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## MEDIATING ROLE OF LITERATURE IN SOCIAL POLICY CREATION PRACTICES OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS: BERJI KRISTIN: TALES FROM GARBAGE HILLS SAMPLE

PAPEL MEDIADOR DE LA LITERATURA EN LAS PRÁCTICAS DE CREACIÓN DE POLÍTICAS SOCIALES DE ESTUDIANTES DE TRABAJO SOCIAL: BERJI KRISTIN: MUESTRA DE CUENTOS DE GARBAGE HILLS

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### ABSTRACT

After the 1950s, Turkey experienced an intense internal migration process. Squatting that developed with migration has been considered as an immigration problem that can be evaluated not only in the context of urbanization, but also socially, economically and culturally. In this sense, squatting constitutes one of the most important issues of both social work and social policy. Latife Tekin's second novel, "Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills", which was first published in 1984 after the book, "Dear Shameless Death", is a story about a slum called Çiçektepe, which was established on the periphery of the city, close to landfills and industrial facilities. In this book, Tekin describes the struggle of people who emigrated from the countryside but carried their traditions and habits here and struggled for life to hold on to space and people. In this study, it was evaluated which of the problems were emphasized by the 3rd and 4th grade students of the Department of Social Work from a foundation university in Istanbul who read the book, Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills, what they proposed to solve these problems, and how they handled the social policy dimension of the solutions they created from the perspective of social work. In other words, it was evaluated to see how the students perceived the slum problem both in the context of the book they read and the department they were affiliated with, how they evaluated the problem, and the opportunities to adapt the solution they created to the present day.

### Keywords:

Social work education, Berji Kristin, social policy .

### RESUMEN

Después de la década de 1950, Turquía experimentó un intenso proceso de migración interna. La ocupación ilegal que se desarrolló con la migración se ha considerado como un problema de inmigración que puede evaluarse no solo en el contexto de la urbanización, sino también social, económica y culturalmente. En este sentido, la okupación constituye uno de los temas más importantes tanto del trabajo social como de la política social. La segunda novela de Latife Tekin, "Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills", que se publicó por primera vez en 1984 después del libro "Dear Shameless Death", es una historia sobre un barrio marginal llamado Çiçektepe, que se estableció en la periferia de la ciudad. cerca de vertederos e instalaciones industriales. En este libro, Tekin describe la lucha de las personas que emigraron del campo pero trajeron sus tradiciones y hábitos aquí y lucharon por la vida para aferrarse al espacio y la gente. En este estudio se evaluó cuáles de los problemas enfatizaron los estudiantes de 3° y 4° grado del Departamento de Trabajo Social de una universidad fundación en Estambul que leyeron el libro Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills, qué propusieron resolver. estos problemas, y cómo manejaron la dimensión de política social de las soluciones que crearon desde la perspectiva del trabajo social. En otras palabras, se evaluó para ver cómo los estudiantes percibían el problema de los barrios marginales tanto en el contexto del libro que leían como del departamento al que estaban afiliados, cómo evaluaban el problema y las oportunidades para adaptar la solución que crearon a la situación. En la actualidad.

### Palabras clave:

Educación en trabajo Social, Berji Kristin, política social.

## INTRODUCTION

Settlements from the early ages to the present day have reached urban status starting from a small area. These settlements have been shaped in every period of history as a result of their interaction with the people they host. The phenomenon of migration has a large number of effects with all its components in this relationship. It is possible to see this effect in literary works a lot. That is because it can be said that the general subject of literature, which is defined as the art of expressing the events that occur in society, the thoughts of people, their feelings and dreams in an aesthetic way through language, is human (Mente e, 2008). In this sense, literary texts often discuss human beings and their relationships with other people.

It also provides information about the social, political and economic conditions of the period in which the event took place. For example, in the 19th century, it is possible to see the effect of socio-economic and cultural changes during the Industrial Revolution in many novels. Émile Zola's 1885 novel, *Germinal*, is one of the most important works reflecting the conditions of the period and the change in the social sphere. This novel describes the pressure of industrial and natural resource consumption of miners in the north of France in the 1860s and the workers who struggled to survive under these pressures and harsh conditions.

It can be said that it is extremely important to understand the period in which the workers are struggling with hunger and misery, as well as the danger of dents or flu explosions in the quarries where they work. *The Grapes of Wrath*, also written by John Steinbeck, deals with Tom and his family, who were forced to leave their fields and places of residence after the industrial revolution. This book, which focuses on the human-land relationship during the industrial revolution and also contains a critique of capitalism, conveys the problem of unemployment, the disbanded families and working conditions.

In her novel, *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills*, Tekin (2018), presents different characters and different stories in the center of the slum called Çiçektepe. The main starting point of the novel is the story of the establishment of the neighborhood. Short and concise sections of the lives of the inhabitants are given, and then the development of Çiçektepe neighborhood and the events that develop here are conveyed. The novel centers on the urbanization process of a group of people who are constantly trying to exist through the piles that are constantly being demolished and rebuilt from the garbage brought by garbage carts. The collective life, problems, culture, traditions and efforts of the inhabitants to hold on to the city are noted.

As can be seen in the urbanization process of Turkey as in the book, the inability of the people who come to the city with migration to adapt brings along different problems. Social work students believe that social work education is the first step to start professional work, and this process creates opportunities for the application of knowledge, skills and values (Anabalón, et al., 2021). In line with this understanding, in this study, problems were tried to be identified according to the perspective of the students of the social work department. Based on the data obtained, the problems were determined according to the importance status, and the proposals of the students for the solution of these problems were listed from the perspective of social work. After a general introduction, the problems were presented according to the importance. In other sections, recommendations from participant students for solving these problems were listed. The validity of these proposals today was discussed, and the applicability of these proposals to today's cities was evaluated.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The mixed method pattern was employed in this study which was conducted to address migration, squatting, unemployment and poverty in the city from the perspective of social work students' social policy development and by means of the novel by Latife Tekin, *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills*. As is known, this methodology has three main approaches. These is listed as quantitative method using numerical data; qualitative method using verbal data; mixed method in which both numerical and verbal data are used together. A mixed method pattern is the one in which qualitative and quantitative data are collected and both patterns are used together (Gay, et al., 2012; Fraenkel, et al., 2012). Complementariness, which is the purpose of merging, which is also used within this research, was used to ensure that the results obtained with one pattern are detailed, developed and sampled with the results of the other pattern and to ensure its explanation.

In this pattern, where two patterns are preferred in a single study, the aim is to provide a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon using the advantages of qualitative and quantitative patterns (Mills & Gay, 2016). In this research, a mixed research method was used by Creswell (2014), as the third approach. While the mixed method has three different applications: *Trinity*, *Explainer* and *Discoverer*, this study used the *Exploratory sequential mixed method*. That means researchers first began their study by exploring qualitative data, then used their findings with the dimension of quantitative research. In other words, quantitative data were augmented with qualitative data. The mixed research model provides

enlightening results in many respects and useful results in obtaining correlational qualities.

Accordingly, when creating groups of participants, the research population was selected from the 3rd and 4th grade students from social work department of a private university in Istanbul. Students prepared presentations about social policy creation in the context of the novel, *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills*, and explained their opinions on the problems and solutions mentioned in the book. Participants were asked for their opinions on the novel they read, and their presentations were collected with their preliminary instructions on what the problems in the book are and how to solve them. The presenting students were then contacted again and consulted via a semi-structured questionnaire via Google forms, and the participants answered the semi-structured questionnaire on how they perceived the problems in the book and what should be done to develop social policy. In accordance with ethical principles, abbreviations were made for the participants in the text (P1, P2 etc.), coding was used indicating the gender of the participants (Male/M, Female/F) and the class they studied (3rd Grade, 4th Grade etc.). For example, a reference given in text such as “P5, F, 21, 4th grade” stands for: Participant no.5, Female, 21 years old, 4th Grade (Table 1).

Table 1. Participants.

Participants	Gender	Age	Grade
P1	F	21	3
P2	F	21	4
P3	F	22	4
P4	F	22	4
P5	M	20	3
P6	F	21	3
P7	F	22	4
P8	F	23	4
P9	F	22	4
P10	M	21	4
P11	F	21	3
P12	F	23	4
P13	F	23	4
P14	F	22	4
P15	F	23	4
P16	F	21	4
P17	F	21	4
P18	M	23	4
P19	F	22	4
P20	M	22	4
P21	F	23	4

P22	F	22	4
P23	F	22	3
P24	F	21	3

Some of the data collected with the semi-structured questionnaire was analyzed by converting it into quantitative data with descriptive statistics. The qualitative data obtained was analyzed with the content analysis technique. The main objective here is to reach concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data and to organize and interpret similar data in an understandable way by combining it within the framework of certain concepts and themes. For this purpose, the conceptualization of the collected data, then the logical arrangement according to the emerging concepts and the determination of the themes explaining the data accordingly were applied (Yıldırım & Şimsek, 2005).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The students’ answers to the questions specified in the semi-structured question form were evaluated under separate headings, and the answers determined to be related to the research subject were analyzed. While the number of students presenting was 24, 4 people from the 3rd grade and 13 people from the 4th grade, and a total of 17 students were given semi-structured questionnaires. The class and gender distribution of the participants who contributed to the study is as follows in percentage: While 3rd graders are 23.5%, 4th graders class students are 76.5% (Table 2).

Table 2. Frequency and percentages of participants’ demographic characteristics.

Variable	Category	F	%
Gender	Female	13	76.5
	Male	4	23.5
Grade	3. Grade	4	23.5
	4. Grade	13	76.5

Participants generally focused on three themes about the most important problem in the novel, *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills*. While 5 participants consider poverty as the most important problem in the book, four of them see unemployment and housing as the most important problem area (Figure 1).

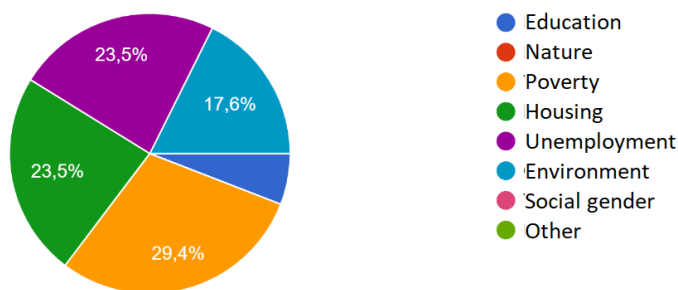


Figure 1. The most important problem in the book.

“What problem do you think is similar to the one in the book in the age and the city you live in?”, is seen to be answered by participants largely with the answer of unemployment (Figure 2). Of course, the multidimensional structure of unemployment is one of the points that should be emphasized here. It is difficult to make a generalized definition of unemployment, which is one of the major problems of many countries. However, unemployment is generally classified as open and hidden unemployment. Open unemployment, desire to work and those who cannot find work even though they have power. In hidden unemployment, however, there is even unemployment though there is no job search situation (Zaim, 1986).

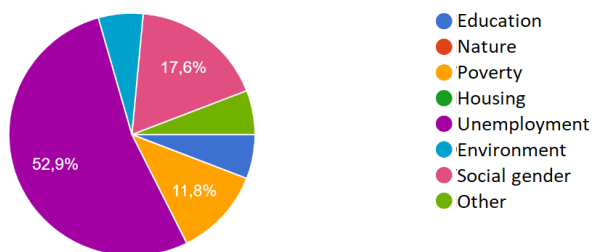


Figure 2. In your age and in the city, in which area is the biggest problem you encounter?

In this context, they state that unemployment, which students consider as an important problem, should be treated as a problem that should be solved not only as an economic phenomenon but also as a social-psychological problem in the context of social policy. P-7, for example, explains this as follows:

*“Unemployment is a macro-level problem, not a micro, and it is political. If there is poverty in one place, if there is no employment area, it means that the state is violating people’s right to work. The cause of poverty is not people, but the policies of the state. Or there may be a deficiency in existing policies/ mistakenly related. For example, if the state cannot provide equal income distribution, one part of society will prosper and the other will become poorer.” P7, female, 22, 18.06.2021*

Since this research was carried out with students living in Istanbul in 2020-2021, it is clear that the answers given here are in Istanbul and that problems related to unemployment, gender and poverty should be evaluated in this respect. It is also considered to be effective on this rate that, especially when the 3rd and 4th graders graduate, their employment process will be prolonged and that they will have difficulty finding work suitable for their formation. However, although it is seen that students consider these problems within their own individual expectations, it is safe to consider unemployment, poverty, gender-based problems as the biggest problems of all developed or developing countries. In addition, most of the students took an approach that acknowledged that unemployment is not only important in its economic dimension, but also in its social dimension. In their statements about the unemployment problem in *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills*, it is seen that participants address the solution of this problem with their environmental, social structure

and psychological dimensions. For example, P-9, who evaluated the unemployment problem mentioned in the novel, said:

*“Providing employment for people living on the flower hill seems to be the most important job. The recycling system can solve the problem there by means of factories and work sites to be built with the income provided from recycling. The establishment of these factories near the neighborhood reduces many other costs. People take time for each other and lead a more comfortable life when their physiological needs are met”* P9, Female, 22, 11.06.2021

K-8, who sought a broader solution to the unemployment mentioned in the book, said, *“All employees should be insured, and the necessary laws should be enacted to protect the rights of workers. In addition, unionization of workers must be established there. Recycling factories are necessary in a place where garbage is dense. Here, all safety measures must be taken and the necessary equipment should be provided for the safety of the workers.* P8, Female, 23, 11.06.2021”. With such statement, the participant emphasizes that the social security dimension of the job is also important.

As it is known, the rapid and unplanned industrialization in Turkey has not been achieved in orderly and planned urbanization due to insufficient measures, and since the 1950s, the housing problem has reached an important level in fast-growing cities. The book, *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills*, has a similar process in the squatting process. Referring to this situation, P-12 stated that planning to prevent environmental pollution should also be taken into account.

*“First of all, it is necessary to improve the neighborhood financially, reduce unemployment and therefore prevent poverty. In doing so, industrial facilities are needed. But a factory should be built outside the houses and neighborhoods, not in the middle of the neighborhood.”* P12, Female, 23, 14.05.2021

It is a neighborhood vision shaped by industrial decentralization supported by the upper-scale plans highlighted in this statement. This process, which can be considered as the process of moving industrial facilities to more suitable locations outside the city, is also considered as a factor that reduces environmental pressure. P-7, who also linked the environmental dimension to the housing problem, has explained that living in a healthy environment is the key to the solution:

*“In other words, the housing problem primarily brings other problems, and it is clear that if this problem is not eliminated, other problems cannot be resolved. Another important*

*problem that comes after the housing problem is the environmental pollution, disadvantaged situations created by the wastes that are the result of this (Toxic wastes, smell of garbage, epidemic diseases that can be spread from garbage), and it is clear that basic needs cannot be easily addressed if problems such as access to clean water and electricity are not provided.”* P7, Female, 21, 18.06.2021

When it comes to prioritizing social problems and solutions, poverty is the most addressed issue for students. “As a social work student, in what field would you like to solve problems first?” In this context, 7 participants answered poverty (Table 3). Although it is difficult to measure poverty caused by factors such as inequality in income distribution, population growth, household size, rural-to-city migration, unemployment, discrimination, social exclusion, the context that students are addressing is the most general definition of poverty, namely the lack of the opportunity to meet the basic needs of people, and the lack of minimum living standards for people to live in.

Table 3. As a social work student, in what field would you like to solve problems?

Fields	F	%
Poverty	7	41.20
Unemployment	4	23.50
Education	3	17.60
Residential	2	11.80
Other	1	5.90

It is quite significant to understand and evaluate the poverty processes in *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills* from today’s perspective. Based on the book, P-1, who evaluates and relates poverty to today’s neighborhoods, describes the poverty process as follows:

*“Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills is a story of poverty that shows the unchanging face of Turkey with its children collecting garbage, the smell of garbage entangled in life, its roof flying from the wind, flooding in the rain. And there are many factors parallel to poverty. We must also associate health, discrimination and education with this. In short, this is the story of a decline that reveals poverty, the difficulties of slum life on the one hand, and the inconclusive existential efforts of women on the other.”* P1, Female, 21, 21.05.2021

It is worth noting that poverty also affects many issues such as material, social and cultural aspects, health, life expectancy, access to social facilities, employment,

learning and dignity. Poverty, which is discussed today as a multifaceted process, is address to be low income and expenditure level for a certain segment of society, low level of use of health and education services, openness to risks and exclusion and weakness from public decision-making mechanisms (Duru & Kalaycı, 2017). In this context, the participants gave the answer of poverty to the question “for which of the problems mentioned in *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills* should a social policy be developed first?” and stated that social policy for this field was important. As P-1 points out, poverty affects people’s access to services such as health, education, housing and infrastructure services, and therefore the well-being of individuals, families and society, and directly affects the level of well-being.

In this discourse, which is developed due to the relationship between unemployment and poverty, it is important for students to parallel where poverty is and where unemployment is widespread. Accordingly, it is seen that the students shaped the ways in which they expressed the problems in the city where they live and the methods of solution in line with the existing social policies from the point of view of social work.

Social policy has been of great importance for social work since its emergence as a profession and discipline (Pearman, 1973). Objectives of social policy such as social development, social peace, social justice, social balance, social integration and social democracy are also shared by social work. As a matter of fact, the main purpose of social work is to solve social problems such as unemployment, poverty, guilt, need for care, discrimination, exclusion, etc. Social policy is the most important tool that shapes plans, programs, services and practices for solving social problems. As it is known, the scope of social policy is covered under two separate topics in terms of subject and person. During the emergence of social policy as a science, the working class, which came to the forefront in the industrialization process, was the only segment that constituted the scope of social policy in terms of individuals.

Later, with the gradual change of working life and the development of the public and service sector, this scope has been included in the employees in this sector. Today, those that need to be protected economically, socially and those that need to be protected in particular have also had an important place in determining the scope of social policy. Therefore, as the scope of social policy has expanded, it has diversified on the issues covered. In this context, all issues concerning the well-being of society are also issues of social policy. The professional focus of social work is to solve social problems and thus to increase the level

of social welfare. Social work interacts with social policy in the process of identifying social problems, identifying the requirements that cause these problems and implementing policies and practices to meet these requirements (Denney 1998).

There are three basic methods followed in general social work applications. These are methods of social work intervention with the individual (micro), the group (mezzo) and the society (macro). In the section in which the policy change for ensuring social development is evaluated through the problem areas (Table 4), the approaches of the majority of students that this level should be society can also be discussed through macro intervention within the understanding of social work.

Table 4. At what level should policy change to ensure social development be?

Problem Area	At what level should policy change to ensure social development be?		
	Individual	Family	Community
Education	-	11.8%	88.2%
Nature	17.6%	-	82.4%
Poverty	5.9%	23.5%	70.6%
Residential	-	5.9%	94.1%
Unemployment	17.6%	5.9%	76.5%
Premises	-	-	100%

Macro intervention includes activities such as raising public awareness of a specific group of needs, a community under pressure or social problem, social policy development, rights advocacy, advocacy in making legal arrangements, and activities related to the reorganization of the social work system (Tomanbay, 2013). In this sense, they emphasized the need for macro interventions for broader solutions instead of intervention methods that are evaluated only as individual and family-oriented in solving almost all problems mentioned in the novel, *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills*.

For example, P-2, P-3 and P-4, who consider the problems experienced in Çiçektepe Neighborhood as housing, poverty, environment, education, unemployment, superstitions, should prioritize these problems and take initiatives to solve such problems today before the ministries:

*“To solve the problems experienced here, it must first be a joint pilot application zone of the Ministry of Family and Social Services and the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change. The social policies that*

*can be carried out here are to provide employment to the people there, to improve their current conditions and to improve their quality of life. In this neighborhood, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization will provide clean water to the houses by drilling after the initiatives that will enable repairs to be started as a solution to the road problem.” P2, Female, 21- P3, 22, Female- P4, 22, Female 21.05.2021*

P-7 stated that public awareness of a specific need group, a community under pressure or social problem should be raised, but that the main policy-making and implementing center is the state, and said:

*“Social policy development, unemployment is a macro-level problem, not a micro, and it is political. If there is poverty in one place, if there is no employment area, it means that the state is violating people’s right to work. The cause of poverty is not people, but the policies of the state. Or there may be a deficiency in existing policies/ mistakenly related. For example, if the state cannot provide equal income distribution, one part of society will prosper and the other will become poorer.” Or if the minimum wage does not increase in line with inflation in the country, people’s purchasing power will decrease. These examples can be increased. It can also be said for Çiçektepe that before the unemployment problem are problems such as not being able to provide access to a certain field of work, especially housing, and the lack of occupation for squatters. It can also be mentioned that the state follows the wrong policy or does not develop any policies.” P7, 22, Female, 18.06.2021*

P-8, P-9 and P-10, who stated that the social policies to be carried out can be solved according to the legal legislation, “Everyone has the right to have adequate living standards for the health and well-being of himself and his family, this right also covers nutrition, clothing, residential medical care and necessary social services and the right to safety in cases of unemployment, disease, disability, and inability to provide for other livelihoods arising from conditions.” Referring to the article, they stated:

*“For the problems described in the book, Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills, or similar problems that will occur today, article 25 of the Constitution will be a good thing. Depending on the article, interventions should be made in the areas needed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security.” P8, Female, 23-P9, 22, Female-P10, 21, Male, 11.06.2021*

The role of social workers in the implementation of social policies is quite high. Because the strategies and programs developed by social service, which shares the goal of reaching a healthy society with social policy, can be effective in this sense; in this way, it can be foreseen

that the formation of social policies that closely affect individuals, groups and societies can contribute more. For example, within the “Ethical Principles” published by the National Association of Social Workers in 1996, it was stated that every social worker should advocate for changing policies and laws to meet basic humanitarian needs and improve social justice (Schneider & Netting, 1999).

Although there is no complete unity on the level and scope of social policy to be produced in the problem areas (education, nature, poverty, housing, unemployment, environment) covered in the novel, *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills*, and there is no complete unity on the role of the social worker, different recommendations have been given about the role of the social worker in changing the policies and laws for different topics/problem areas.

In the book, *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills*, numerous social problems are mentioned such as poverty, unemployment and injustice. The protagonists in the book also struggle to cope with the negativity they encounter in this context and often feel powerless and inadequate. It is also very important for their mental health that these heroes feel that these protagonists have the power to intervene in their own lives. In this context, social work students emphasize the need to support the novel protagonists and their families to reduce the social problems in the book.

Participants state that the residents of Çiçektepe Neighborhood mentioned in the book should play an active role in increasing their well-being by enabling them to change and improve themselves. In this context, they stated that the primary role of the social worker regarding the field of educational problems should be booster. Booster approach also emphasizes elements such as dominance over the environment, recognition of social forces that negatively affect one’s life, and advocates the ideal of establishing partnership and equality among members of society in the process of individual liberation with its dimension that emphasizes social justice (Tuncay & Erbay, 2006).

Referring to article 26/2 of the UDHR, P-11 stated: *“The item 26, which is also included in the UDHR, can be a solution for us. Education needs to be improved to increase tolerance and establish peace. People need to be confident, to defend their rights, and that’s possible through education.” P11, Female, 21, 04.06.2021*

In the field of poverty and unemployment, students see social workers as the ones who highlight the strengths of the process and support the applicant in this direction. To reduce poverty and unemployment, protagonists of the novel should take responsibility for their situation and

consider them the main element of change. Stating that poverty and unemployment should often be addressed together, P-19 and P-20 stated: *“The residents of Çiçektepe Neighborhood need to intervene in their own lives. We do not know exactly what the circumstances are. That’s why the neighborhood should focus on their own lives, control where they are. In this respect, we care about the booster approach”*.

In the book, which is emphasized here, participants stated that the residents of the neighborhood should eliminate the sense of powerlessness they experience, reveal the power within them and reach a state of self-defense.

It is seen that students also attach importance to the role of the social worker and the role of the advocate for social workers. In particular, students stated that it is important to provide resources on unemployment, housing, poverty, direct to service, to connect service systems, and that steps should be taken to ensure that the residents of this neighborhood have confidence about the relationship to be established in the continuation of the professional relationship they will acquire.

P-21 and P-22, who stated that the necessary work should be done on the systems in which individuals live and interact, saw the rupture of the inter-human ties and limited access to services as a priority problem. In addition, they stated that there were problems with the decrease in participation in the decisions taken and expressed the absence of harmony and integration as social exclusion. They stated that there are such problems in the city where they live, and that social work, which is a profession and social science discipline developed within the framework of social policies, can play a role in the solution. In this respect, students stated:

*Article 36 of the Constitution of the Turkish Republic is as follows: Everyone has the right to residence and housing in a manner worthy of human dignity, which can meet their basic humanitarian needs.” Our solution for similar problems at this stage is as follows: The state should build solid housing by transforming on site for such sites, establish factories for the processing of raw materials in the area for the construction of houses and distribute their deeds to the beneficiaries. As a social work student, we must establish a bridge.” P21, Female, 23, P22, Female, 23, 30.04.2021*

With this view, P-21 and P-22 also consider the social workers as a mediator. By evaluating the situation and resources of the residents of Çiçektepe neighborhood, students emphasized their role of connecting and being intermediaries with the people who will provide services. They also stated that they should use the role of coordinator

depending on the individual focus within the environment to ensure that the system functions effectively and humanely. For example, 35.3% of the participants stated that the role of the social worker should be the coordinator.

Considering the question of “What should be the primary role of social work in the implementation of social policies?” in terms of environment, 29.4% of respondents stated that this role should be an activist. As is known, one of the main purposes of the social workers in practice and local is to be a planner and policy developer. In this context, researching, developing ways of adapting policies and elimination of the unsuitable or inefficient are among the main objectives. Therefore, the role of activist is gaining importance in this sense. In this respect, P-23 and P-24 indicated as follows:

*“Ecological awareness needs to be created, and sensitivity needs to be increased. Social work should take on the role of activists in the planning and policy-making process.” P23, Female, 22, P24, Female, 21, 23.04.2021*

Apart from these roles, social work students who express the need to transfer resources and power to the victim’s care about the role of activists along with other roles in this sense. It is seen that they have knowledge, skills and value according to different roles by establishing a relationship with the family, with the society. Here, it is seen that the choice of roles of the students is shaped according to their own conditions, the city in which they live or their own characteristics.

## CONCLUSIONS

Cities, throughout human history, can be seen as a new dimension of interpersonal relations, reflection on physical space. Especially in cities, the demographic and economic structure also refers to the social order that affects the behavior and thoughts of people. Therefore, the purposes of settling people who migrate to the city, a new neighborhood, are increasingly creating other problems. One of these is social and cultural processes such as adaptation with urban society and urbanization with economic problems such as housing and employment. Participant students, who evaluated this process through *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills* and associated it with the city where they lived, discussed this process within social work and social policy.

According to the students who presented and participated in the survey, participation in Çiçektepe Neighborhood is realized quickly, so despite the efforts to hold on, it is experiencing serious problems such as poverty, low capital, unemployment and the environment. Young people and children living in this neighborhood are also deprived of



the conditions that will allow them to benefit from educational opportunities. It also has serious problems in health, housing, employment and care services. They also stated that being a woman creates problems in Çiçektepe Neighborhood. As a result, there are opinions that the experience of exclusion of those who come to the city with migration is even more pronounced.

As a solution, it has been presented as important agendas to increase the quality and quantity of social work in Çiçektepe Neighborhood fairly, to improve education and health, and to make arrangements to prevent the intergenerational transfer of poverty. It is also a prominent understanding that this process is treated as a factor that reduces the feeling of exclusion. In terms of developing and successfully implementing all these policies, there are determinations that students consider it necessary to operate public institutions efficiently together with existing national and international legislation.

It is seen that social work, from the beginning of the 19th century to present, is considered as a professional responsibility to influence social policies to improve social justice and to improve conditions of individuals in need of help. In this context, it is seen that the students are trying to improve the conditions to solve the problems conveyed through Latife Tekin's novel, *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills*, and they care about developing social policy to dominate social justice. Therefore, it is seen that students adopt macro interventions in terms of some regulations such as raising awareness, developing social policy, advocating for rights and regulations.

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