Notes on Precarity in the Academia

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> " For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live" Adorno, *Minima Moralia*.

First, I would like to thank the editors of this book for recording our precarious existence in this world and allowed us to disseminate our and other people's stories. Second, in this paper, I will address a theoretical background related to authoritarianism and precarity, as well as my findings based on the analysis of some interviews with a few academics who experienced precarity due to authoritarian measures in Turkey. The literature review and findings originate from my current research at London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). The research is more specifically related to the relationship between authoritarian regimes and precarity of intellectual labour in the case of Turkey. Although I focused on the precarity of journalists and academics within the scope of intellectual labour in this research, I will only include findings from the interviews with academics in this paper as it is compatible with the scope of this book.

However, before I address the literature review and original findings, I would like to mention my own precarious experience both in Turkey and in England in order to shed light on the question of why I am interested in this subject as a researcher.

I can claim that my professional life has mostly been precarious in my country, Turkey, due to the current authoritarian regime and political pressures. Similarly, I am also a precariat here, in England, because of my status here as a migrant. In addition, the unprecedented competition and overwhelming performance expectations in the British academia, despite all the support that I have had from CARA (the Council for At-Risk Academics) and some valuable input from academics at LSE for maintaining my academic productivity under my current scholarship position.

In regard to my life in Turkey, I used to be a lecturer at Mersin University, Faculty of Communication, for 2 years and my life turned upside down after signing a petition

in January 2016 called the Peace Petition [1]. The petition was merely calling on the Turkish government (the Justice and Development Party- Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi/the AKP) to stop ongoing violence directed to Kurdish civilians, especially after the so-called Peace Process was mutually terminated by the AKP and the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party). Moreover, the petition also demanded from the government to settle the Kurdish issue not by more military operations but by re-establishing peace negotiations. The reason I signed this petition was that I felt desperate as I could not do anything to stop the violence, the inhumane destruction of lives, buildings and infrastructures in Kurdish populated cities and towns in Turkey such as Diyarbakir, Nusaybin, Cizre, Sur and so on. I thought the petition would help to bring more attention to the destruction of Kurds' lives, while the pro-government mainstream media in Turkey and international press had been turning a blind eye to the sufferings of thousands. But in Turkey, the freedom of expression is broadly restricted and oppressed, since almost anything not deemed pro-government is deemed instead 'terrorist propaganda' ; especially when it comes to some 'controversial' and 'politically dangerous' subjects such as the Kurdish issue, Armenian issue and so on. And those who signed the petition, which was clearly related to the Kurdish issue, were condemned, detained and put under judicial and administrative investigations. If we were to be found guilty of alleged terrorism charges as the signatories of the petition, we would face one up to seven years in prison.

After signing the petition, I lost my job in April 2016, as the rectorship of Mersin University did not renew job contracts for those working as lecturers, research assistants and assistant professors. The rectorship could not fire associate professors and professors in this way since they had permanent and relatively safe jobs in Turkey, without renewable job contracts, at that time. However, after the coup attempt in July 2016, the rectorship put all the signatories - about 20 academics in total- working for Mersin University on the emergency decree 689 of 29th April 2017. Thus, I was fired from the university for a second time although I had already been dismissed. Moreover, I have been banned from all public positions in Turkey, as well as my passport has been cancelled due to this decree. Given that my situation is not unique since the same thing happened to thousands of academics and public employees after the failed coup and under Erdogan's regime, studying authoritarianism and precarity became more important in order to think about alternative ways of knowledge production and dissemination beyond campuses, established institutions and structures.

1 Introduction

Over the past few decades, research has mainly and justifiably focused on the relationship between neoliberal capitalism, globalization, and the unprecedented precarization of the labour market (Standing, 2011 ; Wade, 2013 ; Schram, 2015), although 'unemployment, underemployment, insecurity and precariousness are hardly new conditions for the working class' (Jørgensen, 2016 : 963). In this literature, neoliberalism, as a set of practices taken up by different state and private actors, is deemed to be responsible for the increasing precarity of the population, and also, as Butler states (2013 : 33), so

1. See URL : https ://barisicinakademisyenler.net/node/63

'[t]oo, are security regimes, and new forms of state racism and fascism'. In this sense, it is not only neoliberalism that has made the labor market flexible and precarious to the detriment of individual workers, but that repressive regimes have also accelerated the process.

After World War II, there were several pioneering attempts to understand mass support for fascism and authoritarianism (for example Adorno *et al.*, 1950, 1993 ; Reich, 1972). As Arendt (1970 : 46) stressed, 'institutionalized power often appears in the guise of authority, demanding instant, unquestioning recognition'. In order to reach this recognition, authoritarian rulers often tend to repress and domesticate the labour force, especially intellectual labour, which might otherwise constitute a threat to the regime through its critical thinking and questioning. Moreover, neoliberal ideas occasionally match authoritarianism in terms of concerns over a loss of their control and therefore may not allow the institution of democracy.

In addition to authoritarian regimes compatible with neoliberalism on the periphery, such as many Latin American countries whose authoritarian regimes collaborated with neoliberalism, a wave of authoritarianism was present, until post 1977, in Western liberal democracies when it comes to resistance against capitalist interests and hegemony (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán, 2013), . In this sense, Foucault's (2007, 2008) concept of 'governmentality', what he called 'biopower', refers to the governmental power practices over the regulation of peoples' lives that seek to shape individuals as governable subjects. Biopower provides a useful term for thinking through a neoliberal logic compatible with authoritarianism. As Foucault (2007 : 108) stated, governmentality is a collection of 'institutions, procedures [...] calculations, and tactics' that sees 'the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument.' Neoliberalism also makes people 'accept responsibility for handling the shocks of marketization' (Schram, 2015 : 71). Moreover, Jørgensen (2016 : 966) properly emphasizes that unemployment is framed as an individual problem that originated from individual failures and inadequences. And this is a key element to understand existing neoliberalism which 'is liberal and free at the top and restrictive, paternalistic and authoritarian at the bottom' (Wacquant, 2011).

All these aspects point to common elements of both authoritarian rulers and the precarization of labour, which means 'living with a lot of fear and anxiety', according to Bauman (2013 : 25). In this context, it can be claimed that masses, terrified by the threats of an unstable and precarious labour market, have been very important for the ruling classes' efforts to subjugate people without any significant resistance. As will be argued in this paper, people's fears of losing their jobs may strengthen the power of governments and authoritarian regimes in a manner compatible with neoliberalism as it appears in Turkey, and which is not rooted in democracy.

In this paper, I want to focus on the mutual relationship between precarity of the academy and authoritarian regimes, by focusing on the case of Turkey. The scope of this research stems from the idea that an independent academia is crucial to building the critical, participatory and multicultural public sphere which is necessary for a vibrant and properly functioning democracy.

2 Methodology and Research Design

By working on contemporary Turkey, this paper will examine two fundamental questions :

1. How does the current authoritarian regime in Turkey implicate precarization ?
2. How and through which mechanisms can critical intellectual production be maintained under authoritarian regimes and neoliberal policies ?

In order to answer these questions, an in-depth review of the relevant literature and series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews were undertaken. Semi-structured, in-depth interviewing was chosen because it allows biographic-narratives (Wengraf, 2001 : 29). Furthermore, as a type of conversational face-to-face interaction, it also allows for improvisation in a careful, analytical and theorized way.

The interviewees consisted of four academics, all collectively of Turkish descent, who are residing in the UK. All interviewees espouse left-wing ideologies and their work is situated in the social, political and economic science disciplines.

I carefully sampled my interviewees in terms of suitability and relevance for the research's subject and the scope of the research. In this case, the criteria of selection of interviewees was based on the level of danger they faced in Turkey under authoritarianism and their persistence in continuing their professions in the UK. I also prioritized selecting interviewees from different generations and different career levels. Even though there are relatively few interviewees, those different individual cases represent a general picture of how Turkey's current authoritarian regime have made the labour market precarious on the basis of political and ideological motives. For instance, more than 110,000 public employees have been dismissed from their jobs through emergency decrees, while tens of thousands have been suspended since the 2016 coup attempt [2] through alleged accusations of terrorism. Eventually, these numbers indicate a large-scale purge beyond individual and specific cases.

I explained the subject and the aims of my research and the interviewees' roles in the research before conducting interviews and I sought informed consent from them. From an ethics perspective, interviewees guaranteed that their real names and some other details would be hidden [3] in order to prevent all possible threats due to their politically dangerous circumstances in Turkey.

All the interviews were conducted face to face in London and only voice recordings were taken during the interviews. The interviews took place between December 2017 and March 2018. The interviewees' ages varied from 33 to 57.

After transcribing the interviews, a thematic field analysis (TFA) was conducted to analyze and interpret the responses, 'aiming to reconstruct the structuring principles of the story-as-told ; its gestalt' (Wengraf, 2001 : 241). The themes of my analysis were mainly related to working conditions, job security and political pressures that

2. See URL : http ://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/over-18-500-turkish-public-workers-dismissed-with-new-emergency-state-decree-134290

3. Synonyms were used and ages were also changed.

the interviewees experienced in Turkey. Also, seeking new and alternative ways of knowledge production was one of the main themes in the analysis that I hope it may inspire those, who have suffered under authoritarian regimes. The sub-themes of the analysis consisted of the conditions and challenges of living and working in a foreign country - England in this case - which revealed the overwhelming precarity of a competitive labour market. Before presenting my analysis of the data from the interviews, however, I will develop a conceptual framework linking neoliberalism, precarization and authoritarianism in the case of Turkey.

3 Mutual Relationship of Precarity of Labour and Authoritarianism in Turkey in a Historical Context

Turkey has experienced precarity due to both the adoption of neoliberal policies and the authoritarian nature of its regime. However, authoritarianism is not recent in Turkey. In addition to Ottoman times, Turkey has experienced authoritarian rule periods after the founding of the Republic of Turkey. For instance, As Atabaki and Zürcher (2004) mention, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who was the founder and first president of contemporary Turkey, led elite-driven modernization in which state elites imposed modernization on society from the top to the bottom. Further, Atatürk's 'People's Republican Party' (the *CHP*), founded in 1923, institutionalized his personal, authoritarian rule of the country as a single party state, lasting until 1950.

Authoritarianism refers to a style of government 'in which the rulers demand unquestioning obedience from the ruled' (McLean and McMillan, 2016 : 30). This chimes with Schneiderman (2015 : 272), who states that 'authority always demands obedience and its success or failure depends upon followers obeying authoritative demands'. As Fuchs (2018 : 55) states, right-wing authoritarianism includes hierarchical leadership, nationalism, the friend/enemy scheme, patriarchy and militarism compatible with authoritarian capitalism.

As a form of governance and as a set of political-economic practices compatible with capitalist class' interests (Harvey, 2005), neoliberalism triggers precarity. By 'promoting deregulation, a withdrawal of the state' (Cammaerts and Calabrese, 2011 : 2) by 'extension of the rationalities of the market' (Foucault, 2008 : 323), neoliberalism also produces a new and fractured class or category globally named 'the precariat'.

Standing (2013 : 49) calls the precariat as a dangerous evolving class due to its potential for collective organizing and revolutionary capacities (Standing, 2013 and Harvey, 2012), while Bauman (2013 : 26) asserts that it represents a new social category because of liquid modern work-places, mutual suspiciousness, and the stimulation of competitiveness between precariats. Precariousness is still, as Standing (2011 : 57) argues, 'an agenda for transferring risks and insecurity onto workers and their families.' Flexibility and unstable working conditions constitute the precariat's perceptions of itself as worthless and easily dispensable. Precarity, here, indicates informal labour, conditional employment, temporariness, uncertainty, squeezed wages, social risk and fragmented life situations without security, protection and predictability (Schierup and Jørgensen, 2016 : 948).

The first step in the precarization of Turkey was an economic program named the *24th January Economic Decisions* which aimed to transform the economic system from a statist, protectionist economic structure to a free market economy. The planned changes of the program were implemented after the coup in 1980. This period was dominated by an authoritarian military regime without a civil government and political parties (they were allowed again in 1983). During this period of military rule, the pressures on the academy, left-wing and Kurdish groups, and critical organizations such as unions, newspapers and so on were extremely severe. The 1980-coup also took away previously gained rights of the working class and suppressed the organized left in Turkey.

Almost thirty years after the 1980 coup, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002. In its first years the AKP displayed liberal features, adopting the European Union's (EU) harmonization laws and reducing the military's influence and intervention in politics (see Esen and Gumuscu, 2016 : 1584-85). However, the party and its president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan have gradually moved towards authoritarianism and steadily increased repression, especially after the Gezi Uprising in 2013 and more notably after the coup-attempt of July 2016.

Turkey's current regime can be called *electoral (competitive) authoritarian* with a dominant leader, president Erdoğan and a hegemonic party, the AKP. In this sense, Turkey is a good example of electoral or competitive authoritarianism, as Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán (2013 : 11) observe 'in authoritarian regimes, the most important actors always include the president and often include a hegemonic party'. Bora (2017) names this regime 'Erdoğanizm', while Esen and Gumuscu (2016 : 1586) call the regime 'competitive authoritarianism' which basically includes 'unfair elections, the violation of civil liberties, and the existence of an uneven playing field' (Esen and Gumuscu, 2016 : 1586). Although competitive authoritarianism may include democratic institutions and processes such as elections as the guarantee and legitimization of gaining power, the opposition's ability to compete is seriously limited due to abused and politicized state institutions –courts, security forces, tax authorities, local authorities and so on (Levitsky and Loxton, 2012 : 62).

Moreover, a strong connection between precarization and liquidation of labour on the one hand and authoritarian rule in Turkey on the other hand, can be observed since the Gezi Uprising in 2013. During this period, 143 journalists were either fired or forced to resign in 2013 and this number rose to 339 in 2014 (Esen and Gumuscu, 2016 : 1591). However, since the failed coup in 2016, there has been an extreme liquidation and precarization of the labour market even for public sector employees who thought that they had secure and permanent job positions in Turkey. However, in Harvey's (2005 : 169) words, they were reduced to 'use and throw away precariats' nowadays. According to the report titled *The Effects of Emergency State and Decree Laws in Turkey*, which was published by 'The Union of Education and Science Workers' (*Eğitim-Sen,* 2017) almost one year after the failed coup, more than 100,000 public sector employees have lost their jobs between 21st of July 2016 and 5th of May 2017.

Academics and journalists, in particular, have been subjected to the most severe repression under the current authoritarian regime. As Başer *et al.*, (2017 : 292 –

emphasis in original) assert, '[t]hey are forced to live a *civil death* by being deprived of their basic rights'. Although political pressures on the higher education and media are not new in Turkey, after the latest coup-attempt there has been an unprecedented purge of these sectors in Turkey. According to Human Rights Watch [4] (2018), since the 2016 coup attempt, more than 5,800 academics have been dismissed from public universities under emergency decrees. As Amnesty International [5] (2017) reported, more than 120 journalists and other media workers are imprisoned and thousands of media workers are unemployed due to the closure of 156 media outlets after the failed coup. According to Committee to Protect Journalists [6] (2017), Turkey is one of the biggest prisons for journalists in the world along with China and Eygpt. All these data indicate a general crackdown and authoritarian measures over all freedoms and freedom of expression in particular. And precarization of labour has been a useful instrument for both previous and current authoritarian rulers to achieve their social and political goals.

4 Academy under attack : the case of Academics for Peace

The interviewee Dr. Serpil (42, female) used to be an academic in Turkey for many years. During the interview, she explained that the political climate transformed considerably after the failed coup in 2016 and spoke of how she experienced this transformation as an academic who signed the Peace Petition. As she stated :

> "I talked to the rector at my university in Turkey for my sabbatical. First, the rector seemed to support me. Then, I went to another country for the sabbatical with my family. But the rector's attitude changed after the coup attempt. After the first three months of my sabbatical, the rectorship wanted me to go back to Turkey, instead of extending the sabbatcial. Also, they cancelled a symposium in Brussels that I had organized it. All these things happened to me because I had signed the Peace Petition"
> (Serpil, personal interview).

The Peace Petition was issued on January 2016 and was entitled 'We will not be a party to this crime'. It was signed by more than 2,000 academics and it criticized state violence in Kurdish populated areas of Turkey, as well as demanding that the government start peace negotiations on the Kurdish issue. Immediately after the petition was published, president Erdoğan labelled all the peace academics terrorists and betrayers [7], using a discourse of counter-terrorism which 'blurs the boundaries between actual terrorism and civil disobedience' (Başer *et al.*, 2017 : 276). Erdoğan also called on public prosecutors and rectors to punish these academics. After this call, many of those who signed the Peace Petition were detained, four were arrested for 40 days, others were forced or encouraged to withdraw their signatures, and judicial and administrative investigations were launched. Most of the peace academics lost

4. See URL : https ://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/14/turkey-government-targeting-academics

5. See URL : https ://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/02/free-turkey-media/

6. See URL : https ://cpj.org/reports/2017/12/journalists-prison-jail-record-number-turkey-china-egypt.php

7. For more on Erdoğan's reaction and some expressions of support for the Peace Academics, see Weaver (2016) and Butler and Ertür (2017).

their jobs through a variety of methods, such as non-renewal of their job contracts, or having to resign from their jobs because of the pressures and sanctions against them, as was the case with Serpil (personal interview).

Many of the interviewees attested to how their academic lives radically transformed under the current authoritarian regime. Whereas Serpil resigned as a result of the pressures placed upon her, Baran (57, male), a former assistant professor lost his job via a statutory decree during the state of emergency as a result of signing the Peace Petition. This is another example of politically motivated precarization of the academy under authoritarianism. As he remarked :

> "I am one of the signatories of the petition. After launching the petition and the signatories, our university launched administrative investigations against us. Then, the anti-terror branch in the police called us to testify because a judicial investigation was launched. As a result of the administrative investigation, we had the condemnation penalty which may affect our careers negatively. [...] I was suspended at first ; I was not fired totally at that time. I lost my job after a statutory decree on 29 October 2016, which banned me from all public jobs in addition to losing my job"
>
> (Baran, personal interview).

These pressures on, and sanctioning of academics, was not only a sign of the rise of authoritarianism, but led to the increasing precarity of the academy. This precarity in academia is not new, however. The Higher Education Law #2547, which was put in place by the military dictatorship to regulate the employment in academia, stipulates that all academic staff apart from professors and associate professors can be hired by 1, 2 or 3-year renewable contracts and this remains the case today. Further, YÖK (The Higher Education Council of Turkey), which was established as a constitutional organ in 1981 by the military dictatorship, functions to prevent universities from politicization compatible with authoritarian measures and conservative cultural priorities (Ergül *et al*, 2017 : 149-150).

Although the *YÖK* has played an important role in the restructuring of the higher education system in Turkey, the decree-laws passed during the state of emergency and the various administrations of the universities have in recent years proven to be a productive means through which to purge the academy of critical voices. There have been many professors, associate professors, teaching assistants and assistant professors among the academics dismissed through the statutory decrees.

Even though a professorship and an associate professorship used to be among the most secure academic jobs in Turkey, this has changed significantly since the coup attempt in 2016. In her World Report, Devi (2018) states that since the coup attempt in July 2016, 6,081 academics have been dismissed from their jobs and banned from any civic duty with statutory decrees, with an accompanying cancellation of their passports. In this sense, another interviewee Jülide (33, female) who used to be a research assistant and also one of the signatories of the petition, indicated that new kinds of precarity are emerging, driven by political motivations :

> "The situation is even worse today. Unemployment and precariousness have come to the last stage now. There is no a job security for anyone anymore. Not only for research assistants but also for professors and associate professors. Everyone can lose their jobs through a statutory decree. Precariousness is clearly explicit now more than ever through statutory decrees, investigations or not renewing job contracts arbitrarily."
> (personal interview)

Another interviewee, who used to be an assistant professor, not only lost his job, but also had his passport revoked by a statutory decree in October 2016. As one of the signatories of the Peace Petition, Emrah (48, male) believes that the reason for losing his job was not only the petition, but also his longstanding involvement in organized struggle and political activism :

> "I used to be an active member of The Union of Education and Science Workers (*Eğitim-Sen*) at my university in Turkey. So, I was always politically active and participating in organized struggle. I do not want to reduce the reason of losing my job to my signature in the petition. Because half of my ten friends who lost their jobs by the same decree along with me were not signatories. They were dismissed without the signature as they were constantly active in the trade union and political struggle. That's why we lost our jobs."
> (personal interview)

Based on statements such as these from my academic interviewees, it may be concluded that the reasons for the precarization of the academy in Turkey today go beyond the usual performance concerns of the neoliberal university or 'performing/managerial university' (Morrissey, 2013), in which the academic subject is transformed into 'human capital' (Berg *et al.*, 2016 : 171) and measurable, governable 'performing subjects' (Morrisey, 2013). Even though performance criteria are still important and some academics were dismissed due to such performance criteria (especially in the private universities) ideological and political pressures have been far more influential in Turkey's current political atmosphere - whether one is looking at the case of a public university or not.

Baran (personal interview) states in this regard that the case of Academics for Peace is a prominent example of a distinctive feature of the academy in Turkey :

> "The circumstances we are facing now are seriously different than those of the neoliberal universities in the rest of the world. [. . .] There is a new ideology and political theology in Turkey now. People who are not in harmony with this political theology have been eliminated and externalized from the universities. There have been performance criteria in Turkey, as well. However, why we lost our jobs is not because we did not fulfill performance criteria. Hence, when we criticize the neoliberal process, we should pay attention and highlight the particular conditions and differences between Turkey and other countries."

On the basis of my analysis, one can see that although the most determining factor of precarization of labour in Turkey is authoritarianism, this does not mean neoliberalism is absent. On the contrary, authoritarian governance terms such as the 1980 military coup or Erdogan's current regime have been the leading practitioners of a neoliberalism that I prefer to call in this specific situation the 'neoliberal authoritarianism.'

The draconian reaction of the Erdoğan regime against the Peace Academics was the first step in an existential crisis of an academy facing increasing authoritarian pressures. The oppressive measures of the government, the YÖK and the universities, in almost a complete harmony against the Peace Academics, indicate more a crisis of neoliberal measures wielded by the authoritarian regime than a crisis of the universities (Ergül *et al.*, 2017 : 157).

In addition to administrative investigations, trials against Peace Academics, including the interviewees Serpil and Emrah, have also begun. It is the expectation that all signatories of the petition will be called to the courts over the time, university by university, city by city :

> "A trial has been carried out about me through the accusation of terrorist propaganda as I had signed the petition. [...] It is very political charge and we all know this"
>
> (Emrah, personal interview).
>
> "I am accused of making terrorist propaganda and I was invited to the court [...] It was very difficult to answer the questions from the judges because they tried to put us into a difficult situation by their questions "
>
> (Serpil, personal interview).

5 Being a foreign academic in the neoliberal university

Apart from Baran, all of the academic interviewees evaluated themselves as being inadequate for the UK's academic system, which is an excellent case of the neoliberal university where 'universities are increasingly attendant to rankings, benchmarking and competitiveness' (Morrissey, 2013 : 800), where learning is an investment (Simons, 2006) and where everything, everyone and every term and discourse, is approached on the bases of market-principles and terminology (Ahmed, 2006 ; Ahmed, 2007a ; Ahmed, 2007b). Also, the interviewees' experiences as foreign academics in the UK has forced them to re-think their professional careers beyond the university in order to afford their lives.

> "I think I do not attain the performance criteria here. I have been hearing good comments about my research. But it is an academic world that I cannot be in it totally"
>
> (Jülide, personal interview).
>
> "I do not think I can find a very good job as a lecturer at a good university [...] you need at least one or two international publications a year. The education we received in Turkey and our academic background is not

> enough here. The language is not adequate either. Some of the native academics cannot even fulfill these conditions. Even if I would find a good academic job here the fight will begin from the moment I get in. I think of other things, then. I can work as an electrician. I read and write intellectually in the rest of the time. I do not have to be connected to a university"
>
> (Emrah, personal interview).
>
> "I cannot compete with academics as I am not English, I am not proficient in the language and culture of England. I have not even studied here. I can write one or two articles at most in a year. How can I compete with them ? Even if I do something in the academia, I should do another job and have another life, another rhythm. [...] Instead of dealing with peer-review journals, I can write articles for regular magazines. My life is based on reading and writing. I cannot give that up but I can give up the academy."
>
> (Serpil, personal interview).

An analysis of these statements indicates how foreign academics feel about themselves in the UK's neoliberal university system, with its competitive and precarious features. Also, the dominance of English in the neoliberal university system restricts academics who have high levels of expertise but write in their native language (Çetinkaya, 2017 : 75).

Although academic development requires time in order to read relevant literature, gain data, write and interpret all of these aspects, the neoliberal university system wants academics to do everything including publishing and lecturing, as quickly as possible. As Couldry (2011 : 1) argues regarding higher education in the UK, for more than a decade academic production has been intensively regulated first through *the Research Assessment Exercise* (RAE) on the bases of performance calculations of research outputs. Under this regulation, the requirement of at least four outputs per assessment period, which refers to usually one monograph and three peer-reviewed articles over 5-6 years for UK academics, has been the norm for a while.

The interviewees, who became members of the precariat in Turkey because of authoritarian policies, have since also experienced precariousness in the UK due to their unstable and temporary jobs/scholarship positions, as well as their status as migrants - '[t]he "migrant" being the quintessential incarnation of precarity' (Schierup and Jørgensen, 2016 : 949) and '[m]igrant labour embodying the experience of precarity, given that the mobility which is the key characteristic of migration is also the response to borders and identities' (Jørgensen, 2016 : 961). However, precarity is not unique to migrants given that the high levels of unemployment in Greece, Spain and so on, although migrants still constitute a central part of the precariat.

Moreover, when considering the case of Stefan Grim, who used to work at Imperial College in London as a professor for many years and was found dead in his house after he was fired by Imperial College for a failure to fulfill grant income targets (Berg *et al.*, 2016 : 169), it is clear that the neoliberal university system does not offer a safe

world to anyone regardless of their hierarchical status and/or nationalities. In addition to this, due to the pressures inherent in the neoliberal university system, it prevents academics from creating and expressing widespread solidarity.

6 New possible ways of the academic production

Two of my interviewees, Baran and Serpil, pointed towards some national and international initiatives beyond established universities and campuses which provided support beyond the academy, such as the newly-founded *Center for Peace and Democracy Research* in London (an initiative of Academics for Peace UK), the *Solidarity Academies* in different cities in Turkey by the dismissed Peace Academics, the *Open University*, and *Off-Campus*.

> "[The] Center for Peace and Democracy Research will give some urgent opportunities for all colleagues in Turkey, who have preferred stay in the country or have to stay there due to the passport cancellations by the state, in order to maintain their academic productions"
>
> "(Baran, personal interview).
>
> There are some important initiatives such as Off-campus, Open University and Solidarity Academies in Turkey. Social media and online systems can be very helpful in this."
>
> (Serpil personal interview).

Although all these initiatives are crucial to finding alternative ways of academic production and to maintaining teaching, the *Solidarity Academies* founded by dismissed Peace Academics in Turkey have a special importance among all these alternatives due to their persistence in maintaining traditions of intellectual production and sharing the knowledge so created for free. As Başer *et al.* (2017 : 292) state, 'they teach for free or they find people without campus initiatives in order to pursue their academic ideals by underlining that they do not need an institution for intellectual activities'.

In addition to the Solidarity Academies, NYLON - a doctoral students' network formed by Richard Sennett at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and Craig Calhoun at New York University (NYU) (Couldry, 2011 : 10) - is another good example of alternative networks in the academy.

Furthermore, the production and distribution of knowledge is also possible through the use of new technologies. In this context, *Turkey Uncensored*[8], an online project by Index on Censorship enables censored and/or dismissed Turkish writers, journalists, academics, artists and translators to publish their work on the website, as well as other online initiatives.

7 Conclusion

In light of my analysis of the interviews, as well as various reports, it can be concluded that many people in academia lost their jobs and had to leave Turkey because of

8. See URL : https://www.indexoncensorship.org/campaigns/turkey/turkey-uncensored/

political reasons and due to an authoritarian regime determined to repress and close down all dissent. What they have experienced in Turkey goes way beyond the usual neoliberal performance concerns of academics elsewhere. Even though neoliberalism has, since the 1980s, been carried forward alongside authoritarianism in Turkey, the current period witnesses the most severe precarization of academic labour in Turkey's recent history.

Lives and careers under precarity and authoritarianism can be ruined at will or by accident ; their persistence and continuity is no longer guaranteed. The precarization of labour and permanent unemployment threats that result from measures inspired by both neoliberalism and authoritarianism lead to a generalized and large-scale sense of insecurity and acceptance of the exploitation among labourers, as well as political subjugation to the dominant hegemony. In this sense, neoliberal and authoritarian policies have systematically targeted solidarity and collective struggle.

Solidarity is more difficult to achieve under conditions of individual competition, precariousness and authoritarianism. However, as Couldry states (2011 : 8), it is still important to create spaces for more open exchange and develop innovative practice which sustain a sense that *each other's* work matters. As shown in the analysis above, new practices and alternative networks to resist both authoritarianism and neoliberalism are being built – virtual and offline ones, national and transnational ones. This is crucial for those who have suffered under both authoritarian regimes and neoliberal pressures.

Given that we are presently seeing an authoritarian turn in many other countries, such as the United States, Hungary, Poland, Russia, the Philippines, India etc., this fight against authoritarian neoliberalism and precarity is not only a Turkish one, and requires *transnational* solidarity across borders and cultures. We all have to act together not only against precarity as such, but also against authoritarianism. Overcoming these issues, establishing safe labour conditions and building robust democracies and free societies require a global struggle by the oppressed. Also, useful would be creating 'schools of thought' (Dello Buono, 2010 : 21) in the sense of the regional-integrative thinking dedicated to transnational resistance building that is essential for social mobilization globally. As Standing (2013 : 51) rightly states, "we must remember that social progress only comes when enough people join together and demand change." As such, we should turn the precariat into a 'dangerous' class and thereby strengthen as well as embolden the struggle against neoliberalism and authoritarianism.

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