



Care allowance as a social assistance scheme in Turkey: Deservingness, mobility and just welfare state

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About ETHOS

ETHOS - Towards a European Theory Of Justice and fairness is a European Commission Horizon 2020 research project that seeks to provide building blocks for the development of an empirically informed European theory of justice and fairness. The project seeks to do so by:

- a) refining and deepening knowledge on the European foundations of justice - both historically based and contemporarily envisaged;
- b) enhancing awareness of mechanisms that impede the realisation of justice ideals as they are lived in contemporary Europe;
- c) advancing the understanding of the process of drawing and re-drawing of the boundaries of justice (fault lines); and
- d) providing guidance to politicians, policy makers, activists and other stakeholders on how to design and implement policies to reverse inequalities and prevent injustice.

ETHOS does not only understand justice as an abstract moral ideal that is universal and worth striving for but also as a re-enacted and re-constructed 'lived' experience. This experience is embedded in legal, political, moral, social, economic and cultural institutions that claim to be geared toward giving members of society their due.

In the ETHOS project, justice is studied as an interdependent relationship between the ideal of justice and its manifestation – as set out in the complex institutions of contemporary European societies. The relationship between the normative and practical, the formal and informal, is acknowledged and critically assessed through a multi-disciplinary approach.

To enhance the formulation of an empirically based theory of justice and fairness, ETHOS will explore the normative (ideal) underpinnings of justice and its practical realisation in four heuristically defined domains of justice - social justice, economic justice, political justice, and civil and symbolic justice. These domains are revealed in several spheres:

- a) philosophical and political tradition;
- b) legal framework;
- c) daily (bureaucratic) practice;
- d) current public debates; and
- e) the accounts of vulnerable populations in six European countries (Austria, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Turkey and the UK).

The question of drawing boundaries and redrawing the fault-lines of justice permeates the entire investigation.

Utrecht University in the Netherlands coordinates the project, and works together with five other research institutions. These are based in Austria (European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy), Hungary (Central European University), Portugal (Centre for Social Studies), Turkey (Boğaziçi University), and the UK (University of Bristol). The research project lasts from January 2017 to December 2019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The targeted social assistance within a framework of deservingness defines the modern welfare state provisions. Although the allocation of resources to certain welfare benefits and the prioritization of beneficiary groups (usually with urgent needs due to economic crisis, disability, etc.) is a fiscal decision, the construction of category of deservingness also reflects a normative discussion as the distinction is usually made pertaining to categories of 'ablement/disablement (not necessarily referring to disability). In this respect the status of deservingness is a matter of justice as the boundaries of social citizenship are drawn according to the inclusionary and exclusionary aspects of the social assistance framework. As the category of deservingness create hierarchies among the citizens who have access to welfare schemes, it has implications for redistributive, recognitive and representative justice claims.

This study explores the concepts of 'deservingness' and 'mobility' with a particular focus on the care allowance scheme in Turkey. The 2001 economic crisis that had drastic effects on the Turkish economy was a major period for the social policy transformations that took place. The care allowance which has become one of the major social assistance schemes in Turkey in the last two decades demonstrates the boundaries of deservingness that are drawn in relation to the poor.

This study demonstrates that poverty is not a category of deservingness in the welfare bureaucracy; it always interacts with other categories that create 'deserving poor'. Deservingness is closely associated with dependency, so that once the 'dependency' position of a poor person is established they emerge as deserving. "Able-bodied" poor, mostly men, are not the target group of the social assistance schemes. Along with a dependency position, identities also play a role in debates on deservingness as the literature also highlights. Difficulties of mobility in the application process is a major issue, along with the fragile mobility of the beneficiaries as they have to inform the social services administrators of their every step. A welfare state that provides citizens with universal access to welfare benefits is perceived as a 'just welfare state'. Not just equal access but the participatory process for the just welfare state emerges as an important criterion; the social consensus and dialogue for a just welfare state is a matter of redistributive justice as it requires a consensus on the allocation of resources.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This country report is prepared within the framework of WP5.5. The aim of 5.5 is to examine what people understand to be the relation between contemporary welfare states and social justice. As provided in the guidelines, welfare state here is understood as an institution which provides benefits (income, goods and services) to citizens in a particular society, regardless of whether they have contributed to the cost of providing them. Secondly, it provides *specific* benefits which are seen as meeting needs. Finally, the institution is funded by taxation, with tax schedules having no specific connection with the benefits that various classes of people are expected to receive. In short the institution is potentially redistributive, specific in its aims, compulsory, and surveilling (Miller, 1990, pp. 99-100). In this respect, the evolving questions in the study are: *Is the welfare state an expression of social justice or is it an unjust limitation of freedom? Does it promote equality or entrench discrimination?* Two ways in which the investigation is reflected in policy: contribution and belonging which are framed as justice as redistribution (contribution) and justice as recognition (belonging) in the study.

Within this framework, this country study explores the concepts of ‘deservingness’ and ‘mobility’ with a particular focus on the ‘care allowance’ scheme in Turkey. The 2001 economic crisis that had drastic effects on the Turkish economy was a major period for the social policy transformations that took place. Since then, Turkey has experienced considerable increase in the social assistance schemes together with an increase in the public expenditure allocated to such transfers. The Care Allowance, introduced in 2007, is a means-tested (disability threshold and household income) cash benefit provided to the care provider of a disabled family member. The Care Allowance has become one of the major social assistance schemes in Turkey in the last two decades; the country study explores the experiences of access to this particular social assistance scheme within the cognitive and ideological boundaries of welfare bureaucracy, and the tensions that pertains to injustices in relation to such categorization of deservingness and mobility.

Firstly, the country report will elaborate on the analytical frame of the study, it will be followed by an overview of the national context with a focus on the social assistance schemes. Subsequently, the report will deal with the analysis based on the qualitative study conducted in Istanbul where beneficiaries, social policy administrators, social workers and NGO representatives were interviewed. In the conclusion, the report explores how the categories of deservingness (ablement/disablement) and mobility/immobility are relevant in understanding the injustices along the lines of belonging.

2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Ideas of public/collective provision pre-date modern welfare states; the welfare provisions that target poor population and the categories of deserving poor were already been developed in the 19th century. The English Poor Law (1834) and Dutch Armenwet (1854) identified categories of deserving poor including elderly, sick and children (Van Oorschot & Roosma, 2017). The Poor Relief Law (1876) of the Ottoman Empire targeted the elderly, disabled, orphaned children and people who cannot look after themselves by work (Özbek, 2006).

Targeted social assistance within a framework of deservingness also defines modern welfare state provisions (Van Oorschot & Roosma, 2017). Although the allocation of resources to particular welfare benefits and the prioritization/targetting of beneficiary groups (frequently with urgent needs due to economic crisis, disability, etc.) is a fiscal decision, the construction of category of deservingness also reflects a normative discussion as the distinction is usually made pertaining to the categorization of 'ablement/disablement (not necessarily refers to category of disability)'. It is in this respect that the status of deservingness is a matter of justice as the boundaries of social citizenship are drawn according to the inclusionary and exclusionary aspects of the social assistance framework. Hence, the idea of citizenship implies a universality that does not reflect real-life statuses (Fraser & Gordon, 1994, Lister, 2003). The category of deservingness in this respect draws the boundaries of vulnerable citizen's relation with the welfare state. While a specified vulnerability may be legitimate in the eyes of the public (see Van Oorschot & Roosma, 2017) and the state; other vulnerabilities (laziness, willingness to abuse the system) can be perceived as personal traits, race, or immigration status. The stigma that comes with them creates an illegitimate status to receive welfare benefit.

The idea of deserving/non-deserving citizens is firstly created through having reference groups with specific needs: people over 65; workers with impairment/disability; unemployed; families with dependent children; sick employees; households with a lack of means; all adult citizens (Van Oorschot & Roosma, 2017). Van Oorschot and Roosma (2017) argue that social assistance benefits are more accessible, generous, and non-reciprocal for certain groups; among them the elderly and disabled are the least stigmatized in their access and the unemployed the most.

The identity of people also plays a role in the non-deserving/deserving status. 'The deserving are those poor people who belong to 'us'. In modern societies, this criterion might result in an unwillingness to support needy people from ethnic minorities or foreign residents in general' (Oorschot, 2000: 35). Roma in many contexts have been perceived as undeserving poor as the stigma associated with the culturalization of Roma as abled/lazy group who have tendency to exploit the welfare system creates a stigma for Roma and hinders their access to welfare benefits (Akkan et al., 2011).

According to Oorschot (2000: 36) there are five criteria for deservingness that explain how the categories are created: 1. control: poor people's control over their neediness, or their responsibility for it: the less control, the more deserving; 2. need: the greater the level of need, the more deserving; 3. identity: the identity of the poor, i.e. their proximity to the rich or their 'pleasantness'; the closer to 'us', the more deserving; 4. attitude: poor people's attitude towards support, or their docility or gratefulness: the more compliant, the more deserving; 5. reciprocity: the degree of reciprocation by the poor, or having earned support: the more reciprocation, the more deserving.

As the categories of deservingness create hierarchies among citizens who have access to welfare schemes, it has implications for redistributive, recognitive and representative justice claims. The fair redistribution of resources, the recognition of the needs of non-deserving categories and representation of the claims for equal access to social assistance schemes identify the injustices that pertains to the welfare provisions and construction of citizenship.

In this country study, following the guidelines of WP5.5, the questions are operationalized at three levels: 1) How has retrenchment been contested and how have people mobilised ideas of justice?

2) How does the welfare state respond to and shape mobility? 3) What do people understand as the relation between welfare state and justice in theory and in practice? The experiences of social assistance schemes; the relation between social security/ social protection, deservingness and justice; and the mobilization of ideas of justice in welfare struggles are explored in this respect.

In the course of the fieldwork, the in-depth interviews were carried out with:

3 social assistance scheme administrators: two administrators responsible for care allowance schemes at the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (male) and a local administrator (female);

2 beneficiaries (female);

1 representative of the disability (physically disabled) NGO (male);

1 activist working in the disability (physically disabled) NGO (male);

1 social worker working in the social services department of municipality (also the director of the institution) (male).

3. NATIONAL CONTEXT

Turkey shares the characteristics with Southern European welfare states with a corporatist social protection system and social assistance schemes of a clientalist and fragmented nature (Bugra and Keyder, 2006; Gal, 2010). The normative construction of the family in society referred to as familialism defines the features of the welfare system in Turkey. Like in other familialist regimes, in Turkey the family acts as the main care provider for dependents. Gal (2010) suggests that-along with the above factors, religion also plays a role in social policymaking. It is a cultural element that is intertwined with familialism and a degree of orthodoxy whose influence on family policy is dynamic, temporary and context dependent.

Turkey has been responsive to the process of Europeanization as a result of its prolonged EU candidacy and its democratization process. In the last two decades, the country has drastically changed its welfare regime, implementing reforms in the previously fragmented systems of pensions, social security and healthcare moving towards a unified social security system and general health insurance (Bugra & Candas, 2011; Yilmaz, 2017). The developments in the social assistance schemes and the introduction of various cash transfer schemes also mark this period which saw the introduction of extensive social assistance schemes targeting the poor. These changes took place in the context of a global economy of unregulated capitalism (Bugra, 2018).

For Powell and Yörük (2017) the changes in social policies in the last decade have driven Turkey away from the Southern European model and towards a new one that incorporates both liberal and social democratic characteristics. They identify that the changing welfare system in Turkey indicates a new regime type that is developing in the emerging markets. The main social policy tool of such welfare regimes is a well-developed social assistance scheme. Since the 2000s, the drastic increase in the social

assistance schemes together with the increase in the public expenditure allocated to such transfers marks the welfare regime changes in Turkey (Powell and Yörük 2017).

It should be noted that the 2001 economic crisis that had drastic effects on the Turkish economy was also a time of major social policy transformations. Following the 2001 crisis, social policies have addressed urban poverty, referred as ‘new poverty’ as the changes in the labour market affected groups who are left out of the social protection schemes (Bugra & Keyder 2006). ‘Jobless growth’ along with ‘working poor’ has constituted a significant problem, and has also defined the policies addressing poverty reduction. An OECD study shows that in Turkey 16% of working people have incomes below the poverty threshold (according to country’s median income) and this is the highest rate in the OECD (Bugra, 2018).

After a recovery from the 2001 crisis, the 2008–09 recession interrupted the long expansion and the catching–up process. The recession of 2008–09 led to a massive collapse in exports and subsequently in GDP, a reduction of family income and an increase in unemployment rates (TEPAV). However, since the second quarter of 2009, the economy has quickly rebounded (OECD 2010). As Aytaç et al. (2015: 15) argues:

Households tried to cope with the crisis in various ways, including the use of labour market strategies, making changes in family residences, cutting down on consumption, selling assets or borrowing money. Most common were consumption reduction strategies, which can be implemented quickly, most of which are not a major threat to family wellbeing. Not surprisingly, more strategies were used by households that experienced economic hardship, especially unemployment, reduced earnings, and underemployment. Longer periods of breadwinner unemployment were associated with efforts to increase earnings from work (e.g., additional jobs, using female and child labour). In addition, higher levels of coping are found among those with fewer financial resources in the form of lower income and those with higher housing costs (i.e., renters).

Social assistance is not a new phenomenon in the Turkish welfare regime but dates back to the 19th century. The elderly, disabled people and orphaned children without a family have been considered as the ‘deserving poor’ since the Ottoman period. A social assistance scheme *muhtacin maaşı* (needy person income) was introduced in 1910 during Sultan Abdulhamit’s rule. The ‘deserving poor’ who were qualified to receive the *muhtacin maaşı* were those with no income, no relative or family to look after, the elderly, the disabled and orphans (Özbek, 2006). In the late Ottoman Empire, the local administration also played an important role in providing social assistance (poor relief) to the poor. In the mid-nineteenth century it was common for municipalities to put aside 2.5 per cent of their income to support the poor and make regular transfers to them (Öktem, 2018).

The elderly and disabled without a family continued to be the deserving poor in the era of the Turkish Republic. Disability and Elderly Allowance (known as 222) was enacted in 1976. This was one of the institutionalized social assistance programs of the State. Prior to the 2000s, the establishment of the State Institution *Social Solidarity Fund* (SYDTF) that was responsible for social assistance schemes also marks the foundation of an institutional approach to the means-tested social assistance. First centrally organized social assistance schemes have been initiated by World Bank’s Social Risk and

Mitigation Project launched in 2001. In 2006, SYDGM took over all nationwide social assistance schemes introduced by this project with an aim to develop a comprehensive national social assistance policy.

However, the developments in the area of social assistance schemes have only become important after the 2001 crisis and continued under the AKP government. Public spending in this area has increased from 0.5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2002 to close to 1.5% in 2014, excluding social assistance provision by municipal governments (Bugra, 2018). As the government has expanded the means-tested social assistance schemes drastically, between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of social assistance spending in total government spending increased by 266 per cent (Powell & Yörük, 2017). Social assistance benefits provided by the Fund were both in the form of in-kind and cash transfers.

Since the 2000s, there have also been important institutional changes in the social policy area: In 2011, the Ministry of Family and Social Policy was established. Prior to the Ministry, the state institution responsible for social assistance schemes was Social Solidarity Fund established in 1986 as a directorate. In 2018, the Ministry of Family and Social Policy and Ministry of Labour and Social Security were merged. The new Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services is responsible for the administration of the social assistance schemes run by the central government.

Traditionally, local administrations have been deeply involved in the provision of poor relief in Turkey and local administrations have taken over more and more social assistance functions (Öktem, 2018). In the civil sphere, a political economy of religiously oriented charity has gained more power during the AKP's rule (Göçmen, 2014). Religious organizations have become the key civil society actors in poverty relief and their political influence has increased.

The Directorate General for Social Assistance and Solidarity (SYDGM) established in 2004 to coordinate and implement nationwide social assistance schemes is now operating under the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services. The emergence of SYDGM has been an important step taken towards the institutionalization of social assistance within central bureaucracy (Yakut-Çakar & Yılmaz, 2015).

The Social Solidarity Fund (SYDTF) is a unique institution of Turkey's social assistance regime: Directorate General of the Fund (SYDGM) is located at the Ministry and the social assistance is provided by the parastatal foundations -Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (SYDV) established around Turkey. These foundations (SYDV) are not the local branches of the SYDGM, but independent units governed by the local civil authorities and they have their own board of trustees composed of local state administrators. The foundations receive funds from the central government and they are semi-autonomous administrative units. Interestingly, while some social assistance schemes are almost completely centrally organized, some are totally left to local discretion of these foundations (Yakut-Çakar & Yılmaz, 2015).

In 2012, the AKP government made important changes to the SYDTF law that expanded the scope of the SYDTF. The number of beneficiaries of the Fund increased as a result of changes in the eligibility criteria that included citizens in formal employment. This reform established a poverty threshold, that the semi-autonomous administrative units at the local level could use as a means-

testing tool. In 2016, under the influence of global trends, the government introduced new measures that linked the receipt of benefits to participation in active labour market policies (Öktem, 2018).

The Social Assistance Schemes are composed of in-kind transfers (like food and fuel) and cash transfers categorized under the areas of family assistance, education assistance, assistance to the disabled, assistance for special situations (like disasters), health-related social assistance and the social assistance targeting non-citizens (Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, 2019).

Cash transfers include a wide range of programs. CCT (Conditional Cash Transfers) are developed on the World Bank model. In order to receive CCT benefits pregnant women have to deliver their baby in a hospital and go to regular medical check-ups before and immediately after birth and continue with medical check-ups until the child reaches the age of six. To obtain benefits through the education support program, children have to be at least six years old and go to school. Apart from CCTS, cash transfers to widows, families of military recruits and orphans are among the programs. There are also cash schemes provided to the disabled and elderly, and education support to students outside CCTS.

Syrian refugees also have access to social assistance schemes (as well as social services, primary and secondary education and universal health insurance). This is under the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, ratified in 2013 that regulates the rights and obligations of persons under temporary protection. The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), an EU-funded emergency aid programme implemented by Turkish Red Crescent in collaboration with the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and World Food Programme, is an unconditional cash benefit programme for Syrians under temporary protection and other refugees under international protection in Turkey (ESSN, 2019). Refugees who are eligible under the ESSN program must have registered for temporary or international protection in Turkey and have a registered residency address. They must also fall into one of the following categories: women living alone, single-parent households, elderly individuals over age 60 without any younger family member in the household, households with a disabled family member, households with four or more children, or households with a high share of people in need of care (Yılmaz, 2018).

Care allowance provided to the family member of a disabled person is a new policy initiative. Introduced in 2007, it is a means-tested (disability threshold and household income) cash benefit provided to the care provider. Conditions require a minimum disability extent of 50%. There is also a means test that takes total household income divided among all adult household members, and this must be lower than 2/3 of the minimum wage. While the medical report is provided by the Ministry of Health, the household income threshold is decided by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy. The care provider who receives the cash benefit is a family member or a relative who lives in the same household and provides 24-hour care to the disabled person. Extended family members who live in the same household may also receive *care allowance* if they provide care to the disabled. When the care allowance was launched the numbers of entitled care providers reached 30.638. Since then, the increase in the numbers has been dramatic reaching 513,276 in 2018.

The social assistance schemes in Turkey are fragmented, discretionary and irregular (Bugra & Keyder 2006; Öktem, 2018; Yakut-Çakar & Yılmaz, 2015). There are also overlaps among the programs, administered by different institutions which apply different rules (Öktem, 2018). Even the nationwide

social assistance schemes, which are standardized and regular, they do not take the universalistic form of a guaranteed minimum income policy (Bugra, 2018).

Yet, according to Bugra (2018), the growing policy emphasis on social assistance could be interpreted as an attempt at the social inclusion of groups hitherto excluded from the system of social redistribution. Bugra (2018) argues that the current approach to social policy is shaped more by the question 'How to live with the poor?' Means-tested social assistance operates with attempts to target the 'deserving poor', a category in which women have an important place as privileged beneficiaries. Women without relatives to take care of them have a privileged position among the 'deserving poor', along with elderly and disabled. Beyond the realm of social assistance policies, the divide between those who need protection and independent members of society defines a social policy environment where the terms of citizenship of these two groups are defined differently (Bugra, 2018).

4. THE STUDY

This report focuses on care allowance as a social assistance scheme and explores how the allowance draws the boundaries of deservingness and determines the mobility of the beneficiaries. As elaborated in the previous section, care allowance provided to the family member of disabled person is a means-tested cash benefit provided to the care provider. The eligibility threshold for cash for care scheme requires a minimum disability extent of 50%. The care provider who receives the cash benefit is a family member or a relative who lives in the same household and provides 24-hour care to the disabled person.

4.1. DESERVINGNESS

The state administrators referred to the concept of 'disadvantaged' groups a category that differentiates certain groups from the poor more generally in terms of their deservingness. This disadvantaged status in society comes with dependency as discussed above. This category could expand beyond the dependent elderly, disabled or widow to those doing military service (whose family receives social assistance), and families who are dependent on their son's wage or who have a chronic illness. For instance, the state provides electricity without payment as an assistance to those who are dependent on a machine to live.

According to the social worker interviewed, there is no priority among the disadvantaged groups. They are all targeted. As he said: "We do not make distinction among the disabled or homeless children. They are all disadvantaged and the welfare state has to respond to them. Here, the aim is to increase well-being of the disadvantaged citizen." (Social worker, male)

Deservingness in the narratives of the state administrators emerges as a category that encompasses groups that are identified as deserving poor. The category of poverty is not in itself sufficient to access social assistance schemes. There is always another category like disabled, elderly, women that intersects with the situation of poverty and gives the status of deservingness. One of the administrators expressed that:

We divide the social assistance schemes into two. There are the regular social assistance schemes and periodical ones. The regular ones are provided as monthly payments to the individuals as long as their dependent/needful/destitute (muhtaçlık) situation continues. The periodical assistance schemes respond to the immediate needs, to solve the urgent problem. We cannot say that there are no groups who do not have access to any social assistance scheme. However, we could not also say that there is a regular social assistance scheme like basic income where the state provides an indefinite monthly income. The characteristics of the social assistance schemes in our system is that we do not provide social assistance to the individual just because he/she is in poverty; she has to have another feature. Like the underprivileged elderly, we give 601YTL now to the elderly poor. We provide social assistance to the poor if she is disabled, if she is a woman who lost her husband or a poor who is a student with school-based needs. Poor and some other category has to be there. There is a group of people in Turkey who are just poor, they are not disabled, widow, elderly etc., we do not provide those groups with social assistance on a regular base. There is group of poor in Turkey who are not the target of the social assistance schemes. Apart from them we could say that the social protection scheme in Turkey covers the rest. (Social Assistance Schemes high-ranked administrator, male)

As revealed in the narratives of the social assistance bureaucracy, deservingness as category does not include poverty as a category in-itself but, the 'dependent' position of a poor person emerges as a deserving category. Hence, able-bodied' poor men mostly do not fall under the social protection umbrella, their poverty is perceived as a matter of inclusion/participation in the labour market.

We have an integrated system with İş-Kur (Turkish Employment Agency). If we decide that a beneficiary is able to work, we refer them to Employment Agency, where they get training to increase their employability, we provide incentives to them to get to work. If they do not accept the work offers, we cut their social assistance benefits. If a beneficiary rejects job offers three times in the labour market, we end their assistance. We are aware that the labour market itself would not solve it, macro-economic policies are needed. The State does not provide social assistance to those who are able to work in the labour market. We only provide periodical assistance to them to respond immediate needs. (Social Assistance Schemes high-ranked administrator, male)

Even for those categories that fall under the deserving category like disabled are not automatically provided with social assistance if they potentially could find a job in the labour market. 'If a disabled person starts working in the labour market, his/her social benefit is ended automatically' (Social Assistance Schemes high-ranked administrator). Hence along with dependency, 'employability' is another boundary that defines deservingness in the social assistance scheme. As one respondent put it: 'I personally believe that if a person becomes unemployed, first the unemployment insurance should be provided to that person. If that does not work, we should guarantee the minimum income of that person to continue during his lifetime.' (Social Assistance Schemes high-ranked administrator, male)

NGO representatives have wider definition of deservingness and include identity categories rather than dependency category. According to the disability NGO activist, the victims of hate crimes,

LGBT, Roma, non-Sunni religious groups should all be included. He points out that he uses the term 'discriminated against' rather than 'disadvantaged'. These are vulnerable groups. A disabled woman has a double vulnerability according to him: "There are people with multiple disabilities, but if you are a Kurdish or an Alevi additionally, there is no meteor left in the universe that has not fallen on your head." (Disability NGO activist, male)

According to the beneficiary Nilüfer (pseudo name) who receives care allowance to look after her disabled child, the most vulnerable, most wounded group in the society are the disabled. They are dealing with impossibilities all the time, they have to fight with everything. They are not even prioritized in urban planning.

While administrators have more clear-cut categories with regard to deservingness, the beneficiaries make claims for a deserving position with regard to their specific needs. Sometimes this leads to identification of other social groups as undeserving. Limited resources and the myths around allocation of all resources to certain groups create tensions between groups who access to social assistance schemes.

Nilüfer thinks that Syrian refugees are non-deserving. Commenting on this issue, she said that:

There are millions of Syrian people who receive social assistance from the State in this country. My mom for instance, she is 70 years old, suffers from cancer, having every kind of difficulty in daily life. Do her children have to provide care for her? Why does the state does not look after her? For instance, the elderly wage (a social assistance scheme for the elderly in poverty) that is provided to +65 years old, why is it means-tested? When you apply for such schemes, if you have a house that is a problem, you are above the poverty threshold. Once, I said to a social assistance officer 'What are you waiting for? What are you questioning? Shall we die of hunger before you provide social assistance?' They have those thresholds so that they only help the worst of the worst'. (Nilüfer, beneficiary, female)

Sometimes deservingness/non-deservingness is defined in relation to the identity of the beneficiary and 'moral' behaviour associated with that identity. This operates as a stigma on groups like Roma. The beneficiary Özlem thinks that some groups exploit the system by deceiving the doctor who is responsible for providing the medical report that confirms the degree of disability. As she said:

I go to the hospital to get my medical report. I see a Roma mom who tells her child to stutter in front of the doctor to be able to receive the medical report. Because of these people, the system works in a way to protect itself by bringing in thresholds like 'Being seriously disabled'. The state has to remove the thresholds; as it is thresholds that push people to look for ways to exploit the system. (Özlem, beneficiary, female)

'Exploitation' of the State/public resources is a common narrative that defines the implementation of disability and income thresholds. Hence, the beliefs about the 'ambiguities' of the poverty status of the beneficiary define the boundaries of deservingness in the access process. The beneficiary-care provider who is a family member has to prove her/his poverty status continuously in order to have access to the care allowance and stay as a beneficiary in the system. The owned property, a car or a plasma TV are considered as "'luxury' that situates the beneficiary in an undeserving position.

Nilüfer the beneficiary who looks after her disabled child thinks that the application process is formidable. Commenting on this issue, she suggested that:

They want all sorts of documents. Although they could trace our family information, they ask all sorts of questions about our estate and belongings... They ask how many people are living in the household? How many are working? They are interested in the earnings, they do not ask questions about the expenses of the house... the medical expenses of a disabled child, the expenses of the house... Last year they came to check the house. The social worker told me that it is a clean house. You cannot comment on the cleanness of my house even though you give me money! They do not even tell us they are coming, they just turn up... They check the TV, the apartment, they ask the rent, ask me if I cannot find a cheaper place to rent... They are like detectives chasing to see if we deserve the money that they provide. (Nilüfer, beneficiary, female)

The disability activist also refers to the discretionary and ambivalent character of decisions on social assistance provision at the local level:

What we heard is that a beneficiary's social assistance has been terminated due to the fact that the furniture in her house is luxurious according to the social worker who made the house visit. The social worker told the applicant that she could not receive social assistance. Of course the social worker could not put this information in the report as it is not a criterion, but once they decide not to give the monthly assistance, they can come up with other criteria in relation to income. The decision process is very discretionary and ambivalent. (Disability NGO activist, male)

According to the administrators the implementation of the income threshold is also a difficult process for the social services responsible for the administration of the care allowance scheme. Related to this concern, a local administrator said that:

The social workers find it difficult to make decisions that are fair. They go into houses and what they do there is income-calculations. They are not even quantitative people; it is difficult for them to make those threshold calculations (Local administrator of care allowance, female)

A social worker complains about the economic criteria that he has to implement which is out of the scope of his expertise area of social work:

They buy the luxurious car in the name of the disabled person that they care for and pay no tax. Although their income level is below the threshold they can own a luxury car. It is impossible, there is an informality here, an income not declared. We used to reject the application when we saw luxury goods or an owned apartment. Then they said, 'Are we going to eat the car or the apartment?' For instance, if the person has a field outside of Istanbul in Black Sea Region we should find out if there is some kind of agricultural production, or economic benefit from the field. I am a social worker how am I going to decide on the budgetary threshold? I could report on the social needs of the beneficiary, there should not be economic criteria in this system. (Social worker, male)

4.1.1. MEDICAL THRESHOLD

The medical threshold with its associated ambiguities also draws boundaries of deservingness. The category of seriously disabled is a medical category that pertains to dependency; someone who could not carry on in daily life without the care of another person. According to the disability activist:

This is not a meaningful category; someone who is 60% disabled may not have an independent life, whereas a person without eye-sight who is considered 100% disabled, could have an independent life if appropriately supported. Depending on the case, %30 disabled could need care. The regulation has changed recently, there is another scale now, 'Partial care need'. If the doctor puts that option in the medical report, the person cannot receive care allowance. This will lead to the cutting of the allowance in the coming years. They will choose this option to limit the beneficiary numbers. (Disability NGO activist, male)

Having a disabled child and deserving social assistance as a result is a contested issue in the narratives on deservingness. While for the welfare bureaucracy, such 'victimhood' can serve as an entry point to multiple social assistance schemes, beneficiaries may feel shame at having access to assistance through a disabled child.

Cash for care is provided to the mother of the disabled child. Of course, she would not work, she could make use of being victim and access different state cash transfer schemes. She could make use of the system with multiple options of social assistance that are not integrated. The citizen who lives on social assistance takes advantage of every option to access assistance schemes. (Social worker, male)

A beneficiary reveals that how receiving a social assistance for the care of a disabled child becomes a feeling of shame for her as she feels that she makes advantage of her disabled child to receive money:

When we were receiving the money, we were saying that this is M's (disabled child) money. Then I told myself, I get this money because I cannot work. The state provides me with the cash because I lost income to look after my disabled child. It is really difficult to get rid of that psychology, it is hard to participate to daily life with that mood. I spend most of my money on my child, on doctors, on medicine. Care allowance does not even meet those needs. (Nilüfer, beneficiary, female)

They come from social services, they say I can benefit from this, from that... the State provides many benefits. Am I a beggar?... I become dependent on the social services. I cannot even ask money from my mom... I wish they would not put me a in the position of beggar asking from the State all the time. I do not want to be in a victim position all the time just because I have a disabled child. (Özlem, beneficiary, female)

Being in a deserving position for a social assistance scheme emerges as a feeling of shame for the beneficiaries who think that they receive money through a victimhood. This harms the dignity of the beneficiary.

4.2. MOBILITY

4.2.1. MOBILITY AND ACCESS TO CARE ALLOWANCE

There are several issues pertaining to the mobility of the beneficiaries. Difficulties of mobility in the application process is a major issue. This is firstly because of the difficulties in getting a medical report from the hospital. The beneficiaries of care allowance are mostly women with a disabled child. In the application process, they have to get a medical report and they have to take their child to the hospital to receive the report. Taking a disabled child to the hospital and experiencing the hospital bureaucracy demonstrates the difficulties in access to welfare provision. The reports are provided for a period of time that creates a double vulnerability pertaining to mobility, as the families have to go back to the hospital every 1-3 years and renew the report. As one interviewee suggested: "The major issue here is to get the medical report from the hospital. She has to visit different departments with her disabled child. She has to get a disabled car from the Municipality to take her child to the hospital. She has to take her disabled child to the hospital to take the report." (Social worker, male)

The disability activists also refers to the difficulties of getting a medical report from the hospital:

The reports that the hospitals provide are periodical. The family has to renew the report every two years in some instances. They have to start from the beginning in this difficult process. In big cities like Istanbul or Ankara, the Municipality provides transport. It is difficult to get it from the Municipality, but you get it anyway. However, getting the medical report from the hospital is very difficult, it is an agony. I got that medical report four or five times. If you live in a small town, sometimes they transfer you to another hospital in a larger city. It is such a burden for the families. It is terrible. One can give up the application for social assistance. (Disability NGO activist, male)

Also we should not forget that the people who apply for the medical report are mostly the mother [as care provider] of the seriously disabled child. That means getting out of the house is a difficult process for them. And it takes days to get the report from the hospitals. Think of their situation. It is outrageous. If you ask me what should be done, the first thing to do is that these families should not be sent to hospitals to get the medical report. Maybe a medical board could go the houses and see the disabled people in the houses... (Disability NGO activist, male)

Beneficiaries also point to the difficulties in access to the hospitals. Nilüfer told how after long efforts at the hospital where they waited for 3-4 hours in long queues, she received a 3medical report for her disabled child that was valid for three years and required her to travel regularly to the hospital for three weeks. She said she did not object as she saw that others received reports with shorter periods. She complained about other difficulties in the process of getting ad-hoc social assistance from the State.

The State reimburses expenses for the medical equipment of my child. However, in order to get that reimbursement, I have to go to an orthopaedist doctor, get a prescription, take it to the social services and receive it three months later from the Post Office. For 140YTL, I have to go to three offices, I have not applied for that

recently. It is very difficult for me to visit them. For a medical report you travel to the hospitals for two to three months and then I have to declare my assets. They could see from e-State all my assets, by they still want me to bring those documents, it is so difficult. I have to take my disabled child to the hospital. They have to see her. (Özlem, beneficiary, female)

4.2.2. MOBILITY AND THE INCREASE OF VALUE OF THE DISABLED? CONTESTED NARRATIVE OF THE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BUREAUCRACY

According to the administrators, the care allowance contributes to the mobility of the care provider. They claim that having a disabled child becomes an asset that contributes to the mobility of the mother but also to the mobility of the disabled child. This is not just about the financial opportunity but also the value of the disabled child. A disabled child who could be an 'embarrassment' becomes a source of income that the family depends on. The statements of participants related to this issue given below.

The social assistance scheme helps the mother (care provider) to extend her opportunities. I assume that the mother would take her child outside more often. The disabled child becomes valuable to the house. Before, the disabled were living disgracefully in our society as the families were embarrassed about them. Now, if the State finds out that a disabled person in the house lives in bad conditions, the care allowance provided to the family is terminated. As a result, the family cares for the disabled child and provides better care. Therefore, the disabled child means the family is eligible for social assistance schemes and helps the family to go out, maybe to go a holiday. This is a good amount of money. Care allowance is the large amount of money of all the social assistance schemes. (Social Assistance Schemes high-ranked administrator, male)

Care allowance helped the recognition of disabled people in the family. Before they were a matter of embarrassment but now they have worth in the family. (Local social assistance administrator, female)

I am sure they go out more often. The care allowance becomes a tool of respect for the disabled in the family. If that child wants to go out it is a burden for the family to take her out, but if the disabled child brings a care allowance to the family, the family has a different attitude towards to the disabled child. It is embarrassing for me to make such explanations, but I am almost sure it works that way. Money brings value to the disabled child. It is true for the elderly. If the elderly person is eligible for care allowance the children fight among themselves to become their care provider. Care allowance has a positive effect on both the care provider and the receiver. (Social worker, male)

4.2.3. STATE REGULATIONS THAT CHALLENGES THE MOBILITY OF THE CARE ALLOWANCE BENEFICIARY

The beneficiaries of the care allowance come under State scrutiny. This defines the fragile mobility of the beneficiaries as they have to inform the social services administrators of their every step. There are spontaneous house visits where the family should be found in their place. If not, it could be a reason to terminate the allowance.

In Istanbul we have 31-32 social services centres, one in almost every provincial district. If the family wants to go to their village of origin for the summer they send a letter of request to the social services centres. If I go out on a field visit and could not find them in the house then it is problem for them. Their allowances could be terminated. Of course we do not terminate the allowance with just one visit. We write it down in a report, we try to reach to the family through other means. As social workers, we can get information more quickly now. When we go to the house and cannot not find them, we ask the neighbours, the neighbourhood representative¹ (. The families know that we investigate them. They come to us and tell us that 'You asked my neighbour, the shopkeeper in the neighbourhood about me...' I tell them of course I ask them we provide social assistance with people's tax money. We believe that it should be distributed fairly. We need to be sensitive about it. (Social worker, male)

The beneficiary on the other hand finds the spontaneous house checks an intervention in their personal life that affects their mobility negatively.

They come every now and then without informing us. They do not call us before they come. I could be out. They come for the second time, I could be out again. But they are suspicious of us all the time as if we are 'fraudsters'. The social worker told me 'If on my second visit, you are not here, I am going to report that you are not at home and start an investigation about you'. Is this for real? Should I stay at home all the time and wait for the social services to come? You (the researcher) for instance you called me before you came, I was at school and I gave you an appointment. I could be at my neighbours. This is my personal life. If I go out for a holiday for 10-15 days, I am obliged to inform the social services. (Özlem, beneficiary, female)

Give a date for your visit! The social workers' unannounced family visits are a problem for me. I cannot live like that. They do not even check how care is provided in the family, or the credentials of the care provider. (Disability NGO activist, male)

Moving house can also be a reason for terminating the care allowance.

For instance, the beneficiary receives our permission to go to Amasya (Black Sea city) for a month. We tell them okay you have provided your letter of request you can go. The beneficiary goes there, then they transfer their residence to Amasya. This is also being done by the political parties during election. They register people's residences

¹ The elected body at the neighbourhood level called *muhtar*.

in other places. Once they move out of the registered residence, social assistance is terminated automatically. The beneficiary has to apply to the social assistance administration of that city. Changing residence is the red line. Once the residence is changed, it is over. It is an important rule for us to regulate the scheme, to monitor the families. Otherwise we could not follow any beneficiary. (Social worker, male)

4.2.4. MOBILITY AND NEEDS OF THE CARE RECEIVER FOR 24/7

Expectations of the care provider are high if they are granted the care allowance. They are obliged to provide round the clock care in order to be eligible. This has implications for the mobility of the care provider.

They do not provide an option for the care receiver to receive care from a third person outside of the family. The family member must provide care to the care receiver. It is an obligation. For the seriously disabled, family care providers have to be with the care receiver all the time, almost /24/7. The care receiver has to be accompanied all the time, 24 hours. For instance, a disabled person attached to a breathing machine needs to be accompanied all the time. The machine gives a warning and you change the air circulation. It is hard to leave them and do something else. The state says: 'The family is already providing care to this child or providing care to a disabled person in the family. I will give you money in return.' This is unregistered work without any social security benefits, without a personal life and with anxieties for the future. The disabled person cannot continue an independent life in Turkey, this is a problem for me. (Disability NGO activist, male)

The social assistance scheme administrator argues that the mobility of the care provider is supported by other social services schemes like the temporary visitor scheme. As he expressed it:

If a care provider needs to leave the house for a week, she can leave her disabled child and family member in a residential institution of the state. The allowance is not terminated under such circumstances. In many cities there are day care centres, where they can leave their disabled child. (Social Assistance Schemes high-ranked administrator, male).

The care burden on the family member legitimized by the care allowance also a matter of non/participation in the labour market. Considering the social assistance scheme provided as a cash benefit in return for care, the care provider's 24/7 care responsibility could be regarded as a trade-off between participation in the labour market and providing full time care at home paid for by the state. This is also a matter of mobility as the 24/7 care work prevents the care allowance beneficiary from taking up a job in the labour market.

If she finds a job, she can get the minimum wage. We already give her almost the same amount in care allowance in return for her care work with the disabled family member. Maybe we prevent the beneficiary to look for a job by providing an allowance that asks

for 24/7 care. The expectations of the state from the family member are burdensome (Local social assistance administrator, female)

The care provider receives a regular allowance every month. She both provides care and raises the economic level of the family, increasing their economic resources. Therefore, the allowance is not just given to the disabled. All family members benefit from it. This is not something that prevents the family member from looking for a job in the labour market. But we do not know if they are employable if would not be providing care for the disabled family member anyway. I do not think so. In this respect, it is an income for the family member. But of course if she does not provide the right care, it is a reason to terminate it. (Social Assistance Schemes high-ranked administrator, male)

The beneficiaries on the other hand tell the story of immobility from their daily experiences. Nilüfer says that sometimes she leaves her disabled child with her mom. But it is getting more difficult each day as feeding her is a risky process because she problems swallowing. She does not have a personal life anymore:

We are married for 11 years; it is very rare that we go out together. One of us has to be with the kid. Taking the allowance has not made a difference. (Nilüfer, beneficiary, female)

4.3. PROTEST AND DIFFICULTIES IN CLAIMS FOR JUSTICE

The income thresholds and the eligibility criteria along with the burdensome process of application lead to objections by the applicants. Some of the cases are brought to court. Yet it takes months to reach a decision which puts the likely beneficiaries in a disadvantaged position. According to the disability activist, many disabled or disabled family members whose application is rejected usually do not fight for it as they are already exhausted by the application process. Of course, there are cases that where the rejection is brought to the court.

One beneficiary said that their family claim was rejected because of a medical report that found them ineligible due to the percentage of disability being under the established threshold. The applicant/beneficiary has to wait till the rejection process comes to a decision which takes six to nine months. If the application is rejected and under appeal the family comes under the strict scrutiny of the state: bank statements, shopping habits, invoices, the make of car are all investigated by the social services.

I have been working in the social services centre for two years. I have not come across any cases that is brought to court among our applicants. However, the main objections are at the medical report stage. Medical reports that says no to the conditionality of seriously disabled are challenged. We are in a better position here at the social services as they first have to get the medical report. The right for petition (against a rejection) is their basic right. The applicant could provide it and we would consider it. (Social worker, male)

I have done a work on the rejection of disability and elderly allowance/2022 (a different scheme that care allowance). She is found eligible and starts getting the allowance. After one or two years she moves to another street in the same district. She informs the local administration. They treat it as a new application and start a new documentary review process. She is also asked to bring proof of a court decision that she is the guardian of a mentally disabled child. It takes seven months and the allowance is stopped. Then she applies again and the administration says she should start the procedures from the beginning. We applied to the public inspection office. I have written her petition. The office reached a decision that the administration acted against the social assistance regulation and this is an unjust process. She is reimbursed for the seven months that she has not received her allowance. As an NGO we have supported her in her search for justice. There are thousands that we are not able to support. They need to know us, get in touch with us. There are serious challenges for applicants to access to the justice system. The person needs to know her rights, needs to know how to write a petition, pay for the lawyer. This is impossible. People are not able to use the mechanisms to claim justice and their rights. (Disability NGO activist, male)

The local administrator tells that the applicants were given the right to object to the decision within 30 days after the receipt of the decision letter. There are many cases brought to the court. She adds that 'Given the circumstances in our country, this is a very good allowance and it equates to the minimum wage. Some cases are also reported in the media. The beneficiaries use every platform that they can use. The ones in Ankara has a better access to these platforms. There are previous court decision that support the applicant's appeal. We also have court decisions against who have received the allowance, not deserving it'.

4.4. CLAIMS FOR JUSTICE

One of the claims of the beneficiaries pertain to their needs for mobility and psychosocial support.

Özlem (beneficiary) thinks the whole process is unjust for care providers for disabled children. She says that these families need social activities. Commenting about this issue she told said:

These make us happy. I am not claiming for a luxurious activity. The Municipality could organize a picnic, take us by shuttle bus. They could also provide more rehabilitation services to my disabled child. They show me how to do it, but a teacher could make it better. There is also a need for home based care services for all disabled children, a rehabilitation teacher could be sent to home. (Özlem, beneficiary, female)

Teachers go to houses where the child is attached to a machine, and this should be extended to other children according to Nilüfer. She also believes that the income threshold should be removed: "Even we have income that is above the threshold, but we should be eligible for the allowance, the expenses of a disabled kid are so high that they should consider those as well". (Nilüfer, beneficiary, female)

The local administrator also refers to the need for psychosocial support for the beneficiaries. The house visits could be strengthened by such support mechanism. The care provider-mother has a heavy burden and her mental health can be challenged by the demands of care of a disabled child. She thinks that the Ministry should prioritize such services to those families.

The disability activist refers to the difficulties in access to justice system. "The accessibility of the court houses, knowing the terminology, knowing your rights, these are all important. The court decision takes so long, sometimes two or three years." He also argues that a system that is based on family care is problematic for the disabled who pursues an independent life. He said that "I am not obliged to live with a family member, or receive care from a family member. Maybe with the allowance that I receive I want to receive care from a third person outside of the family." (Disability NGO activist, male)

4.4.1. CLAIMS OF NGOS

The disability movement is a well-established social movement with a strong voice in Turkey. The administrator points that disability NGOs are campaigning for social insurance for care providers who receive the care allowance. The demand is to bring social assistance under a social protection scheme where care providers are also eligible for a pension. The disability NGO activist argued that care insurance is a must. He suggested that, 'The State should provide financial resources for that. We should also question the social spending on the social assistance schemes. How does the state allocate resources to the social assistance schemes? What is the ratio in the budget, we must question all these.' The administrator says that this demand is very expensive.

We need to increase taxes to collect the money that would be a burden on all the members of the society. We do negotiate these with the NGOs, we work on it occasionally but it is a matter of politicians' priorities. When we refer to poor, the picture changes, I have never seen an NGO that advocates for the rights of poor people. There are humanitarian poor relief NGOs but no NGO with a claim for rights. Maybe there is a need for that. (Social Assistance Schemes high-ranked administrator, male)

4.5. JUST WELFARE STATE

A welfare state that does not have deservingness criteria, that provides universal welfare benefits is perceived as 'just welfare state' by the research participants. Universality of social assistance schemes emerges here as a tool for just welfare state; the claims of the beneficiaries for justice are also in line with the universality argument. Care allowance eligibility criteria as for all social assistance schemes push applicants to look for ways to trick administrators in order to become eligible for access to the allowance. Such a process that rigidly separates deserving beneficiaries from undeserving applicants (who still need to receive the allowance) acts as mechanism that threatens the trust between the state and the citizen.

The social worker suggests that the state pushes citizens to fraud through its deservingness criteria. Commenting on this issue, he suggested that:

She/he had a house, trying to pass the 'land title' to a relative to hide it from the state. This is not a welfare state. I think the income threshold should be abolished. For all disabled it should be provided without any income threshold. We could regulate it and if we decide there is no good care there, we could transfer the disabled person to institutional care. (Social worker, male)

For the beneficiaries a just welfare state should provide care to all disabled and other dependents without any sort of criteria. According to the NGO representative, every citizen should be included in the social protection schemes. Social protection is not limited with social assistance according to him. The high ranked social administrator points out that this is very important for the feelings of belonging of citizens. As he expressed: 'For citizens to actively participate in society social protection and social assistance schemes should be integrated, the citizens should have confidence for the future. This is also important for the social integration.' (Social Assistance Schemes high-ranked administrator, male)

This starts with a strong social security system, providing them with employment opportunities. If they cannot work, supporting them through social assistance schemes and helping them to participate in society. The social safety net should be sustained. This is not something that an institution can solve it on its own. Social security, employment and social assistance should develop together. Citizens should have a firm belief that the welfare state is just. (Social Assistance Schemes high-ranked administrator, male)

The participatory process in welfare state emerges as an important criterion for it to be just. According to the disability NGO activist, the state should not decide alone how a social protection system works. 'The state has to consult with activists, disability NGOs, and other parties. They should come together and reach a consensus about what kind of welfare state we want'. The social consensus and dialogue that he refers to for a just welfare state is a matter of redistributive justice as it requires a consensus on the allocation of resources. In this framework social assistance emerges as a relevant mechanism according to the high ranked administrator. Defining just/fair criteria for deservingness and fair usage of the resources of other members of the society could be achieved by a belief in a just welfare state' according to him.

5. CONCLUSION

This country study deals with the care allowance as social assistance scheme and explored how deservingness, mobility, claims for justice and a just welfare state are understood by different social actors and beneficiaries of the welfare system. Since 2007, the care allowance emerged as one of the major social assistance schemes. It provides a monthly income that nearly equates to the minimum wage and is far most the most generous social assistance scheme of the Turkish welfare state. In this respect, it is interesting to see how such an allowance sets the boundaries of deservingness through thresholds (medical report for disability) and means-testing (income).

The study firstly shows that poverty is not a standalone category of deservingness in the welfare bureaucracy; it always interacts with other categories that creates 'deserving poor'. For state administrators, deservingness does not just pertain to poverty but another category has to intersect with poverty in order to benefit from social assistance. These categories like elderly, disabled, women are the disadvantaged groups the social assistance schemes target. Thus, deservingness is closely associated with dependency. For the care allowance, along with a general category of disability, the disability thresholds and income means tests draw the boundaries of deservingness with respect to access to the scheme. Once the 'dependency' position of the poor emerges as a deserving category, able-bodied poor, mostly men are not the target group of the social assistance schemes. Their poverty is perceived as a matter of inclusion in the labour market. Even those categories that do fall under the deserving category like disabled are not provided with social assistance if they find a job. The employability criteria is a strong theme in the narratives that set the boundaries of access to social assistance.

Along with a dependency position, identity also plays a role in debates on deservingness as the literature also highlights. While the disadvantaged categories (elderly, women, children etc.) that interact with poverty are developed by the welfare bureaucracy, the identity based discrimination that can interact with poverty is raised by the civil society actors. As the narrative of the NGO representative demonstrates there is a need for a category of 'discriminated against' rather than 'disadvantaged' for a more inclusive understanding of vulnerability that tackles intersectional inequalities in access to welfare provisions.

Yet, in a situation where resources are scarce, redistribution through targeting creates myths of deservingness/undeservingness in relation to social assistance schemes. As in the case of Syrian refugees, there is a belief among beneficiaries that refugees benefit from state resources more than Turkish citizens. Limited resources and the myths around allocation of all resources to certain groups create tensions among groups who have claims to have access to the social assistance schemes. Sometimes deservingness/non-deservingness is defined in relation to the identity of the beneficiary and 'moral' behaviour attributed to that identity. This operates as a stigma on groups like Roma. Exploitation of the state/public resources is a common narrative that defines the boundaries of deservingness.

There are several issues pertaining to the mobility of the beneficiaries. Difficulties of mobility in the application process is a major issue, firstly due to the difficulties in getting a medical report from the hospital. According to the administrators, the care allowance contributes to the mobility of the care provider. Having a disabled child becomes an asset that contributes to the mobility of the mother but also to the mobility of the disabled child according to the administrators. This is not just about the increase of financial opportunity but also the increase of the value of the disabled child in the house according to them. A disabled child who could be an 'embarrassment' for them is now a source of income that the family depends on. Such a contested narrative demonstrates that in the perspective of welfare bureaucracy, 'deservingness' paves the way to an increase in the status of the beneficiaries in the society, and contributes to participation in society. For the beneficiaries though, being included in the category of the deserving beneficiary through their disabled child is a matter of embarrassment when it comes to spending the allowance for their own needs. The mobility that comes with the allowance is an ambiguous mobility.

Moreover, the beneficiaries of the care allowance, once they receive the assistance scheme come under state scrutiny. This is a process that defines the fragile mobility of the beneficiaries as they have to inform the social services administrators of their every step. There are spontaneous house visits where the family should be found in their place which also could become criteria to lose their allowance or the change of residence becomes a reason for the termination of the care allowance. Therefore, the deserving the allowance brings restrictions to mobility of the beneficiaries that manifests how the categories define the freedom of citizens.

In this respect, a welfare state that provides universal access to the welfare benefits to the citizens is perceived as 'just welfare state'. Not just equal access but the participatory process for the just welfare state emerges as an important criterion; the social consensus and dialogue for a just welfare state is a matter of redistributive justice as it requires a consensus on the allocation of resources. The fair redistribution of resources, recognition of the needs of non-deserving categories and representation of the claims for equal access to social assistance schemes identify the injustices that pertain to the welfare provisions and construction of citizenship.

Considering the findings of the research, several policy recommendations could be formulated. The application process for the social assistance scheme is a burdensome experience. Although the needs of the beneficiaries are urgent, the bureaucratic process is lengthy. The communication and coordination among the related State institutions should be sustained to ease the application process. The deservingness criteria that put the beneficiaries in a vulnerable position should be altered. More universalistic approaches are needed to overcome such vulnerability. Cash schemes fail to meet the needs of disabled citizens. There are various needs of disabled children like home-based health care, medical rehabilitation, psychosocial rehabilitation, behaviour therapy, and physiotherapy applications, etc. It is vital to strengthen the social services integrated with social assistance schemes that would meet the needs of the families with disabled members. Services such as nursing, day-care/round-the-clock care, and domestic work should be also integrated into the care services in order to lift the full responsibility of care work from only the caregiver. Local authorities could extend their social care facilities for both caregivers and care receivers. Caring for a disabled child has emotional burdens since mothers face isolation from the labour market and social life. The current cash-for-care scheme in Turkey confines both the disabled person and his/her caregiver to their homes. Social services should also prioritize the needs of the caregivers who are beneficiaries of the assistance scheme.

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