Living in an armed conflict zone and Resilience across the system

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Outline

- Overview of Turkey and Kurds living in Turkey
- Brief history of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict
- Battles in 2015-2016
- Experiences at the individual level: Children and Families
- Experiences at wider: Education and Academia
- Resilience
Turkey...

- Located in the middle of Europe, Asia and Middle East
- Upper-middle-income
  - Child poverty! - 36%
  - In EU: 1%-32%, average = 10%
- 99.8% Muslim
- 81 million population
  - 70-75% Turkish
  - 19% Kurdish
  - 7-12% other minorities
- Structural and cultural violence
- Systematic socioeconomic underdevelopment
- Lowest urbanization rate, welfare status and life chances
- Child poverty: 49% - 55%
- Intergenerational transmission of poverty

- Kurds: Transnational ethnic community
- Semi-feudal structure; patriarchal
- Mainly lives in the East of Turkey

Ethnic conflict
### Brief History of the Turkish-Kurdish Conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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#### Key Points:

- **1923 - Republic**
  - Founded on the remnants of multi-ethnic, religious, and lingual Ottoman Empire.
  - Policies to construct a national (i.e., Turkish) state with a national (i.e., Turkish) identity.
  - Assimilation

- **1920 to 1940 - Riots**
  - Several riots against the assimilation policies of secular Turkish state.
  - More religious-based and tribal characteristics.
  - Each quelled by slaughter of thousands.
  - Systematic oppression of Kurds.

- **1978 - PKK**
  - Foundation of the Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK - Kurdish Workers Party).
  - Ethno-nationalistic perspective.
  - Demanding greater political and cultural rights and authority in the East of Turkey.

- **1980 - Military Coup**
  - Following the raging political violence between left-and right-wing groups.
  - 500k were tortured and arrested, hundreds died in prison, 50 were executed.
  - New Constitution: Militarily disciplined Turkish society. Complete denial and ban of ethnic minorities.

- **1984 to 2000 - Conflict**
  - PKK announced a Kurdish uprising.
  - 36k death – 6k civilians, 8k from Turkish Army, and 22k from PKK. 7k cases of unidentified murders and disappearances.
  - Destroyed villages and forced displacement of 1 million.
  - 1999 - PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was arrested. PKK declared a unilateral ceasefire.
Brief History of the Turkish-Kurdish Conflict

Early 2000’s
- Negotiations with the European Union.
- Some reforms to protect the rights of ethnic minorities.
- Pro-Kurdish political parties were banned.

2004 to 2015
- Periods of combats and ceasefires.
- Secret negotiations..
- In March 2013, Ocalan announced a ceasefire with peace talks.
- The ceasefire ended.

July 2015 and onwards
- Emergency state and open-ended and day-long curfews in 11 cities affecting 1.81 million residents.
- Extensive damage to property including housing, business, and public buildings because of heavy weaponry use (e.g., air-dropped bombs).
- Casualties:
  - 397 civilians (at least 79 children)
  - 223 unknown youth (rebels or civilians?)
  - 1,423 rebels and 851 state forces
- In July 2016, coup attempt. Emergency state in whole country.
Impact of the Turkish-Kurdish Conflict

- Individual Level
  - Children and Families

- Wider Level: Education and Academia
  - Teachers: Ayşe Çelik
  - Local group: Colorful Hopes
  - Academics for Peace
Impact at the individual level: Children and Families

Southeastern Project

- Between June and October 2016
- Three cities affected from the conflict: Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Van
- Face-to-face interviews during house visits
- 495 caregivers (mainly mothers) for their 653 children aged from 1.5 to 18

- Demographic and socioeconomic variables
- Children’s armed conflict experiences
Impact at the individual level: Children and Families

Socioeconomic adversity

- 48% of the caregivers were illiterate, only 0.8% had university education
- 95% were unemployed
- Almost all families were in the extreme poverty
- Crowded households (average = 7, range = 2-17)
- High fertility rate (average = 5, range = 1 to 15)
Impact at the individual level: Children and Families

Due to battles and curfews:

- 78% of children changed their residence at least once (average = 2, range = 0-8)
- 41% of school age children changed their school at least once (average = 1, range = 0-3)
- 16% of them could not attend school for a period ranging between 1 and 12 months (average = 8)
- 21% of children were separated from at least one of their parents
- 35% of children were separated from close associates (e.g. siblings, friends)
**Direct Experience**

- Exposure to combats: 88.5%
- Attack on house: 64.9%
- Attack on school: 48.5%
- Deprivation of basic needs: 82.3%
- Physical assault by the armed forces: 85.5%
- Armed assault: 81.8%
- Injury/disability because of violence: 84.3%
- Sudden, violent death: 84.3%
- Detention: 75.3%
- Arrest: 75%

**Indirect Experience**

- Exposure to combats: 19.9%
- Attack on house: 22.7%
- Attack on school: 27.3%
- Deprivation of basic needs: 19.5%
- Physical assault by the armed forces: 6.92%
- Armed assault: 15.6%
- Injury/disability because of violence: 14.7%
- Sudden, violent death: 14.8%
- Detention: 22.4%
- Arrest: 24.7%

**No Experience**

- Exposure to combats: 7.7%
- Attack on house: 27.3%
- Attack on school: 36.2%
- Deprivation of basic needs: 13.1%
- Physical assault by the armed forces: 3.1%
- Armed assault: 1.56%
- Injury/disability because of violence: 1%
- Sudden, violent death: 1%
- Detention: 2.8%
- Arrest: 0.3%
Impact at the individual level

Children and families experience

- Sharp socioeconomic hardship
- Exposure to armed conflict experiences
- Poverty and political violence increase violence in families

- All linked to psychological problems in children and adolescents
Impact at the wider level: Education

Fall 2015

- Due to curfews, education was disrupted
  - 17 districts of 7 cities
  - 1,556 schools
  - 360k students and 17k teachers

- Teachers in two districts were instructed to leave the region
  - an SMS from the Ministry of Education
  - to receive a “training” in the middle of the semester
Impact at the wider level: The case of Ayşe Teacher

The case of Ayşe Çelik:
A teacher calling in a talk show as an audience from Diyarbakır on January 2016

Her statement:
“What is happening here is misrepresented on television. I cannot really say more, please don’t stay silent. Please show more sensitivity as human beings. Don’t let people die. Don’t let children die. Don’t let mothers cry”.
Responses at the wider level: The Case of Ayşe Teacher

- Ayşe Teacher was charged with terrorist propaganda and sentenced to 15 months in prison.
- She entered in prison with her 6-month-old baby.
- After the campaigns and her lawyers’ applications, her sentencing was deferred.
- She was released upon the Constitutional Court’s verdict that her freedom of expression was violated.
Impact at the wider level: A community group

- Colorful Hopes Association
- A local organization in Sur district of Diyarbakir
Responses at the wider level: A community group

- Leisure and sport activities
- Workshops on social equality, peace, ecosystem and environmental issues
- Talks with “celebrities”
- Campaigns:
  - Toy library
  - Book library
  - Bikes
- Mobilizing and training local people and volunteers
- Research on child labor: Children- not seasonal, all the time!
January 11, 2016

1,128 pro-peace academic

Public petition:
«We will not be a party to this crime!»

Calling the government to «prepare the conditions for negotiations and create a road map that would lead to a lasting peace»
Impact at the wider level: Academics for Peace

- Furious reactions from the government
- Disciplinary action by university administrations upon the call from the Council of Higher Education
- Many academics were dismissed or forced to resignation
- Criminal investigation
- Jail

- Public lynch, hate speech, harassment
Impact at the wider level: Academics for Peace

- Coup attempt in July 2016
- Emergency state during the following two years
- «Executive Orders» - not just Gülenist movement
- 126k exiled from public service and positions
  - Academics for Peace
  - Left-wing, union members and representatives
  - Kurdish groups, teachers, dozens of elected mayors
- Arrest of co-chairs of pro-Kurdish People’s Democratic Party
  - Journalists, lawyers, Medical Chamber members
Responses at the wider level: Academics for Peace
In addition to more than 1,800 academics, including Noam Chomsky, Şevval Benhabib, Steven Pinker, Judith Butler and Bruce Alberts, the following institutions and groups also support the petition:

Research Institute on Turkey, Academic Solidarity Network, Forum Transregionale Studien, Article 19, Global Freedom of Expression, Columbia University, Academics for Peace - North America, Academics for Peace - United Kingdom, California Scholars for Academic Freedom, PEN International, National Writers Union - UAW Local 1881/AFL-CIO, English PEN, PEN America and Dansk PEN.
Academics for Peace - Hearing Statistics as of 21.05.2019

Distribution of Sentences

- 15 Months: Suspended 6, Convicted 119, Deferred 0
- 27 Months: Suspended 17, Convicted 0, Deferred 0
- 22 Months: Suspended 18, Convicted 0, Deferred 0
- 18 Months: Suspended 10, Convicted 0, Deferred 0
- 30 Months: Suspended 6, Convicted 0, Deferred 0
- 25 Months: Suspended 5, Convicted 0, Deferred 0
- 36 Months: Suspended 1, Convicted 0, Deferred 0

Courts and Cases

- Ongoing: 100
- Deferred: 0
- Convicted: 0
- Suspended: 0

Upcoming Hearings per Month

- July 2019: 0
- June 2019: 0
- October 2019: 45
- November 2019: 28
- September 2019: 25
- May 2019: 21
- December 2019: 2

Busiest Hearing Days

- 08.10.2019: 15
- 18.06.2019: 15
- 16.07.2019: 15
- 05.11.2019: 13
- 12.06.2019: 12
- 06.07.2019: 11
- 18.07.2019: 11
- 02.07.2019: 10
- 01.11.2019: 10

CALL FOR SOLIDARITY

For Academics for Peace # Turkey
December 5, 2017, 9:00
Istanbul Caglayan Courthouse

#HANDSOFFMYCOWLEAGUES
#ACADEMICSforPEACE

@barisakademik
www.barisincikademiisyenler.net
Excerpts from the Hearings...

The Statement of an academic from Marmara University /January 04, 2018
“I’m neither a hero nor an enemy, I’m just a human being with a conscience.

The Statement of an academic from Galatasaray University /December 22, 2017
“The civilian casualties of the conflict period had lead me to deep worries. Even

The Statement of an academic from Marmara University /December 21, 2017
“If the same text would appear in front of me, I wouldn’t hesitate to undersign it

The Statement of an academic from Istanbul University /December 7, 2017
“I have spent 16 full years in academia, and I have always wanted to remain in it. My
only ideal is to lead a scientist’s life and serve the society.
I have undersigned the declaration dated January 11, 2016 solely for this reason. I
was watching the events that have occurred in early 2016 with sorrow. I was aware
of the applications made to ECHR by the lawyers. I have deeply felt the agony of the
wounded people waiting for ambulance, the dead bodies being kept in
refrigerators. In the end, I thought it (the declaration) would contribute to the
struggle for peace.”
Overall

- Impact at multiple levels of the society
- Evaluation of the situation from the lens of Resilience
Resilience - definitions...

- “Positive development despite adversity.” (Luthar, 2003)
- “The ability to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges, strengthened and more resourceful.” (Walsh, 2008)
- “Positive adaptation to adversity despite serious threats to adaptation or development.” (Masten, 2001)
- “Overcoming adversity, whilst also potentially subtly changing, or even dramatically transforming, (aspects of) that adversity.” (Hart et al., 2016)
  - or, beating the odds and changing the odds
Resilience through...

- consciousness-raising by working with individuals or groups in relation to the various inequalities they might face.
- emancipatory learning, adult education and legal rights education.
- mobilizing communities, neighborhood organization and community development.
- advocacy work, civic activism or advocating for others can inspire transformation.
- negotiating, developing and using persuasion skills.
- lobbying, campaigning and understanding the stages of policy and law-making and, thus, where to focus your effort.
- co-production, distributing leadership, participatory action research.
RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

Basics
- Good Housing
- Money to live
- Being safe
- Transport and getting to places
- Healthy diet
- Exercise and fresh air
- Enough sleep
- Play and hobbies
- Not being judged

Belonging
- Find somewhere you feel like you belong
- Find your place in the world
- Spend time with good people and in good places
- Keep relationships going
- More healthy relationships the better
- Take what you can from relationships where there is some hope
- Get together with people you can rely on
- Responsibilities & obligations: for example, looking after your brother/sister or going to school
- Focus on good times and places
- Understand what has happened in your life
- Predict a good experience of someone or something new
- Make friends and mix with other people

Learning
- Make school or college work as well as possible
- Engage mentors
- Plan out your future
- Organise yourself
- Highlight achievements
- Develop life skills

Coping
- Understand right from wrong
- Be brave
- Solving problems
- Focus on the good things in life. Put on your Positivity Glasses!
- Find time for your interests
- Calming down and making yourself feel better
- Remember tomorrow is another day
- Lean on others when necessary
- Have a laugh

Core self
- Instil a sense of hope
- Understand other people’s feelings
- Know and understand yourself
- Take responsibility for yourself
- Find time for your talents
- There is existing help and solutions for problems, use them

Noble truths
- Accepting
- Conserving
- Commitment
- Enlisting

Adapted from Hart & Blincow with Thomas 2007 www.boingboing.org.uk. Co-designed with Marton Primary’s Resilience Committee
Practice

In the context of Turkish-Kurdish Conflict...

Can you identify the Resilient moves?

How can we use Resilience Framework to build resilience?

- Individual Level
  - Children and Families

- Community Level
  - Local group: Colorful Hopes

- Wider System
  - Academics for Peace