be made happy”, and “destitute” come to the fore, and situations such as “waiting in line”, “concourse” and “help of the benevolent” are mentioned.

## What can it induce?

- It obscures the struggle of people living under poverty conditions against poverty.
- It may reflect poverty as the suffering and weakness of individuals instead of an issue that is of concern for society.
- It creates a hierarchy at the expense of poor people, and reinforces the recipient-giver relationship.
- In the first place, it causes feelings of pity among the readers and sets aside pointing at the systematic discrimination that causes poverty, and at those that are accountable.
- Public resources implemented for combatting poverty are presented as a favor of the state, not as its responsibility.

## EXAMPLES

### 1. NEWS

#### ***Batman Hope Caravan provided clothing for more than 200 orphans and needy children***

***Children who found the chance to visit the storehouse with their families and buy any shoes and clothes they wish, felt happy about welcoming the Eid al-Adha with new clothing.***

*With the slogan “Be a hope for the orphan and needy”, the Batman Hope Caravan put a smile on the faces of hundreds of orphans and needy children shortly before Eid al-Adha.*

*Salih Güzel, the chair of Batman Hope Caravan said in his statement that they provided clothing aid for more than 200 orphans and needy children in the city on the occasion of the Eid al-Adha.*

#### ***“We had the opportunity to dress more than 200 orphans and poor”***

*Güzel argued that they have traditionalized the clothing aid, and said: “As Batman Hope Caravan, we are carrying out yet another clothing program for orphans and poor children, which we have traditionalized already. With the donations of our benefactors, we had the opportunity to dress more than 200 orphans and poor here today. May God bless our benefactors”.*

#### ***“The day the orphans and poor are pleased, is a day of happiness for us”***

*Güzel, who thanked the benefactors for providing full support, stated “Every day the orphans and poor laugh and are pleased, is a joyful day of happiness for us. God bless our benefactors for letting us experience this happiness. We thank them for choosing Batman Hope Caravan as mediators for their good cause.” (Odak Haber.com, July 2022) (Odak Haber.com, Temmuz 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- The expressions “destitute”, “needy” children are being used as adjectives defining people living in poverty conditions. Similarly, the chairman of the association refers to the children as “orphans, poor”. These expressions cause a feeling of pity among readers and weaken the children.
- While the expression “destituteness” is attributed to children, it obscures the fact that not having access to clothing is a violation of rights, and that the state is responsible for protecting children from poverty and social exclusion<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup>. European Social Charter, Article 30

- The clothing support is given in front of the cameras, which reinforces the hierarchy between the poor and the benefactors. Furthermore, it heroizes them. Benefactors are described as “sources of hope that make children smile”.
- The clothing aid is being instrumentalized and used as a publicity event.
- Romanticizing and tabloidizing are prominent strategies used in the narration of the news to attract the attention of the readers as well as potential benefactors.

## NEWS 2

### ***The morning of a homeless person in Istanbul***

***While passers-by peek at this man who sleeps on the street and keep going, for him stray dogs and their fellowship are different from those strangers’ eyes.***

*This narrow road that links to the Kadıköy Söğütluçeşme metrobus station in Turkey’s biggest city, Istanbul, is especially crowded during rush hours. For one of the thousands of homeless of the city, who have no work to go to and no home to return to, it is much more than this.*

*While passers-by peek at this man who sleeps with a blanket over his head, which he probably found in the garbage, to him, stray dogs and their fellowship are different from those strangers’ eyes.*

*(Evrensel newspaper, April 2022) (Evrensel Gazetesi, Nisan 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- A condition of a person, whose right to housing has been violated so that he lives under circumstances incompatible with human dignity and health, is being romanticized and normalized.
- Structural factors that cause poverty, and whoever is responsible for them are being ignored.
- The expression “While passers-by peek at and keep going” describes a poor profile that has to be rescued by the passers-by, and lay the burden of ensuring the right to housing on the “passers-by”.
- The address of the person is shared in a detailed manner, although we don’t know whether the person whose pictures were taken had consented to this. Considering that overnight sleeping on the streets may be interpreted as “disrupting the public order” according to the Law of Misdemeanor and may result with penal sanctions, it jeopardizes the security of the person.

### NEWS 3.1

## **No end in sight for the Queue ordeal! They have waited for hours for 2.5 TL**

**Low-income citizens have spent hours in the queue in front of the bread canteen in Bandırma that belongs to Fırıntaş, a subsidiary of the Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality, to buy 300 grams of bread for 2.5 TL. A retired citizen reacting to what happened rebelled: “Will our destiny pass by waiting in such queues?”**

*Low-income citizens created long queues in front of the bread canteen of the Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality subsidiary Fırıntaş in the Bandırma district, to buy cheap Ramadan bread. (Sözcü newspaper, April 2022) (Sözcü Gazetesi, Nisan 2022)*

### NEWS 3.2

## **Poverty landscapes from the country: Meters of queue for free shoes**

**In Sultangazi İstanbul, free shoes were distributed to the needy. A queue of meters was formed in front of the warehouse where the donation was made. The images laid poverty bare.**

*A person in İstanbul distributed approximately 5,000 pair of shoes to the needy. Hundreds of needy people who wanted to receive free shoes formed a queue of meters in front of the warehouse where the distribution took place. According to the DHA, today around 1 pm, a shoe factory located on the Old Edirne Asphalt in the Habipler neighborhood of Sultangazi, has distributed free shoes to the needy. Numerous people, who have heard that free shoes will be distributed, gathered in front of the warehouse and formed a queue for meters. (Birgün newspaper, April 2022) (Birgün Gazetesi, Nisan 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- Strategies that people living in poverty have developed to access basic needs are generally communicated with the message “poor wait in queues for hours”. This expression not only intensifies the representation of a passive, resigned poverty; it may also stigmatize people.
- The fact that a person lives in insecurity and has no access to basic needs, despite having worked for years and receiving regular pension as a retiree, is reported as an individual suffering, ignoring the systematic aspect of the problem.
- The expression “low-income citizens” is being used for people who cannot access basic needs, and, as it is the case in the two news, instead of people who are not able to buy bread or shoes. This statement reduces poverty to economic standards; the multi-dimensional structure of poverty, its causes and results is being associated only with the income situation.

## NEWS 4.

### **Citizen dependent on electricity aid**

**In Turkey, where 5.9 million households crushed by the economic crisis strive to survive with social assistance, and 11 million citizens get by only with food allowance, almost 2 million households are dependent on electricity aid.**

*While in Turkey the government-created poverty is being reflected on official data and the number of people maintaining their lives with food allowances reached 11 million, the number of households that benefit from electric consumption aid reached 2 million. In 2021, 1,801,835 households who suffered under exorbitant electricity bills had to receive electricity consumption aid. The data provided by the Ministry of Family and Social Services once again illustrated the raising poverty. In Turkey, where millions of households try to survive with social aid, it was learned that nearly 2 million households could pay the electricity bills only with support.*

*The crunch the economy in Turkey is going through was presented with the “Struggle Against Poverty and Social Assistance” figures. The Ministry declared that households that qualify as social support receivers benefit from the electricity consumption aid, and added that within the scope of the Ministry’s assistance program, households with 1-2 people are paid 75 kWh equivalent in TL/ month, households with 3 people are paid 100 kWh equivalent in TL/ month, households with 4 people are paid 125 kWh equivalent in TL/ month, and households with 5 or more people are paid 150 kWh equivalent in TL/ month.*

### **Discount perception is not real**

*Ahmet Akin, Deputy Chairman of the CHP pointed out that the perception of reduction in energy bills, particularly electricity and fuel, does not reflect the truth. Akin from the CHP stated that the total load of energy bills in 2022 have doubled compared to 2021, and said: “The government creates a perception of discount, yet leaves the citizen to the increased bills”. In a nutshell, Akin presented the following figures:*

- *The bill load, which was 1,060 TL in 2021, increased to 2,075 TL in 2022.*
- *While civil servants received a 30% increase and minimum wage earners a 50% increase in their salaries in 2022, the load of energy bills has increased almost by 100%.*
- *The bill for 240 kWh electric consumption, which was 190 TL in March 2021, and 220 TL in December increased to 310 TL. (Birgün newspaper, March 2022) (Birgün Gazetesi, 2022)*

### **What happens in this news?**

- The emphasis on “trying to survive through social support” and the used data intensifies the prejudices that people living under poverty conditions are a burden for the state. It conveys the support, which needs to be provided by the state to enable its citizens to access their basic rights in the face of inflation, as a favor since the people are “needy”.
- Expressions such as “crushed by the economic crisis”, “filling the stomach by food aid”, “in need for electricity support” individualize poverty and the reasons that prevent people to access their basic rights, and put people in a miserable position.

## THE “OPPOSER POOR” REPRESENTATION

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### What is it?

- It is the representation of the poor who opposes discrimination and the poverty conditions s/he lives in, claims his/her right, questions public authorities and their practices, points at the responsible ones, struggles, and gets organized.
- Such news report about the difficulties people experience, their actions, demands, organizations and their calls.

### What can it induce?

- It shakes the embraced representations of “dangerous”, “imposter”, or “helpless” and breaks down prejudices against people living in poverty. The reader meets an alternative representation, which in fact does exist.
- It renders the struggle of the people against poverty and their demands visible, and popularizes them. It enhances the feeling of togetherness.
- It breaks the perception of “people who live on social aid and take advantage of poverty”.
- It weakens the idea that poverty pertains to a specific group of people, and that the way out of poverty has to be an individual struggle. It underpins the idea that rights violations caused by poverty are in fact everybody’s problem.

## **Those saying “We can’t make a living” put up a people’s desk in Antalya: “You can’t put the burden of the crisis on us!”**

*Kutay Meriç, member of the central executive committee of the People’s Houses made the opening speech, which was attended by more than 200 people. He reminded that the Eskişehir Governorship has prohibited the banner saying, “We can’t make a living. Take the price hikes back”, which the Eskişehir People’s House has sought to hang. Drawing attention to the statement recorded in the minutes by the Governorship, which reads “it may lead to the confrontation of groups with different views”, Meriç maintained that the Governorships stopped minding their own businesses and instead try to suppress people rebelling for their livelihoods.*

## **Citizens spoke about difficulties of subsistence**

*Following Meriç, pensioners, women domestic workers, high school and university students, a teacher employed in private sector, a tourism worker and a public enterprise worker talked about the difficulties they face in maintaining their subsistence. The tourism worker and the teacher employed in the private sector said that despite the raise in the minimum wage, they don’t receive this amount, and that the bosses want some part of the salary to be handed to them. Almost every citizen pointed at the price hikes. Citizens who stated that the salary raises were already being melted by price hikes, said “Enough is enough!”. ([Sendika.org, January, 2022](#)) ([Sendika.org, Ocak 2022](#))*

## **Fight together for one free meal**

*Just as the employers have to give us our food, since the workers have fought for this and won, the state also has to provide one meal of children at school. We need to act altogether to ensure this. [A woman worker // Kocaeli \(Ekmek ve Gül.net, June 2022\)](#) ([Ekmek ve Gül.net, Haziran 2022](#))*

## **Pensioners struggling with hunger and poverty will walk to Ankara with 5 demands**

*Pensioners will go on streets for increasing inflation, shrinking salaries, and the hunger line that exceeds salaries. The march, which will be started on April 15 in different parts of the country, will end with a rally on April 16, at the Anıt Park in Ankara. Hıdır Kurtulmaz, Head of the Kadıköy Branch of the All-Pensioners Trade Union said that pensioners can’t bear to live in hunger anymore: “As pensioners we are not at the hunger threshold, we reached the limit of death. Enough is enough”.*

*Following workers, tradesmen, farmers and organized sections of society, pensioners have also started to raise their voices against high living costs. All Pensioners Union and Pensioners Solidarity Union will walk to Ankara, demanding additional increases to retirement salaries to afford a humane life, the withdrawal of price hikes on consumer products, and the removal of obstacles to the organization of pensioner unions. (Gerçek Gündem.com, April 2022) (Gerçek Gündem.com, Nisan 2022)*

### **Reaction from paper collector to the new regulation: What are we going to make a living with?**

*Regarding the new circular issued by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, Uğur Çelik, who earns his livelihood by collecting paper, said: “We don’t know anything about the occupation code that the state recently determined. The enactment of the law will affect us very much. By what will we live? It’s me and my boy working, we can’t make a living.*

*(Cumhuriyet newspaper, June 2022) (Cumhuriyet Gazetesi, Haziran 2022)*

### **A disabled woman’s fight for survival: We are disabled, because they disable us!**

*We are in our right mind. We are social state, but we don’t receive a service compatible with a social state. They make us family-depended; the families do not care. They are not sensitive. The state shouldn’t leave us to families and turn its back to us. We are left to our fates. What they give us for care at home is 2,240 TL, the salary is around a 1,290 TL. The minimum wage is 4,253 TL.*

*What we get as salary is even below minimum wage.” (Evrensel newspaper, May 2022) (Evrensel Gazetesi, Mayıs 2022)*

### **Tourism workers working under severe conditions: We are seasonal workers, we have no job guarantee**

*Most of the tourism workers work as seasonal workers. Ece Mutlu, Representative of the ‘We Are on the Neck of the Bosses, Antalya Tourism Workers Solidarity Network’, stated that the major legal trouble for the workers, which results from being unemployed at the end of each season and being left without security during the winter, is the restriction on them seeking justice through legal means”. Mutlu summarized the problems of the sector workers, saying, “They cannot benefit from several rights, such as unemployment benefits, compensations or annual leaves, due to the fact that the continuity of social security which the laws demand, cannot be ensured.”*

*(Artı Gerçek.com, June 2022) (Artı Gerçek.com, Haziran 2022)*





# THEMATIC NEWS ANALYSES

## SECTION CONTENTS:

### DEFINITION

### NEWS

### WHAT CAN IT INDUCE?

While monitoring the news in the period from January to August 2022 on a daily basis, we observed that the way some issues of public interest were reported about, and how stories' emphasized aspects varied according to news source. Additionally, we observed that certain issues could be manipulated through several images and expressions. In this section we represent our thematic analyses on news that enjoyed media coverage for a long time and attracted attention, with the following content: **"Baby Nisa: Who is responsible?", "Waste Collectors Circular: Good News or Bad News?", "Inflation: They are worse than us", "Social Supports: Grace or Right?"**.

## THEMATIC NEWS ANALYSIS I

### BABY NISA

**THE STATE OF THINGS:** A young woman, who was forced into an unwanted marriage by her family faced systematic oppression and was threatened with death by her baby's father, has moved into a shelter to ensure her safety. She gave birth to her baby while staying at the shelter. When her 6-months period expired, she needed to leave the shelter. Without any income and any place to go, the woman left her baby in front of a building. The people who found the baby gave notice.

The statement of the young woman was taken, and the baby was taken under protection in an affiliated nursery of the General Directorate of Child Services. Due to acute respiratory distress, the baby was taken to the intensive care unit and died in the hospital.

Media channels reported about this incident throughout April in various ways. Personal information about the young woman was published, allegations about her were put forward, and videos and photographs of the moment she left the baby were disseminated. What kind of risks are involved in these narrations? What was the responsibility of the media while reporting about this incident?

#### News 1

#### ***She stirred up Turkey! Look who is the mother of that baby***

*It turned out that the real mother of the baby, who was wet-nursed by the emergency medical technician Büşra Durmaz, is prostituting. The mother Ebru S. was arrested and taken into custody.*

*The 29 years old emergency medical technician Büşra Durmaz won the hearts when she recently wet-nursed a 3-month-old baby that was abandoned on empty land, where she arrived upon notice..*

#### ***Security cameras examined***

*Police teams started to work to find the mother who left the baby. Within the scope of the mission, security footage of 60 cameras was examined by the teams of the Istanbul Police Headquarters Juvenile Branch Directorate. It was reported that Ebru S. got on the subway at the Maltepe Huzurevi Metro station and got off at the Pendik station. The police have determined that the suspect mother Ebru S. then took a taxi and left the baby in the Kavakpınar neighborhood.*



#### ***Left the baby and prostituted***

*It was learned that the security footage also shows suspect mother Ebru S. getting into a car on the Tandoğan Street after leaving her baby. Based on the license plate, the police determined that the car was located in Gebze and contacted the driver, M.D. It was claimed that M.D. said in his statement that he had sexual intercourse with Ebru S., whom he knew before, in the Pendik coast and then left her at her house.*

#### ***Taken into custody***

*The police teams arrested suspect Ebru S. yesterday around 3 pm in front of her house. It was learned that Ebru S. was taken into custody with an order of the prosecution for "attempted murder" and "abandonment". The proceedings of suspect Ebru S. with the police continue. (Yeni Akit newspaper, April 2022) (Yeni Akit Gazetesi, Nisan 2022)*

## NEWS 2

### **Statement of mother who abandoned baby Nisa Mihriban on the street came out: Hair-raising words**

It was learned that Ebru S., (20) who was arrested on the grounds of having left her 3-month-old baby on the street, said in her statement at the police station: "I've left the baby for someone to adopt her. I wish I had turned to the state; I am very regretful. Because I was in extreme trouble I left the baby in a public spot, where everybody could see her. I had no intention to kill; I absolutely acted out of difficulty."

Mother Ebru S. who abandoned her 3-month-old baby on March 29 in Istanbul Pendik, was arrested upon a prosecution order. Suspect Ebru S. said in her statement at the police station that she got married through an imam-marriage in 2019, had a child from this marriage, and that her child started to stay with her husband after their separation. Claiming that she turned to her family after separating from her husband, Ebru S. told that her family forced her into an unwanted marriage, upon which she moved in a separate house.

#### **MY TIME AT THE WOMEN'S SHELTER WAS UP**

She reportedly said that she had sexual intercourse with a person called M.C. whom she has never seen again, then moved into a shelter and found out there that she was pregnant. Ebru S. continued her statement: "On January 5th, I gave birth to a baby girl. After giving birth I returned to the women's shelter. Women's shelters have time limitations; you can stay 6 months in each shelter. My time was up."



#### **SHE EXPLAINED WHY SHE LEFT**

Ebru S. told that upon the advice of a woman from the shelter she planned to go to another woman, but figured that the later would not accept her with the baby, which is why she left her baby at an address she did not know, around 12 AM on March 29th. The suspect Ebru S. declared that she met with her friend M.D. after she left her baby, and had consensual sexual intercourse with this person.

#### **I SENT A MESSAGE TO THE BABY'S FATHER**

Suspect Ebru S. claimed that she sent a message to the father of the baby, telling, "I am pregnant", but that the father M.Ç. did not reply.

#### **I WISH I'D TURNED TO THE STATE**

It was recorded that Ebru S. said the following in her statement: "My family does not know that I got pregnant. I left the baby for somebody to adopt. I wish I had turned to the state, I very much regret it. I was in trouble; hence I left the baby at a public spot where everybody could see it. I had no intention to kill. I left it just because of sheer difficulty."

After the completion of the procedures at the police station, Ebru S. (20) was transferred to the Anatolian Palace of Justice in Kartal. The suspect left the questions of the press unanswered when she came out of the police station. (Yeni Şafak newspaper, April 2022) (Yeni Şafak Gazetesi, 2022)

### NEWS 3

#### **Compassion of emergency medical technician who wet-nursed abandoned baby thrilled again**

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Minister of Health Fahrettin Koca shared on his social media account that Büşra Kayalı Durmaz, the emergency medical technician stationed in Pendik, who went to the abandoned baby case wet-nursed the 14-months (sic) old baby. (Anadolu Agency, April 2022) (Anadolu Ajansı, Nisan 2022)



### NEWS 4

#### **Turkey weeps for baby Nisa: Every second of the abandoning moment caught on camera**

Turkey weeps for baby Nisa Mihriban, who was abandoned by her mother. Security camera footage of baby Nisa Mihriban being abandoned by the mother Ebru S. in Pendik appeared. It was notable that Ebru S. was ambling as if nothing had happened. Here are those heartbreaking moments:

As part of the efforts initiated by the police teams to find the mother who left baby Nisa Mihriban, the teams of the Istanbul Police Department Child Branch inspected footage of 60 security cameras.

#### **TOOK THE SUBWAY AT MALTEPE, GOT OFF AT THE PENDİK STATION**

It was communicated that Ebru S. got on the subway at the Maltepe Huzurevi Metro Station and got off at Pendik. The police found out that the suspected mother, Ebru S., took a taxi to the Kavakpınar neighborhood and left the baby here.

#### **THE MOMENTS OF ABANDONMENT OF BABY NISA ARE ON CAMERA**

The security camera recorded the moments when Ebru S. left her baby. In the footage Ebru S. is seen at the



Pendik subway station carrying a suitcase in one hand and a bag on the other hand, with her baby in it. Ebru S., whose cold-blooded look is noticeable, disappeared after a while.

#### **LEFT THE BABY AND RETURNED WITHOUT A BACKWARD GLANCE**

In another footage, the moments when Ebru S. left the baby and returned were captured. It was remarkable that with only the suitcase in her hand, Ebru S. walked away as if nothing had happened. After that Ebru S. gets into a car and drives away. (SuperHaber.tv, April 2022) (Süper Haber.tv, Nisan 2022)

## NEWS 5

### ***Negligence Allegations regarding Nisa! That moment is on camera! She left like this!***

*It was reported that the brain death of 3-month-old 'Nisa Mihriban' who was abandoned by her mother Ebru S. (20) in Istanbul on a vacant lot in Pendik, and then brought to life by emergency medical technician Büşra Durmaz, has occurred. After the baby died, an investigation was started and a statement taken in order to determine whether her dry-nurse D.Y. was delinquent as there were allegations that a vomit-like substance got into the throat of the baby. In addition, the Ministry of Family and Social Services also started an administrative investigation into the death of baby Nisa. The mother Ebru S., who was arrested for 'attempted murder' and 'abandonment', was caught on camera while abandoning her baby. (Habertürk.com, April 2022) (Habertürk.com, Nisan 2022)*



## What happens in these narrations?

**When the background of the incident and the statements of the woman are analyzed, what is seen is a young woman struggling in a circuit of violence and poverty, without any support.**

The woman being threatened goes to the police. Afterwards, she is placed in a woman's shelter, where the baby is born. We do not know whether the woman has been informed about terminating pregnancy, or the child protection system. The responsibility of protecting a baby that was born as a result of an unwanted pregnancy, in a shelter opened by the state should also be with the state. However, after the 6-months period expires, the woman and baby are expelled from the shelter without being shown any alternative despite the ongoing threat to their safety.

Research and figures reveal that violence and poverty are interrelated and that women can't access mechanisms that would protect them. One in four homeless women end up homeless because of domestic violence.<sup>11</sup> In one in six households where multidimensional poverty is experienced, the woman is a single parent.<sup>12</sup> The figures provided by DPN show that the ratio of families with a female single parent is one in five. We know from our experiences that poverty does not only limit people's access to basic needs, but also to information and protective mechanisms. When a woman is exposed to violence, she cannot reach justice and has to make a decision without properly finding out about her rights and options. Shelters may fall short of planning personal social service. Women are not able to obtain the legal and psychosocial support they need. Some shelters refuse to accept women with sons who are elder than 12 years.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Family and Youth Services Bureau, "Domestic Violence and Homelessness: Statistics (2016)," June 24, 2016, available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/resource/dv-homelessness-stats-2016>

<sup>12</sup> [https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/UNDP\\_OPHI\\_GMPI\\_2021\\_Report\\_Unmasking.pdf](https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/UNDP_OPHI_GMPI_2021_Report_Unmasking.pdf)

## Singularization of a systemic problem:

- The news emphasizes the statement of the young women, “I wish I had turned to the state, I do regret”, and in some reports this is even used as the headline. This distortion removes from the storyline the very fact that the woman already turned to the state but could not find protection. As a result, it creates a perception among the readers that the woman is the only one responsible for the negligence, and that the child would be safe if she had gone to public institutions.
- After choking on something at the Child Care Center, which causes an acute respiratory failure, the baby was put into intensive care and died there. Any information about an eventual negligence here is missing in the press. The headline “Alleged negligence of Nisa! That moment is on camera! She left like this!” matches the negligence at the Child Care Center with the images that capture the mother while leaving the baby, and thus creates a distorted perception about the responsible person.
- News that report about this incidence either don’t mention the responsibility of the state, or ignore it. However, the Turkish Republic is obliged to protect children from the lifetime consequences, the physical as well as emotional damage of poverty, not only according to its constitution and child protection law, but also due to international conventions to which it is a party. According to the United Nations Convention on Children’s Rights, every child has the right to development and its health must be ensured.<sup>13</sup> In this regard, to maintain a better life children must be assisted when necessary. According to the European Social Charter, everyone has the right to be protected against poverty and social exclusion. States that are party to the Convention stipulate to carry out a coordinated and all-out approach in the fight against poverty.<sup>14</sup>

## Sensationalism:

- An incidence that involves systematic negligence, a woman whom the state eventually failed to protect from a chain of violence, and a baby that lost its life, is being tabloidized through media.
- Trying to cause a sensation with headlines such as “She stirred up Turkey! Look who is the mother of that baby”, “Statement of mother who abandoned baby Nisa Mihriban on the street came out: Hair-raising words”, hinders the readers to have a wholistic comprehension of the incident, and turns the case into a gossip topic, with condemnation being in the center.

## Targeting:

- The reports highlight two different “mother” profiles: “the merciful wet-nurse” and “the heartless murderous mother”. The photo of the female paramedic who reached the baby upon a notice and breastfed her, as well as the video she recorded with the baby appear in almost every news story. While illustrating how mothering should be like, she represents a heart-warming example for being merciful. Health Minister Fahrettin Koca tweets about this issue. After that the press calls the baby after the name given to her by the female paramedic.
- The expression, “After the baby, who was wet-nursed by the emergency medical technician Büşra Durmaz was taken into intensive care, it was learned that her mother was prostituting”, is an explicit example for the two different “mother” profiles being drawn. The headline

<sup>13</sup>. United Nations Convention on Children’s Rights, Articles 26–27

<sup>14</sup>. European Social Charter, Article 30

makes a comparison, by bringing independent events together. An allegation concerning the private life of the woman is picked out to target her.

- Expressions such as, “She left the baby and returned without looking back” or “It was notable that Ebru S. was ambling as if nothing had happened” strengthen the perception of “remorseless, murderer mother”.
- The news is accompanied by a photograph showing the moment of the arrest of the young woman, titled “The murderous mother has been arrested”, juxtaposed to a photo of the emergency medical technician who “saved” the baby. The caption “Negligence allegations in Nisa’s brain death! The Ministry has launched an investigation” is written on the photograph showing the moment of arrest, which also serves to associate the responsibility of the negligence in the Child Care Home with the mother.

## Disclosure:

- Videos from camera footage are being close-shot and spread. Images that are shared with headlines such as, “Turkey weeps for baby Nisa: Every second of the abandoning moment caught on camera”, “Negligence Allegations regarding Nisa! That moment is on camera! She left like this!” denounce the woman.
- In the news stories, the young woman’s name, initial of her last, information about her private life and the city she lives in are being shared. Photos are blurred, yet her face can still be recognized. The media violates in various ways the privacy of a woman who is being threatened by her relatives, lives under pressure, and needs protection.
- Neither in the news nor in the statements of public institutions the other parent who is responsible for taking care about the baby, i.e., the father and his duties are mentioned, while the mother is presented as irresponsible. However, with the United Nations Convention on Children’s Rights<sup>15</sup> of which it is a party to, Turkey does stipulate that it will make every effort for the principle that both parents are responsible for ensuring the growth and development of the child, to be recognized.
- Sharing the images and videos of the baby and her mother is a violation of the right to be forgotten for both of them.

15. United Nations Convention on Children’s Rights, Article 18

## ALTERNATIVE NEWS EXAMPLE

### **Purple Roof: If the Istanbul Convention had been implemented, E.S. wouldn't go through this desperation, the baby would be alive**

In its statement about E.S., who had to abandon her baby, the Purple Roof Women Shelter Foundation maintained: "Integrative, protective and preventive policies are not implemented, women are left helpless".

The Purple Roof Women Shelter Foundation made a statement about the 20-year-old E.S. who gave birth to her baby while she stayed in a shelter, and had to leave her baby on the streets out of desperation. The statement asserted that the story of E.S. is a singular example of the discrimination and the lack of choices women experience, and that the young woman is being tried to be punished by accusatory approaches. It was said: "Today, we once again invoke the importance of holistic, protective and preventive policies for women's lives, as included in the Istanbul Convention."

#### **THE STATEMENT MADE BY THE MOR ROOF WOMEN'S SHELTER FOUNDATION READS AS FOLLOWS**

"The story of E.S., which we came across in the news, is a singular example of the discrimination and the lack of choices women must endure. We see in E.S.'s story that a woman who came to the shelter due to the threat of violence was not informed about pregnancy termination methods and the option of adoption. E.S. was told that she had to leave the shelter after 6 months- this illustrates once again that a time limit is applied in shelters, without considering that every woman is unique, and that qualified social work does not exist. If proper social work had been done, the woman would not have been taken out of the shelter in midst of this helplessness; considering the best interests of the child she would have been taken care of by the state.

In the patriarchal society we live in a young woman is tried to be punished with accusatory approaches, while she is being left helpless and without alternatives in face of male violence, due to the lack of the state's lack of system. Also today, we once again invoke the importance of holistic, protective and preventive policies for women's lives, as included in the Istanbul Convention.



#### **'NUMBER OF SHELTERS IN TURKEY IS INSUFFICIENT'**

The number of shelters in Turkey is insufficient; there is no holistic, empowering social work that considers unique needs of women in shelters; the social, economic and psychological support they need is not provided. Several rules in shelters, such as the 6-months limit, or refusing to accept boys older than 12 years with their mothers, prevent women from breaking free of violence. Women are not informed about contraceptive methods and their rights for abortion; their access to these rights is hindered. Not being able to access sexual health rights and contraceptive methods endanger the health and lives of these women. In case of unwanted pregnancies, this danger is augmented by the fact that women cannot access abortion rights. Child marriages are not only child abuses, they also render women more prone to abuse and violence in the future.

#### **'THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE IS BEING IGNORED'**

While women seek their own solutions and try to overcome difficulties within this lack of support, gender roles that are based on gender inequality are being accepted and reproduced through accusatory approaches; the relation between the woman and motherhood is being essentialized; the state's responsibility to support women to live as free and equal individuals in society is being ignored.

Responsible for what has happened are the ones who withdrew overnight from the Istanbul Convention, which proposes protective and preventive policies so that these things don't happen in the first place; those who instigate misogyny, attack our vested rights, and encourage male violence through impunity and by not applying existing laws. (Ekmek ve Gül.net, April 2022) (Ekmek ve Gül.net, Nisan 2022) Photo credit: Eylem Nazlier



## Why can it be considered a good example?

- It disseminates the statement of the Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation, which has been combatting violence against women, that points to the non-singularity of the incident, to other women in similar circumstances, and to the violations caused by the system.
- Alternative to the way the incident was reported on mainstream media, it offers a rights-based content.
- It enables the readers being informed about the systemic aspects of the incident, which forms the subject of the news.
- It doesn't target an individual. It elaborates on the multidimensional background of the incident.
- It avoids discourses and images that could feed prejudices, label or accuse individuals, and cause discrimination. It narrates the statement in an objective way.
- It mentions the photo credits for the image used in the news.

## THEMATIC NEWS ANALYSIS 2

### WASTE COLLECTOR CIRCULAR: GOOD NEWS OR BAD NEWS?

#### THE STATE OF THINGS:

On June 23, 2022, the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change issued a circular concerning "Waste Collectors" aimed at regulating the working conditions of waste collectors and formally registering their work.

#### ACCORDING TO THE CIRCULAR;

- Individuals who want to engage in collecting waste will apply to the municipality in their location, and those whose applications are deemed suitable by the police and gendarmerie commandries, and whose applications the municipality approves will be given an "Independent Zero Waste Collector Card".
- It will be possible to take administrative action against people who collect waste without possessing a Waste Collector Card, and municipality police and police departments will be able to intervene when "necessary".
- People will not be allowed to collect waste outside of the district they are registered.
- Waste collectors will work using hand gloves, working clothes and waste collecting vehicles that are compatible with the standards set by the municipality, during specified hours, and without doing any harm to the existing zero waste system. The licenses of those who operate outside the principles set by the municipality will be revoked.
- Collected waste will be delivered to designated waste facilities. The waste will be weighed there, and payments will be made in line with market conditions.

## BACKGROUND:

**July 2016** - In January, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization imposed a fine of 140,000 TL on 27 companies in Ankara. Firms stopped buying paper from waste collectors. As a result, waste collectors faced the risk of unemployment.

**July 2019** - The Zero Waste Circular was published. The aim of this regulation was described as the following: "Setting the general principles and essence regarding the establishment, dissemination, development, monitoring, financing, recording and certification of the zero-waste management system, which aims to protect the environment and human health and all resources in waste management processes along the principles of effective management of raw materials and natural resources and sustainable development."

**September 2021 - April 2022**- Operations were carried out against waste collection storehouses. Police and municipality teams intervened in paper collection depots; paper collectors were taken into custody.

**September - October 2021**- Paper collectors initiated a petition titled "Hands off my barrow", organized demonstrations against the raids.

**23 June 2022** - "Waste Collectors" circular was issued

*The issued circular received various reactions from the public. The circular also appeared with different tones and discourses in the media. We will analyze 3 different media reports that cover the circular.*

## NEWS 1

### ***They won't be afraid of us anymore***

*The endeavor of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change which will endow them with a legal status, made waste collectors happy.*

*The endeavor of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change which will endow them with a legal status, made waste collectors happy. According to the draft announced by Minister Murat Kurum, waste collectors will obtain uniforms and IDs. Yeni Şafak interviewed waste collectors about the draft regulation in question. Recep Karaman replied: "With this decision, we will be under guarantee. We'll also be given IDs and uniforms. Most of the time, people would be scared of us; they wouldn't come near to us. Now people won't refrain from us, they can approach us comfortably."*

### ***WE'D BE MORE COMFORTABLE***

*Uğur Bakır also stated that people no longer need to be afraid of them, as they will get a uniform and said, "We will be able to enter streets comfortably. Normally,*



*when there was theft in a street, people thought we did it because of our appearance, and therefore we couldn't enter streets. They can't do that anymore". Paper collector Cemil Malakçioğlu said that through this endeavor they would have the right to speak in society, and told: "When we went out to the street, people used to look at us badly and turned away from us. No such thing will happen anymore". Paper collector Yusuf Adıbelli, touched on the importance of clothing and said, "We will be more comfortable when we walk around the neighborhoods. Little children will no longer be scared when they see us." (Yeni Şafak newspaper, April 2022) (Yeni Şafak Gazetesi, Nisan 2022)*

## NEWS 2

*Two News with different headlines, same content*

**Occupational status for waste collectors** (Hürriyet Newspaper)

**Occupational status for waste laborer, the zero waste heroes** (Sabah Newspaper)

*The Ministry Circular No. 2022/6 on citizens who are publicly known as “paper collectors” and collect waste without being affiliated with any business was issued by Murat Kurum, Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change. The Circular on “Waste Collectors” authorizes freelance waste collectors by registering them in a “zero waste information system” and regulates their working system.*

*The Ministry Circular on “Waste Collectors”, which introduces a number of measures and decisions regarding the citizens who collect waste without being affiliated with any business, and regulates the collection of recyclable wastes such as plastic, paper and metal, was issued. The Circular No. 2022/6 issued by Murat Kurum, the Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, requests that the local authorities provide the necessary coordination for the implementation, and that the municipalities carry out the field practices as well as the arrangements and measures in the field in accordance with the legislation.*



### WHO CAN APPLY AND HOW?

Individuals who are engaged in waste collecting activities need to make their applications to the municipalities of their place of activity, with their ID numbers and contact information. Municipalities will only evaluate applications of individuals aged 18 and above for the sake of compliance with the law.

Municipalities will pass the information of the independent zero waste collector applicants to the provincial/district police directorates and gendarmerie commanders. Police directorates and gendarmerie commanders, in turn, will notify relevant municipalities about the eligible ones.

A waste collector, whose application process has been completed by the municipalities, will be registered in the Zero Waste Information System and will be able to have an “Independent Zero Waste Collector Card”.

...(More information about the Circular...)

*(Hürriyet newspaper, June 2022) (Sabah newspaper, June 2022)*

*(Hürriyet Gazetesi, Haziran 2022) (Sabah Gazetesi, Haziran 2022)*

## What happens in this news?

### Distortion:

- A discourse of “legal status” or “occupational status” brought by the circular for the paper collector is created. Even though these discourses may lead to the perception that the regulation is about enabling solid waste collectors to work within a legal frame with their working rights secured, the circular does not provide a physical or social security. Neither does it offer any legal working order. Insecure and irregular working conditions are maintained. The circular does only regulate the registration of the solid waste collectors and their working within a working permit.
- The report indicates the circular was pleasing for the paper collectors. However, as DPN we know from our interviews with collectors and from the statements made by the Istanbul Support for Recycling Association, or by unions such as UMUT-SEN, and from the rallies and press releases of paper collectors themselves, that the circular poses a threat for many collectors to lose their job, and doesn't meet the needs of the paper collectors. While this dimension of the circular is omitted in the news, only positive reactions are reflected in the narratives.

### Romanticizing:

The “Zero waste heroes” discourse and expressions such as “they won't be afraid of us anymore”, romanticize the insecure and unhealthy working conditions and the uniform regulation. The existing and sustained insecure working conditions do not offer legal protection for the paper collectors. The fact that they cannot benefit from any social security, and the responsibility of the government that is obliged to protect their working rights, becomes invisible in this narration which targets emotions.

### The fearsome poor representation:

The news story titled, “They won't be afraid from us anymore” focuses on how solid waste collectors are perceived as “fearsome” in their own clothes. It is narrated with the own words of the persons that they are being frightened of, and perceived as annoying, and that they are happy that this has changed with the uniform regulation. This narrative reinforces the judgement that poverty is something annoying and need to be hidden; it supports the representation of the fearsome/annoying poor.

## A GOOD EXAMPLE:

### Regulation for waste collectors: Work permit and uniform

Uniformed, legal status will be given to people who try to make a living by collecting waste such as paper, plastic and iron from garbage.

Erdoğan Süzer from Sözcü reported that according to the draft regulation that is still being prepared, those who want to collect waste from garbage would apply to the provincial directorates of environment and to the municipalities in their provinces.

Municipalities will provide a uniform and an identity card showing the work permit to those applicants whose conditions are considered to be appropriate.

#### Not allowed as second job

With the draft regulation, children under the age of 18 will not be permitted to work in waste collecting. Furthermore, tradesmen, workers, and civil servants who already have a job will not be able to collect waste from garbage as a second job.

Those who collect waste from garbage, without having a uniform and an ID on their collar will be reported to the police and municipal police.

#### They won't charge Municipalities

Legally, there is no sector called paper collecting. The waste that the workers collect is indeed registered by firms, but the collectors don't enjoy a legal status, hence no security.

According to the news by Mithat Yurdakul from Milliyet on the same draft, waste collectors will be working under the district municipalities, but will not receive any money from them and try to earn their livelihood by the waste they collect.

Within the scope of the endeavor of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, which will be finalized soon, it is planned that district municipalities set a quota for waste collectors. Their incorporation into the social security system is also on the agenda, but there is no definite position on that yet.

#### Waste depots were raided

The Zero Waste Project, which was announced by Emine Erdoğan, and The Türkiye Environment Agency, which was founded last year, had increased the pressure on paper collectors.

Following the Istanbul Governorship's decision on 23 August 2021 to ban paper collecting, waste depots had been raided.

### The regulation vs. the workers' needs

According to the November 2021 dated "Right to Live" report about recycling workers, which was prepared by CHP (Republican Peoples' Party) Ankara deputy Tekin Bingöl in the wake of the incidents, the primary needs of the workers were as following:

- Waste collection needs to be recognized as a new profession and workers that operate in this sector should be registered. With an individual contribution method, they and their families need to be integrated into the social security system.
- Intermediaries, storekeepers and illegal storage facilities that sell the waste they buy cheaply from collection workers to licensed facilities at high prices need to be eliminated through inspections, and the chain of labor exploitation must be broken by building recycling facilities where municipalities can make direct purchase.
- Every year, a certain portion of incremental revenues should be given to the workers, and legal regulations should be made to improve the working conditions of waste collection workers.
- In order to improve the working health conditions of the workers, new equipment that are peculiar for the occupation should be prepared so that workers can protect themselves during collecting waste. Clothing such as aprons, gauntlets, protective masks against dust and infectious diseases, sun hats, and protective visors must be designed in accordance with the working conditions and be obtainable free of charge.
- Barrows called çek-çek with which the waste is collected need to be designed in accordance with hygiene conditions and urban aesthetics. The demands of the workers for battery powered and light vehicles should be met.
- Every year, Provincial Health Directorates should provide medical screening for the workers; vaccinations of workers that are significant for the occupation, such as hepatitis, tuberculosis and tetanus, etc. must be completed.
- The Ministry of National Education should develop a special program to prevent child labor; scholarship support should be provided for children who had to start education with disadvantages; the education of children should be guaranteed by incentives developed for social security contributions to discourage families from making their children work, through inspections, and awareness raising activities. ([Bianet.org](http://Bianet.org), April 2022) ([Bianet.org](http://Bianet.org), Nisan 2022)

## Why is it a Good Example?

- The regulations brought by the circular are discussed in respect to the aspects that could affect paper collectors, together with their shortcomings.
- Reference is made to the background of the circular; interventions against waste collectors that occurred prior to the circular are mentioned.
- The needs of waste collectors, which were determined upon interviews with them, are listed.

## THEMATIC NEWS ANALYSIS 3

### INFLATION: THEIR SITUATION IS WORSE THAN OURS

#### THE STATE OF THINGS:

As of August 2022, the 8-month CPI (Consumer Price Index) was calculated as 47.85% by TÜİK, and 91.62% by ENAG.<sup>16</sup> According to the data provided by TÜRK-İŞ<sup>17</sup> as of August 2022 the hunger line for a family of four was 6,890 TL and the poverty line was 22,442 TL. The monthly living costs of a single person were 9,000 TL. The minimum wage, which will be effective as of July 1, 2022, has been determined as 6,471 TL gross and 5,500.35 TL net.

In Europe, the EUROSTAT data<sup>18</sup> foresaw that in the Euro zone, the annual inflation rate would be determined as 9.1% in August.

#### NEWS 1

##### **Retired English woman complains about cost of living: I can cook once a week**

*Sarah, a pensioner from England, Wales, who is having financial difficulties said: "You wake up in the morning and the first things that come to your mind are those that you can't do at home. Whereas, if you have lots of money you can turn on the heater, get warm and do whatever you like to do. I can cook only once a week, just as it was in the 50's, and most of the people are in the same situation. (Yeni Şafak newspaper, May 2022) (Yeni Şafak Gazetesi, Mayıs 2022)*



#### NEWS 2

##### **'Inflation crisis' in Europe doesn't settle: record after record! First Germany, Spain, France, and now England**

*The inflation crisis in Europe, which started with the Russia-Ukraine war and has been maintained by the energy (petrol/natural gas) duel, further exacerbated with the disruptions in food supply chains. It was striking that especially in Germany, the locomotive country of European Union economy, the producer price inflation reached the highest rates of the last 49 years. Inflation rates in England increased to 9.1% in May, the highest level of the last 40 years. At the same time, inflation figures in France, Italy and Spain, countries that are among the biggest economies of Europe also cause concerns.*

*(Sabah newspaper, June 2022) (Sabah Gazetesi, Haziran 2022)*



16. <https://twitter.com/senolbabuscu/status/1566691946663477249>

17. <https://www.turkis.org.tr/agustos-aclik-yoksulluk-siniri/>

18. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Inflation\\_in\\_the\\_euro\\_area](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Inflation_in_the_euro_area)

## NEWS 3

### **Children in England will starve at school**

**According to a research report published in England, the increase in energy and food prices has worsened the living costs in the country even more.**

According to the report prepared by the Food Foundation, family funds have shrunk due to the increased heating costs during winter months, and at least one out of five households is confronted with the dilemma “heat or eat”. It is expected that in comparison to April, gas and electricity bills will increase by 700 £ (approximately 950 \$) per year, and push approximately five million households into fuel poverty, despite support interventions made by the government. In January, market bills increased by 3.8% and potentially, for an average household the annual food expenditure increased by an extra 180 Sterling (more than 240 dollar). These figures illustrate that the increase in food insecurity continues nationwide. In July 2021, 7.3% of the households in England declared that they skip meals, stay hungry, or eat nothing all day. This rate has increased to 8.8% (4.7



million adults) in January. 3.6% of adults (1 million) said that in the last month either they or a person from their household had to stay hungry for a complete day, because the money was not enough for buying food. People with severe disabilities were about five times more likely to be unable to access food (within the last six months) than people without a disability. In addition, the number of households with children, which experienced food insecurity, was 11.0% in July. Last month a significant increase occurred by more than 12.1%. In comparison to August 2020, parents are more concerned about their children having lunch at school. 4.9% of parents who have children aged between 8-16 years and are not registered for free school lunch worry that their children will have to go to school without lunch. (Türkiye Newspaper, February 2022) (Türkiye Gazetesi, Şubat 2022)

## NEWS 4

### **Every sixth German has to spare a meal**

The war atmosphere that followed the coronavirus pandemic has led to the interruption of the world order. Countries that are confronted with inflation crises due to the problems encountered in the global economy embarked on seeking solutions, but results are still to be seen. One of these countries is Germany. While inflation has reached its highest level in the country since 1970, the price hikes in every field made the headlines of Bild, a widely read newspaper.

#### **THEY STRUGGLE TO MAKE ENDS MEET**

According to the Bild newspaper that reported about a comprehensive study in the country, it was stated that Germans are having troubles in making ends



meet. In the details of the news, it is stated that every sixth German has started to skip meals in order to get by. The news article recited that even though people pass on meat and fish, or buy from discount supermarkets, more and more Germans save on food in order to get by.

(Sabah newspaper, June 2022) (Sabah Gazetesi, Haziran 2022)

## NEWS 5

### ***Leftists fancying Germans should take a good look at this***

*The left-handed mob that has been trying to smear Turkey over the economy by holding up Germany as an example was once again disgraced. A Turkish citizen living in Germany said, “It became difficult to make a living not only here but all over the world.”*

*The left-handed mob, which ignores the worldwide inflation crisis and pretends that only Turkey has economic problems, fell into disgrace before everyone. An interview made with Turks living in Germany has come to the fore in social media. “It has become hard to get along, not just here, but all over the world,” said a woman citizen living in Germany.*



*Stating that the perception about, “Turks living like kings in Germany” is just a lie, she maintained that it is difficult to make a living in Germany, too, and said: “For example, I am retired. My pension is 995 Euros. People in Turkey get amazed when you say this. But my rent became 806 Euros.”*

*(Yeni Akit newspaper, July 2022) (Yeni Akit Gazetesi, Temmuz 2022)*

## What happens in this news?

- In our media observations in 2022, we saw the content of news articles focusing on “inflation” and “not getting by” varies according to the news source. While mainstream media channels mention the rising inflation rates and the struggle of people living under poverty conditions in Europe, our search in mainstream media revealed that there was no news about the poverty agenda and peoples’ struggle for life in Turkey.
- News about the inflation rates in England, Germany, France and Spain are supported by study findings and testimonies from people who live in poverty and talk about their difficult circumstances. However, when we look at the period between January and August 2022, we see that no single news story was published on this scale in the mainstream media about inflation in Turkey.
- It can be said that the mainstream media in Turkey turns a blind eye to poverty in Turkey, and that there is an effort to shape the perception that “Europe is far worse than us”.



## NEWS 1

### **In Austria inflation rate hits highest levels in 41 years**

The Austrian Statistics Institute (Statistik Austria) announced the annual inflation figures of the country in March. Accordingly, the annual CPI rates which were revised as 5.8% in February, increased to 6.8% in March and hit the highest level since November 1981. (Akşam newspaper, April 2022) (Akşam Gazetesi, Nisan 2022)



## NEWS 2

### **Inflation figures for August were announced**

The Statistics Institute of Turkey (TÜİK) announced the 2022 August inflation figures. Accordingly, the inflation rate in August was realized as 1.46% and compared to the same month of the previous year as 80.21%.

The Consumer Price Index in August 2022 was realized as 1.46% compared to the previous month, as 47.85% compared to December of the previous year, and as 80.21% compared to the same month of the previous year. The Statistics Institute of Turkey (TÜİK), declared the inflation figures for August 2022. Accordingly, the change in the CPI in August 2022 equaled 1.46% compared to the previous month, 47.85%, compared to December of the previous year, and 80.21% compared to the same month of the previous year. Based on the averages of the last 12 months, the change in the CPI was 54.69%. (Aksam newspaper, September 2022) (Akşam Gazetesi, Eylül 2022)



## What happens in this news?

### Strategy of distortion

- While referring to the inflation rates in Austria, the Akşam newspaper uses the expression “increased”. In the news about Turkey, it uses the expression “was realized”. This difference illustrates that the newspaper on the one hand emphasizes the rise in inflation and that this is the worse period in the last 40 years, and prefers a rather unclear statistical narrative and abstains from an emphasis on increase on the other. When both news stories are analyzed, it is not understood as a story about the CPI being announced for August in Turkey.
- The images used in the news are striking. In the news that reports about 6.8% inflation rate in Austria, an image is used which depicts an almost empty shopping cart and a woman examining the receipt. This image strengthens the message that inflation has restricted people’s access to basic needs.
- While in the news report on the CPI in Turkey increasing by 80.21% compared to the average of the same month last year, the image displays a full shopping cart wandering in a market with full shelves. This creates an image that people face no problems in accessing their basic needs.
- The contrast in the news language and in the choices for visuals between these creates a perception among readers that inflation in Austria is worse than in Turkey, which normalizes the conditions in Turkey.

## NEWS 1

### **In France pensioners took to the streets: We're crushed by inflation, can't live on**

**Pensioners in France took to the streets, saying that they're crushed by the inflation in the country and demanding wage increase.**

Pensioners took to the streets in Paris, the capital city of France. Arguing that they are crushed by inflation, the pensioners demanded wage raise. Thousands attended the protest which was supported by the General Work Union (CGT) and some NGOs. Pensioners, whose purchasing power has decreased due to forced cutbacks implemented by the government of French President Emmanuel Macron, as well as increased inflation, complained about living costs and demanded urgent wage increase. .



### **MACRON PROMISED THAT THE "LOWEST WAGE WILL BE 1,100 EURO"**

With the banners in their hands, the crowded group reminded Macron of the lowest retirement pension of 1,100 Euros, which was an electoral promise of him. Stating that they were not able to make their voices heard by the government and President Macron in previous protests, pensioners demanded a regulation of the wages as well as an increase in social benefits. (Türkiye newspaper, March 2022) (Türkiye Gazetesi, Mart 2022)

## NEWS 2

### **The government prepares for good news for pensioners**

**Preparations were started for taking necessary steps to solve problems of low-income citizens, especially pensioners, related to inflation and high living costs. Within this scope, the government will push every limit to increase the purchasing power of the citizens through new social projects and the wage increases planned for July.**

After President Erdoğan declared that new steps will be taken for increasing the welfare level of citizens, all eyes are now on the economy administration. According to the received information, the economy administration has started with the preparations to push all limits for low-income citizens, particularly pensioners. AKP MPs also met with respective ministers and stated that the most mentioned demand they face is about the "pensioners and minimum wage



earners", and that the government definitely has to take a step in these matters. The deputies were told that there are certain preparations in this regard and that in July a wage raise is planned that will "please the pensioners very much". It was stated that an interim raise in the minimum wage at the rate of the 'inflation gap' is also on the table. According to the information obtained, the economy management pushed the limits and initiated preparations to take steps for low-income citizens, particularly the retired.

(Türkiye newspaper, June 2022)  
(Türkiye Gazetesi, Haziran 2022)

## What happens in this news?

- In the news about financial hardship and wage increase demands of pensioners in France, the poor are depicted as protesting with banners, and seeking rights. The article highlights the poor living conditions of pensioners in France. A photo taken at the protests is used.
- In the article about the pensioners in Turkey, however, a visual is used on which a pair of hands is depicted, “one giving and the other receiving money”. The impression that the conditions of pensioners in Turkey have been improved is created, and that cash support exists. Neither of the two images’ sources are cited.
- In the article about Turkey, a statement is being presented as “good news”, despite lacking explanations about the details and an underlying decision. The expressions, “According to the received information, the economy administration has started with the preparations to push all limits for the low-income citizens, particularly the pensioners” as well as “The government prepares for good news for the retired”, passivate pensioners who struggle for their rights and demands. Further, the article does not contain the demands or the struggle of pensioners.
- Stating that “a wage raise is planned that will please the pensioners very much”, the perception of victimized and powerless poor, waiting for the improvement of their conditions with the grace of the state, is reinforced.
- In our search in the Türkiye newspaper for the period January–August 2022, we didn’t find any news about the “We can’t live by” protests of the pensioners. Yet, the protests of pensioners in France seem to qualify as news for this newspaper.
- The message given through the selection of images for the two news published in the same newspaper and the respective poor profile that is drawn are completely different. This shapes the readers’ perception of poverty.

## THEMATIC NEWS ANALYSIS 4

### SOCIAL SUPPORTS: GRACE, OR RIGHT?

#### THE STATE OF THINGS:

- According to TÜİK figures, the ratio of the government’s social protection expenditures to GNP (Gross National Product) in 2020 is 12.8%. Within this, the amount allocated to family and child support constitutes 0.6% of GNP, the amount allocated to unemployment support constitutes 0.9% of GNP and the amount allocated to social exclusion constitutes 0.1% of GNP.
- 40% of social protection expenditures are made of state subsidies. Shares paid by individuals themselves or employers constitute 60%.
- According to Article 30 of the European Social Charter, to which Turkey is a party, states “to take measures within the framework of an overall and coordinated approach to promote the effective access of persons who live or risk living in a situation of social exclusion or poverty, as well as their families, to, in particular, employment, housing, training, education, culture and social and medical assistance”.

## NEWS 1

### Good news for low-income citizens on the way! Erdoğan will announce the details

**The Ministries of Finance and Justice are about to finish their work for the solution of the problems of low-income people concerning the financial matters that have been brought to court. With the regulation, those who are under execution proceedings due to debts arising from taxes and fees and the like, will breathe a sigh of relief.**

The final stage has been reached in the work of the Ministries of Treasury and Finance, and Justice, which aimed at a solution for low-income citizens' financial problems that have been brought to court. To this end,



the authorities of the two ministries will have a final meeting today.

#### **ERDOĞAN IS EXPECTED TO ANNOUNCE**

According to the information obtained from the Ministry of Treasury and Finance, a proposal has been drafted by two ministries for the solution of low-income citizens' financial problems that have been brought to court. In yesterday's meeting, details of the draft were discussed. The proposal drafted by the Ministries of Treasury and Finance, and Justice will be submitted to the approval of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. It is expected that President Erdoğan will declare the details of the regulation, which is of concern for low-income citizens. (Türkiye newspaper, July 2022) (Türkiye Gazetesi, Temmuz 2022)

## NEWS 2

### Big campaign for those wishing to buy a house! Those with less than 10,000 TL income can apply

**After the cabinet meeting, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced that TOKI will be given support in the amount of 30 billion TL for social housing projects. What are the conditions to benefit from the project? Here are the details...**

Following President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's announcement concerning the financing of TOKI with an amount of 30 billion liras, new campaigns are on the way. The household income of citizens who wish to benefit from the houses mustn't exceed 10,000 TL. For Istanbul a limit of 11.500 TL will be applied.

After President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has announced that TOKI will be given financing with an amount of 30 billion TL for ensuring that low-income citizens are made landlords, eyes are on new campaigns now.

#### **150,000 social housing in 81 provinces**

With the campaign, the details of which will be announced by Erdoğan in June, it is planned to build 150,000 more social housing for low-income families in 81 provinces. According to the information taken from the Sabah



newspaper, the social housing units will be sold to low-income citizens not owning a house with 10% cash-in-advance and a fixed installment payment of 240 months. The prices of the houses will be around 400,000 TL.

#### **Income mustn't be more than 10,000 TL**

The household income of the citizens who want to benefit from the houses that TOKI will build under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change may not be more than 10,000 TL. This amount will be applied as 11,500 TL for Istanbul.

Families of martyrs, disabled war and service veterans, as well as widows and orphans will be given the right to buy houses without drawing lots, but the houses of these people will principally be determined by lottery.

5% of the social housing units will be reserved for disabled citizens and beneficiaries will be determined by casting lots. The quota reserved for retired citizens will be 25% of the housing. (Yeni Akit newspaper, May 2022) (Yeni Akit Gazetesi, Mayıs 2022)

## NEWS 3

### **Erdoğan gave the instruction: Good news for workers on Eid al-Adha**

**Additional payments of the workers will be paid before Eid al-Adha upon the decision of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.**

**Vedat Bilgin, Minister for Work and Social Security said, “With the decision of our President, additional payments of our workers will be paid before Eid al-Adha”.**

The decision to make additional payments for workers working in the state and affiliated institutions was published in the Official Gazette.



#### **WHEN WILL THE ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS BE DEPOSITED?**

According to the decision published in the Official Gazette with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's signature, the first half of the additional payment will be made on July 4, 2022 (4/7/2022), and the second half on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (16/12/2022). (Yeni Akit newspaper, June 2022) (Yeni Akit Gazetesi, Haziran 2022)

## NEWS 4

### **‘Social protection’ for millions: 104 billion TL will be paid**

**Upon the directive of President Erdoğan, and with the motto “Citizens will not be crushed by inflation” the government has activated the “social protection” shield. In the Citizen’s Budget Guide, social assistance payments for the year 2022 attracted notice.**

While the government struggles to protect citizens from being crushed by inflation, it mobilized all institutions for strengthening social policies. In the Citizen’s Budget Guide prepared by the Presidency, Strategy and Budget Office, attention was drawn to social assistance payments for the year 2022. The Guide emphasizes that with social assistance programs that fit the needs, a social support system has been created that will not leave anyone abandoned, and states that the resources allocated for social expenditures were 104.2 billion liras.

The Citizen’s Budget Guide, prepared by the Strategy and Budget Office draws attention to the fact that the number of households and citizens receiving social support will increase this year, too. Important points of the Guide are the following

#### **STATE PAYS CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THOSE WHO CAN’T**

Approximately 23,4 billion liras will be transferred for covering the health contribution costs of citizens with no solvency. Within the scope of social support, regular assistance programs will continue to support women. Approximately 57% of social support beneficiaries, 65% of regular support beneficiaries, and 52% of temporary support beneficiaries are women.

#### **SUPPORT FOR THE ELDERLY**

The resources allocated for the elderly to be cared in a peaceful environment and their social and psychological needs being met, were raised to 1.9 billion TL by a 35% increase. This year, approximately 9.1 billion liras will be transferred for the monthly payments of citizens over the age of 65. 295 million TL has been allocated for payments that will be made to foster families within the scope of foster family services, which are carried out for raising children who need protection in a family environment during the period that requires them to be protected.

#### **13.2 BILLION FOR HOME-CARE**

**13.2 billion liras will be allocated to support the care of disabled citizens at home.**

1.2 billion liras will be transferred for the care of disabled people, who cannot be cared for at home, in private rehabilitation centers, and approximately 6.6 billion liras will be transferred for the pensions paid to our disabled citizens and their relatives. A contribution of 1.3 billion liras will be made for the transportation expenses of the disabled.

#### **SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT SERVICE**

**2.5 billion liras will be allocated for social and economic support payments that will permit our children and youngsters in economic deprivation to grow up with their families.**

By this time, approximately 700,000 children have profited from the social and economic support service, which prevents children from being away from their families for economic reasons. Within the scope of the electricity consumption support for poor families, a contribution in the amount of 2.4 billion liras will be made.

(Sabah newspaper, April 2022) (Sabah Gazetesi, Nisan 2022)

## What happens in this news?

- Social support provided by public institutions are reported with discourses such as “good news” or “campaign”. Social support, which the state is obliged to provide, is being sensationalized.
- The relation between the state/municipality and the citizen is narrated as one between the favor-doer and the beneficiary, the giver and the taker, instead of one between the rights owner and the one obliged to ensure rights. This supports an approach, which drifts away from a rights-based understanding that sees each individual as a rights owner.
- The provided support is narrated as a favor that the president or the ministers personally makes for people living in poverty. What is ignored is the fact the state is obliged to protect its citizens from poverty, that people living in poverty and not earning enough income for their livelihood is a result of state policies and have to be prevented by state policies, as well.

## CONCLUSION

**The way media reports news about poverty, the language it uses and the aspects it emphasizes while bringing up the topic may shape the society’s perception about poverty and the factors that cause it, or even their belief about whether poverty exists in that society at all, and hence the public opinion.**

**They may reinforce thoughts and a range of prejudices that the cause of poverty is related to individuals, that people experiencing poverty do not want to work or change their living conditions, that it would be possible for them to end their poverty if they would have wanted to and worked hard enough, and that social support habituated them to laziness.**

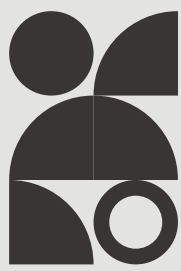
Furthermore, through strengthening the perception that poverty is inevitable, and that the eradication of poverty is impossible, such discourses make readers and hence society take a passive stance against the rights struggle of people living in poverty. They even lead to opposition against social policies, which are supposed to be provided by the state, or lead to the impression that the provided support is not deserved. It erases the obligation of the state to “protect each and everybody from poverty and social exclusion” from memories, and reinforces the belief that “poverty is an individual fault”.

However, news that do not exclude people living in poverty, their burden-sharing, and struggles, that are rights-based and inclusive, distance themselves from discourses that augment prejudice and labeling, and that reflect people’s struggle for their rights as well as the systematic factors that cause poverty, can actually make possible an objective societal comprehension of poverty with its multidimensional structure. A change in how poverty is discussed by the public may also affect what the public demands from the state.

Based on the analyses in this report and the various guides prepared for press members, we have also brought together a number of principles that can be considered while using visuals, producing images and contents about poverty.

**With the conviction that poverty is a violation of human rights, and remembering the influence of the media in the fight against poverty, we wish to be able to reflect on and discuss our prejudices about poverty and people living in poverty...**





**DEEP  
POVERTY  
NETWORK**