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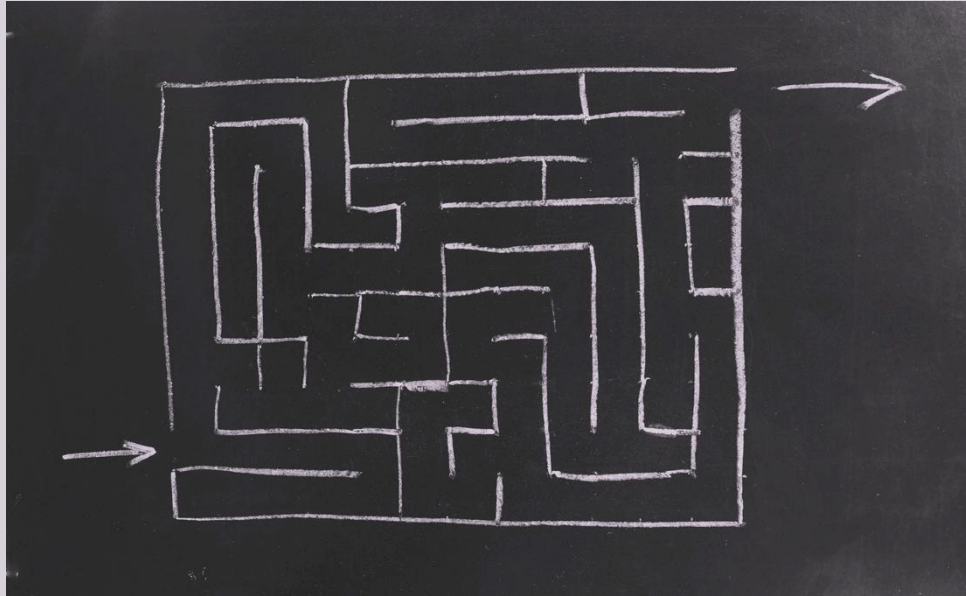
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ENSTİTÜ -

MAPPING THE AFTERMATH: ACADEMICS FOR PEACE AND THE STRUGGLE TO RETURN TO ACADEMIA



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This report was produced with the support of Civil Rights Defenders.

Mapping the Aftermath: Academics for Peace and the Struggle to Return to Academia*

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This work is dedicated to the common struggle of Academics for Peace on the tenth anniversary of the "We Will Not Be a Party to This Crime" Peace Declaration, which was announced in a press release on January 11, 2016.

MAPPING THE AFTERMATH

ACADEMICS FOR PEACE AND THE STRUGGLE TO RETURN TO ACADEMIA

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic freedom is an essential principle that forms the basis of the institutional existence of universities as well as being an indispensable element for the sustainability of democratic societies. Protecting the rights of academics to research, teach and express opinions on social issues is naturally not only a matter of individual rights but also a critical requirement for social development and scientific progress. The process that started in Turkey in 2016 is a concrete example of how these fundamental rights can be systematically violated.

This research aims to comprehensively examine the experiences of academics who signed the declaration titled "We Will Not Be a Party to This Crime" published on January 11, 2016 and were subsequently subjected to various rights violations. While the declaration called for an end to the conflicts with the PKK in southeastern Turkey in 2015-2016, an end to curfews, compliance with basic human rights law criteria and the search for peaceful solutions, the signatory academics were subjected to unexpected multifaceted social, political, administrative and legal pressures, obstacles, discrimination and violence. Immediately after the signing of the peace declaration, four academics were arrested and imprisoned, many of them were subjected to physical and psychological violence at universities, and they were subjected to judicial and institutional investigations. Many of the peace signatory academics were dismissed from their jobs on administrative initiative, some had to leave their jobs for safety reasons, and the vast majority were stigmatized or excluded from academic studies. The education process of the majority of the signatories, who are still pursuing their master's and doctoral degrees, was prolonged, they were exposed to various pressures, and some of them could not complete their education. The worst thing in this process was the suicide of an academic. After the coup attempt in July 2016, Turkey started to be governed by State of Emergency (Olağanüstü Hal- OHAL) decrees (DW, Turkey's State of Emergency balance sheet, 2018). Thus, some of

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the Academics for Peace were dismissed from their positions with the Decree Laws (Kanun Hükmünde Kararname-KHK) issued within the scope of these State of Emergency practices, and they were exposed to more severe pressures and unlawfulness mentioned above, and they experienced deep traumas not only professionally but also economically, socially and psychologically. There have been those who have won the cases by fighting against all these unlawful practices, and there are still those whose cases are ongoing. In the meantime, although some institutions had to recognize the court decision, they did not recognize and did not implement the decision of the reinstatement provision. In this sense, many reports and studies have been carried out on the academics of the Peace signatories, but it has been seen that there is not enough work on the experiences, feelings and consequences of the academics who could not be reinstated despite the legal decision and were dismissed for the second time. Therefore, in order to contribute to filling this scientific gap, this research focuses on the current situation of academics who have not been reinstated or who have been dismissed for the second time despite the fact that they have been reinstated by court decisions.

The scope of the study includes Academics for Peace who have worked in different cities and universities across Turkey. In-depth individual interviews and two separate focus group discussions were conducted with Academics for Peace. The participants' academic and professional status, economic conditions, mental well-being, relations with solidarity networks and attitudes towards returning to academia were evaluated multidimensionally.

The main purpose of the research is to document the rights violations these academics are exposed to, to make visible the systematic obstacles they face in the reemployment processes, and to develop solution-oriented recommendations for policymakers at both national and international levels in this context. The findings to be obtained as a result of the research aim to contribute to the protection of academic freedoms and the reintegration of dismissed academics into the higher education system with a restorative justice perspective.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH CONTEXT

The academy is a field of knowledge production based on the development of free thought, the production of critical knowledge and the principle of social benefit. The academic structure is historically based on the principle of autonomy; this autonomy encompasses not only institutional independence but also the ability of academics to express their thoughts freely, producing scientific data free from political interference (Scholars at Risk, 2024; Ren & Li, 2013; Karran 2007). The critical nature of scientific thought by its very nature makes academia more than just an institution for technical knowledge production; its speaking out on social issues, human rights violations, or the effects of state policies reveals this institution's indispensability for democratic societies (Culum, 2015; Altıparmak & Akdeniz, 2017). In this context, it is one of the main functions of academia that academics act with a sense of social responsibility and criticize current power practices through peaceful methods

(Kabasakal Badamchi, 2022; Altıparmak & Akdeniz, 2017). However, especially in recent years, academics who try to fulfill these functions in different parts of the world face serious political pressures. For example, political, belief and freedom demands in Iran (Erfani, 2025), academics criticizing Palestinian policies in Israel (Bianet, 2025; FREE TO THINK 2024), the debates surrounding the concept of antisemitism in Germany have turned some academic statements into grounds for accusations (Gazete Duvar, 2024). Similarly, in Afghanistan under the control of the Taliban regime, especially female academics have been systematically excluded from academic life, their positions at universities have been terminated, and their freedom of expression has been eliminated (Adrian et al., 2024). Unfortunately, there are many other countries such as Sudan, China, Russia, and Ukraine, where academic pressure is intensely experienced (FREE TO THINK 2024). These pressures are seen to have multi-layered effects not only on professional but also on academic development, social life, economic sustainability and fundamental legal rights. The disruption of academic production, the loss of international collaborations, social exclusion and economic insecurity are the direct consequences of this process (Scholars at Risk, 2024; Science Academy Board of Directors, 2019, FREE TO THINK 2024). In the above-mentioned countries, scientific studies have been carried out, albeit partially, on these situations, and the effects of academic pressures have been partially investigated (Quin, 2024). However, in the same way, there have not yet been sufficient scientific studies to examine the processes experienced in Turkey, especially in the context of the Academics for Peace initiative (Science Academy Board of Directors, 2019; Quin, 2024).

Academics for Peace, who signed the "We Will Not Be a Party to This Crime" declaration in Turkey in 2016, faced direct state-originated pressure mechanisms after the declaration. These academics, who were dismissed from their positions by Decree Laws issued under the State of Emergency regime, were not only severed from their professions but also from their social life areas and educational processes (Academics for Peace, 2025a, BAK, 2024). However, the pressures were not limited to emergency decrees, but also physical and psychological violence, exclusion, discrimination and arbitrary dismissals were experienced in universities as a result of political discourses and targeting created by the ruling circles (BAK, 2025b). Academics for Peace have been openly targeted in many cases and safe working conditions in the academic environment have been eliminated (HRFT, 2020).

Practices such as discrimination, exclusion, scholarship cancellations, and bans on leaving the country have profoundly affected their academic and personal lives. While some could not continue their education process, some had to go abroad; however, the travel bans imposed on many academics who were dismissed by the Decree Law eliminated this opportunity (Şenses, 2020; BAK, 2025b; HRFT, 2020; Dinçer 2024). Some academics, who have gained the right to return to their duties through the judiciary, have not been actually reinstated by the university administrations and have faced a silent and systematic exclusion policy and victimization of rights. Although the intra-group and social solidarity networks established against these multidimensional pressures have allowed some support, albeit limited, many

academics continue to experience serious problems both financially and morally (BAK, 2025a, b).

Academia is not only a profession but also a field of social responsibility (Dinçer, 2024; Ergün & Özenç, 2020; Günok, 2020). The experiences of intellectuals such as Academics for Peace, who undertake this responsibility, should be considered not only as individual stories, but also as socio-political indicators that reveal the effects of the political system on scientific autonomy (Ergün, & Özenç, 2020; Şenses, 2020; Dinçer, 2024, Çelik, & Özveri, 2023; HRFT, 2020; BAK 2025a, b.; Scholars at Risk, 2025). However, in Turkey, studies that provide in-depth and systematic analyses of this process are limited (Dinçer, 2024, Çelik, & Özveri, 2023; Şenses, 2020; Ergün, & Özenç, 2020). In this context, this study aims to examine the professional, socio-psychological and political repositioning of Academics for Peace after the expulsion process, their participation in solidarity networks, their academic production practices and their strategies for returning to academia. In this respect, the study offers an original and holistic contribution to understanding the relationship between academic freedom, freedom of expression and political oppression not only in Turkey but also in the world.

The concept of academic freedom has historically been shaped around the autonomy of universities and the rights of academics to conduct independent research. This freedom includes not only the choice of research topics but also the right to express opinions and criticism on social issues. In the international literature, the protection of academic freedom is accepted as one of the basic requirements of democratic societies.

The Academics for Peace process in Turkey constitutes a unique case in terms of systematic violations of academic freedom. The developments since 2016 have brought about not only violations of individual rights, but also structural transformations affecting the entire university system. This process has shown how fragile academic freedoms are and how easily political powers can suspend these rights.

In the existing literature, there are limited studies examining the experiences of dismissed academics from a holistic perspective. This research aims to fill this gap and systematically identify and record the multidimensional experiences of Academics for Peace.

3. METHOD

This research is structured within the framework of qualitative research methods. The research design is based on a descriptive and exploratory approach that aims to deeply understand the experiences of the expelled Academics for Peace and to reveal the structural, economic, and psychosocial dimensions of these experiences.

The data collection process consisted of 30 in-depth individual interviews and two focus group discussions. Participants were selected from among Academics for Peace who have worked in different cities and universities across Turkey. In order to reach this sample group, they were reached through the e-mail address group including Academics for Peace with the suggestion of BAK-Solidarity, the BİRARADA Association and other solidarity networks. The sample consists of academics who have been dismissed from public service and their jobs by Decree Law or for other reasons among Academics for Peace, or who had to leave their jobs. While creating the sample, the principle of maximum diversity was adopted, and different academic disciplines, age groups, professional positions and geographical distribution were taken into account. A previously prepared semi-structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Individual interviews were conducted online, while focus interviews were conducted online and face-to-face. Interviews were audio-recorded.

Thematic analysis method was used in examining the data. In this analysis method, first pilot analysis was performed with the MAXQDA 24 software program, and then it was compared with the results of the AI program. This process and results were discussed among the three researchers to reach a consensus. In-depth individual interviews were coded as CODE1, CODE2, face-to-face focus group participant as YÖKAT, online focus group participants as ÇOKAT. Later, data were analyzed and themes were created. Following the thematic analysis methodology of Braun and Clarke (2006), the data were analyzed in a systematic manner. Nine main themes were determined in the research and sub-themes were created under each theme. The Findings and Discussion section will analyze each of these main and sub-themes individually. In the conclusion and evaluation section, short and long-term policy recommendations are included.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Istanbul Bilgi University Ethics Committee before data collection (Nr: 2025-40154-135). In addition, verbal and written consent was obtained from the academics who volunteered to participate in the project.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the thematic analysis, 9 main themes and 40 sub-themes were determined. These main themes are explained and reported below with their sub-themes.

4.1. REINTEGRATION HINDERED DESPITE LEGAL GAINS

The most striking dimension of the research findings is that the return to work and actual integration of academics whose rights have been handed restored by court decisions are systematically prevented. This situation shows how much the principles of the rule of law have been damaged at the university level in Turkey and how politically biased some university administrators have behaved and moved away from the legal ground. This deep gap between legal achievement and practical

application reveals that violations of academic freedom cannot be solved only by legal regulations, but that institutional and cultural transformation is also necessary.

4.1.1. Second Dismissal/Repeated Liquidation

A significant portion of the participants in the study had been dismissed multiple times. This shows that the expulsion process is not a one-time decision, but a systematic policy. The multiple expulsion mechanism keeps academics under constant uncertainty, creating psychological pressure and disrupting their academic production. CODE9 describes his tragic experience as follows:

I was in the biology department, I was working in the biology department of E University. I am one of those who were dismissed twice, for the first time in January 2017, then for the second time in April... My first dismissal was made by the decision of the university board of directors. It was something that the rector of E University at that time did... Then here is the first in January 2017, the second in April...

Her statement that makes this experience even more striking is:

Yes, I was kicked out three times. They thought I wasn't kicked out enough. They keep coming and throwing me from where I am to somewhere else again.

CODE9's statement that "they thought I was not kicked out enough" shows that the expulsion process has turned from personal to a systematic liquidation policy. The metaphor of "throwing" reflects how academics are treated without human dignity and are pushed into an unchecked process.

CODE26 also described the systematic blocking experience as follows:

I started working again on May 10, 2023. I was fired again on May 10, 2024. When I took office, they made my contract for one year. So, after one year, contracts are normally made for three years. They asked me for a 3-year academic score. In other words, they asked for the score made for 3-year contracts. I gave half of it. And with the decision of the head of the department, the head of the department, the faculty board, with the annotation of a single person in the faculty board, I was officially expelled again.

This experience shows that university administrations develop alternative prevention mechanisms while fulfilling legal requirements. Making a 1-year contract instead of the normal 3-year contract and demanding a 3-year score indicates the existence of a planned obstruction strategy at the institutional level.

CODE28, on the other hand, also experienced economic punishment in this multiple dismissal process:

Then, when I was dismissed from the university again, I couldn't remember the exact date last September-October. I retired. I was taken out again a month or two later. This time, they asked me for that eight-year payment back, and with an incredible interest. In other words, they paid me retrospectively, with

approximately nine percent annual interest for those seven and a half years, when I returned to university. When I was dismissed again, they asked for it back again with an interest of twenty-four percent.

The situation where the money received with 9% interest is demanded back with 24% interest shows the existence of an economic punishment mechanism. This practice creates a deterrent effect by giving the message that even the recognition of legal rights can bring economic costs.

4.1.2. Non-Execution or Delay of Court Decisions

About seven months after the petition of the Academics for Peace, political tension in Turkey increased even more and due to the coup attempt that occurred in the ongoing process, the country began to be governed by state of emergency decisions. During this period, State of Emergency commissions were established and Academics for Peace, who were trying to seek their rights through the courts, had to apply to this State of Emergency commission first. A Peace Academic could only apply to the court as a second stage after receiving the decision of the State of Emergency commission, for example, when receiving a negative response. However, it took years for the State of Emergency commission to make a decision on an applicant. This was meaninglessly prolonging the process of reaching a legal result and causing irreversible loss of rights. As a result, the existence of the State of Emergency Commission has stood as an obstacle to other legal remedies and delayed the application process to the European Court of Human Rights. For example, CODE11 expresses her thoughts on the delay policy during the state of emergency as follows:

The State of Emergency Commission was somehow a delay process by the state or the official authorities. Maybe it should be said as a thing, as a scientific evidence. It was an interim commission established by the state to delay or postpone the process in the European Court of Human Rights so that the legal process would not end, but for 3 years, 4 years, 5 years, no one received any rejection or acceptance.

The observation of CODE11 as a "delay commission" shows that the purpose of the State of Emergency Commission is not to provide justice, but to gain time. This situation reveals that state institutions have developed a strategy to delay their international legal obligations.

CODE26's experience in this regard also supports this interpretation.

In other words, we had filed a lawsuit in the Administrative Court before, but then they said it was under the State of Emergency. The State of Emergency Commission was established and our process completely shifted there. The State of Emergency Commission made negative decisions about all Academics for Peace. Thus, we were able to file a lawsuit in the administrative courts again.

On the other hand, it was revealed that even academics who returned to work with court decisions and won legal victories were not actually reinstated, and university administrations developed a systematic resistance to court decisions. This situation

calls into question the functioning of the principles of judicial independence and the rule of law at the university level. The experience of CODE3, who was suspended from his job by a state of emergency decree in 2017, at M University clearly shows this:

I think I was reinstated in 2023. To M University by administrative court decision. But M University did not implement the decision. It refused me returning to my job, using the security investigation as an excuse... Because I normally care about working at a public university... But anyway, M University has already been so hostile throughout my entire legal process that M University is the only university in Turkey that does not implement the court decision, the reinstatement decision, using the security investigation as an excuse.

The definition of M University as "the only university in Turkey that does not implement the court decision" shows the extent of institutional resistance. The use of the pretext of "security investigation" reveals that legal requirements are sabotaged by procedural obstacles.

4.1.3. Administrative Obstacles in the University (Position Barriers)

The returned academics face systematic obstacles at the institutional level. These obstacles offer a wide range from office allocation to course distribution and cause academics to be deprived of normal working conditions. For example, CODE5 states that although he was reinstated, he was not given an office until the decision of the court of appeal was made:

Exactly two months later, the decision came from the Court of Appeals. Two months later it approved my reinstatement. But they didn't give me an office until then. In fact, I had a newspaper article done. Especially a bit. Two months later, exactly on Friday morning my lawyer called me. My own lawyer. He said professor, the court of appeals approved it. He approved the reinstatement and so on. The same day in the afternoon, the Dean's office called. Professor, come Monday, your office is ready, they said. The same day though..

CODE5's assessment that this situation was intentional is as follows:

No, there was actually an empty office, but what I understand is that University A applied to appeal, they waited thinking maybe appeal would reject the reinstatement.

The fact that both the appeal decision was issued on the same day and the office was reported to be ready show that the university administration is closely monitoring the situation but deliberately implementing a policy of delay. This is supported by the statement "there was an empty office".

CODE11, on the other hand, shared with us the comprehensive blocking experience she encountered in many different areas as follows:

The dean's office and the rectorate, on the other hand, did what they were legally obliged to do, but beyond that, for example, my professorship came, they did not

give it. In other words, they wanted a position in another department, but no position was requested for me... For example, they don't give me an administrative task. I used to teach four courses, now I teach two. They gave two of my courses to another teacher and did not return them to me. They did not give me the lodging. I was staying in the lodging before I was expelled. When I returned, they did not give me the lodging.

This experience shows that university administrations implement a systematic policy of marginalization and exclusion and act discriminately while fulfilling "legal obligations". The fact that professorships are not given, that fewer courses are given in the distribution of courses, and that basic rights such as lodging are not given are among the evidences that the signatory academics who return to work are treated as second-class. The experience of CODE18 reveals the system's "civil death" strategy created by these administrative and managerial obstacles:

Well, that's actually the thing, I mean, I think that's what the government was trying to do and was very successful at. So let's do something, you know. This is actually what they called civil death. You know, let them be forgotten, then come back, get their salary, and live...

4.1.4. Exclusion and Stigmatization in the University Environment

The dimension of social exclusion deeply affects the psychological state of academics. This exclusion occurs at the level of both colleagues and managers and damages the institutional belonging of academics. CODE20 described this situation with the analogy of "contagious disease":

So you are kind of a thing with everyone, of course, until a certain trust and routine is formed. You are like a contagious disease. It was also there when we were kicked out. I mean, everyone says oh or something.

The metaphor of "contagious disease" strongly reflects the societal dimension of stigma. This analogy illustrates the isolation experienced by Academics for Peace in their social relationships and the fear approached by their colleagues. CODE18, on the other hand, has experienced an erosion of academic identity due to this stigma:

So being labeled is not a good thing. In other words, you are very academic and very general, so if you are a teacher, you want to be known for your teaching. If you are a football player, you want to be known for your performance on the field. You are no longer seen as an academic. So no one looks at you as an academic.

This statement shows how academic identity is substituted for political identity. The prominence of the political label instead of professional performance reveals that academic evaluation criteria have become politicized.

4.1.5. Prolonged Appeal and Uncertainty Processes

The uncertainty of legal processes makes it impossible for academics to plan their lives. This uncertainty has a corrosive effect both economically and psychologically

and keeps academics under constant stress. CODE5 expressed his experiences in this sense as follows:

For example, three courts of appeal handle our cases. Thirteen, fourteen and fifteen... The thirteenth court rejected all reinstatement appeals before it. In other words, if fifty files came, he rejected fifty of them. The fourteenth court approved all reinstatement appeals before it. If 50 returns came, he approved all 50 of them. Isn't it interesting? In other words, a task was shared. They said to 13 that you reject whoever comes in front of you. They also said to 14, do whatever comes in front of you, approve it. Not a single decision has been made from 15 for 2 years, and that one is still pending.

The courts' 100% rejection or 100% approval rates suggest that political directives are more effective than legal consideration. The phrase "task shared" indicates the existence of a coordinated policy.

CODE26's explanations clearly reveal that returning is not a real return:

It still feels as if nothing in my office belongs to me. For two years it has been completely empty. If you saw it, you would see my desk bare, the walls bare—so empty that anyone walking in would think no one occupies that room, as if it doesn't belong to me, as if it doesn't belong to you. Because I don't want to settle into a place I've been dismissed from twice. ...From the very moment I started working again, I never knew whether I would be going to the university the next day. I still don't know, because my case is still at the appeals stage. In my situation—our appeals were divided among three courts—mine has not yet issued any decision.

Focus group studies validate individual experiences at a collective level and reveal the prevalence of systemic problems. The common experiences that emerge within the group dynamics show that the problem has become structural rather than individual. In this sense, ÇOKAT7's observation regarding the repeated dismissal process is important:

As a matter of fact, when the university appealed, the process of our repeated dismissal began one by one. I just mentioned the university's attitude towards appointing us. They waited until the last moment, until the last minute of the 30th day, and started our jobs. But when they expelled us for the second time, they did the exact opposite. As soon as the decision reached them, they dismissed us.

This experience shows that university administrations apply double standards. The fact that they act "immediately" in dismissal while waiting for the "last minute" in reinstatement reveals the existence of a deliberate blocking strategy.

The findings of THEME 1 show that the problem experienced by Academics for Peace is too systemic and multi-layered to be solved with a simple legal regulation. Even a legal victory does not guarantee de facto integration, but rather introduces new obstruction mechanisms. These mechanisms manifest themselves in the following ways:

1. *Legal Manipulation*: Formal recognition but de facto sabotage of court decisions
2. *Institutional Mobbing*: Systematic restriction of basic working conditions
3. *Social Isolation*: Creating a climate of fear in relationships between colleagues
4. *Economic Punishment*: Converting the use of legal rights into economic costs
5. *Psychological Attrition*: Creating a loss of motivation by being kept under constant uncertainty

This multidimensional obstruction strategy can be evaluated within the framework of Foucault's concept of "power technologies". The use of indirect control mechanisms instead of direct pressure aims to break the motivation of resistance. This situation reveals that legal regulations alone are not enough to protect academic freedom, but institutional culture change is also necessary. It is necessary to strengthen the autonomous structures of universities, to depoliticize academic evaluation criteria and to internalize the principles of the rule of law at the institutional level. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that this policy of systemic blocking will have long-term negative effects on international academic cooperation and Turkey's scientific reputation.

4.2. ECONOMIC INSECURITY AND SURVIVAL/LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

The economic insecurity experienced by Academics for Peace after dismissal created not just material loss, but a multidimensional trauma that also included loss of identity, status, and lifestyle. The data obtained from individual and focus group interviews show that economic strategies are shaped within the framework of both individual resilience and collective solidarity dynamics.

In focus group discussion, ÇOKAT1's finding summarizes the multidimensional situation of economic trauma:

What was the initiating factor for staying upright in difficult periods? Frankly, I had two children and I had no other chance. If there weren't children, I don't think I could have gotten through that period like that. Therefore, the most important thing there was the necessity of staying strong also for others. At least for me, that's how it was.

This statement shows that economic trauma has not only a material but also an existential dimension.

Age and status differences have been very effective in economic losses. The statement of ÇOKAT2 highlights the importance of the age factor:

I was 57-58 years old when I was expelled. So I was close to retirement. That's why I could think about my retirement. You know, I was not the age of ÇOKAT1 Prof., ÇOKAT6 Prof., ÇOKAT3 Prof..

4.2.1. Borrowing and Sale of Assets/Property and Family Solidarity

This sub-theme reveals the most dramatic manifestations of the immediate economic shock generated by the dismissal. The experiences of the participants show a systematic process of economic struggle.

The experience of CODE24 summarizes the sudden cycle of economic struggle and borrowing in the most striking way:

I remember that a few days later I could not find the money to buy bread. Just like that, we were expelled on the 8th or 9th of the month. You know, you plan in such a way that on the 15th of the month, the money will come again and you will continue accordingly. The fifteenth of the month came and yes, a few days later, we had to buy bread and it was too heavy for me.

This quote shows that the life arrangements of academics, which were planned according to their regular salary income, were disintegrated overnight. The experience of CODE11 reveals that borrowing is not a simple process.

I experienced such layered impoverishment or indebtedness. And that is that if I received my salaries, I would not borrow dollars, euros or gold from anyone. But since I couldn't receive my salaries, I both took something in TL basis and also because I borrowed dollars, the debt I had to pay also increased due to the rise of the dollar and gold.

This finding shows that the dismissal does not only cause a loss of income, but also that the debt burden increases exponentially in inflationary processes.

The experience of CODE12 clearly illustrates how the systemic coercion process leads to property sales and asset erosion:

... I sold my house. In other words, I sold the house, which I paid for with a mortgage loan, because I could not pay it. And I paid off the loan with that money. From what remained, I had a small amount left. I managed for two years with those... Zero. It was the same in my first dismissal. Zero. Now it's zero too. It feels like I had to rebuild my life from scratch twice.

This narrative reveals not only the economic loss, but also the existential trauma experienced with the metaphor of "building a life from scratch twice", as well as the spirit of struggle.

It is seen that the strongest solidarity network in the face of economic collapse is the family. CODE30's experience exemplifies the strategy of communal living among family members:

They also bought me a house in Antalya. There was a village I loved very much. Everyone put their money and they bought a house for me... I had no economic savings after that. Because I'm a person who helps her siblings, we as a family, as siblings, whoever has supported the other.

This example shows that family solidarity creates not only an economic but also an emotional and social safety net.

4.2.2. Civil Society Organizations and Trade Union Solidarity

This sub-theme reveals the power and limits of institutional solidarity. Almost all participants praised the systematic economic support of Eğitim Sen, the union in the field of education affiliated to KESK.

CODE5's identification highlights the uniqueness of the union:

You know, in this process, for example, the union still continues, it still does. It paid a certain amount of money every month to all those who were dismissed from the emergency decree. Well, it still pays. For example, I know it is paying seventeen thousand liras now. If they haven't increased it. It is a very important thing, that is, it is one of the things that no union, no organization has ever done until now.

This support is critical not only financially but also spiritually. The statement of CODE1 clearly shows this situation:

I would especially like to state that the amount given by Eğitim Sen, both with its material content but especially because it's institutional support from outside the family, came very well to me spiritually. Having some income from my union was very important.

The institutional support of the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) is also critical for medical academics. The experience of CODE15 illustrates this situation dramatically:

And during that period, the lawyer of the Turkish Medical Association (TMA) took on the cases of our physicians. I received tremendous support. Honestly, I hardly did anything myself. My lawyers guided everything, I can put it that way. It was such a strong support — I can't even put it into words. And they did all of this without charging any fee. This is what we call institutional solidarity.

Academics for Peace who signed the Peace Declaration and were subsequently dismissed from their jobs came together in different cities and established solidarity academies to create alternative academic environments. In this sense, solidarity academies established especially in Ankara, Istanbul, Kocaeli and Izmir provided activities and education both focused on society's needs and strengthening the relationship between Academics for Peace and society and themselves, open to public participation. However, it is observed that these alternative academic solidarity networks experienced economic sustainability problems in the institutionalization process. Therefore, Academics for Peace never had organizational capacity to weave economic solidarity among themselves.

For example, in focus group discussions, ÇOKAT6 expressed this difficult struggle as follows:

When we started to form independent institutions in every province instead of continuing in the form of solidarity academies and workshops, should I say that we did not understand economic solidarity very well, or it turned out that our practice in this regard was not very developed.

4.2.3. Working in Precarious Low-Income Jobs Outside the Field of Expertise

This sub-theme constitutes one of the most concrete indicators of the erosion of academic identity. The experiences of the participants reflect both economic hardship and identity crisis.

CODE5 and CODE22's statements shows how they had a wide range of work experiences to improve their economic situation:

Well, I did many things, I learned many things just to make money. There are computer programs, there are one or two such analysis programs. I learned about them, I trained about them. If a person is a communist, they learn quickly. I always say this. Well, I learned a lot of things. I don't know, I learned a software. I learned how to make a web page.

...

After I was fired, I worked in a lot of jobs, but not academic ones. So... I even wrote a book about it for a while. At one point, I was working at 13 jobs, in pieces. I was not working full-time but working in a magazine, translating in a publishing house, I had found a job in a construction company, I was translating for a magazine about electricity and lighting.

This strategy means not only economic hardship but also the fragmentation and destabilization of life. These quotes also illustrate both the economic challenge and the creative strategies developed in the face of this challenge. The experience of CODE4 shows the systematic exclusion in the process of job searching:

I mean I applied to several places as a worker or as a salesperson to markets. To chain markets, I applied for waitressing. I even applied for sales at a pizzeria. All of these resulted negatively. There wasn't even any response back... Since there was a statement that I was dismissed from public service, they didn't want to take this risk when Social Security Institution registration was made.

CODE18, on the other hand, approaches this out-of-field working experience from a different perspective:

*'So, like, ever since I was a student, whenever I was in a tight spot—and I guess I also like that field—I go back to construction work. ...I had gone back to construction. I worked in construction for a while...
...What was it called? I tried the textile sector. I know a bunch of unnecessary stuff about textiles now, for example. You go and openly tell some people why you're looking for a job. Like, "because of this, because of that," then you spend half an hour*

complaining about the government, and afterward, they hit you with the classic line: "We'll call you later."

All these experiences show that dismissal creates a very systematic stigma, not only in the academic field, but in the entire labor market. In Turkey, it is a legal obligation to enter insurance through the Social Security Institution (SGK) for each employee, and it is not legally possible to provide employment without SGK registration (Social Security and General Health Insurance Law No. 5510). Within the framework of this legal obligation, it is stated that warning notes have been added to the SGK registration numbers of Academics for Peace by the state in a way that will be accessible to employers. This situation can be considered as an indirect mechanism to prevent these academics from re-entering the labor market.

4.2.4. Survival with Overseas Scholarships/Funds

This sub-theme illustrates both the opportunities and the limits of international support mechanisms.

CODE6's experience highlights the importance of international support:

Then I came to France in the summer of 2003. With a PAUSE scholarship. I have been doing postdoc on cancer genetics and oncogenetics with a PAUSE scholarship for two years.

However, another statement by the same participant shows the limits of these supports:

The real story goes through the international network.

CODE6 emphasizes that finding scholarships abroad depends on having relationships in certain networks, and therefore states that those in need may not be reached, but in this regard, it states that a scholarship distribution based on merit, not need, is correct.

The analysis of Theme 2 shows that the economic insecurity experienced by Academics for Peace is a multidimensional and deep trauma. This trauma is not only income loss but also causes consequences such as identity erosion through the necessity of working in jobs outside the area of expertise, social status loss through stigmatization and exclusion, lifestyle changes and changes in family relationships such as dependency on family support. Solidarity networks, especially Eğitim Sen's regular and continuous support, have been of critical importance for survival. However, the sustainability problem of other solidarity networks' support and the inability to institutionalize economic solidarity created important limitations. Although international support provides important opportunities, access inequality and the presence of critical perspectives are issues that need to be considered. The analysis of this theme shows that economic insecurity is not only an individual

problem but constitutes a systemic threat to academic freedom and democratic society.

4.3. PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS AND COPING STRATEGIES

In this section, the psychological effects experienced by Academics for Peace during the expulsion process and the coping strategies they developed are discussed. The data obtained from individual interviews and two focus group interviews reveal the depth and diversity of traumatic experiences that academics are exposed to.

4.3.1. Psychological Effects

4.3.1.1. Depression, Anxiety, Suicidal Ideation and Insomnia

The expulsion process has led to severe depression, anxiety disorders, and even suicidal thoughts in academics. The experience of CODE23 illustrates this situation dramatically:

And I went through a very severe depression in 2017.... And I had a suicide attempt at that time. On July 15, 2017. So I remember going through a really difficult process before and after. In other words, I received both psychotherapy and medication for a long time.

The experience of CODE19 similarly shows that psychological problems reach a clinical dimension:

I was diagnosed with depression, major depression, and generalized anxiety disorder. I took medication for a long time... Because I am also trying to write a doctoral thesis. There was something very serious... The attention deficit was unbelievable. There were sleep attacks during the day and so on.

Particularly striking is the severity of the physical symptoms experienced by CODE6:

Then insomnia started. I go to bed in the evening. Until 10 in the morning, I close my eyes but I can't sleep. By 10 in the morning, my face hurt from trying to close my eyes, from not being able to sleep. Then crying fits started.

CODE30's experience with chronic anxiety disorder illustrates the long-term effects of the process:

Therefore, when I was suspended, after a certain period, this anxiety disorder of mine reached its peak. Normally, while I was managing with therapy and mild medications, the doctor had to... But of course, it continued and the doctor started me on a heavy antidepressant. I still can't get rid of it.

The panic attack experience of YÖKAT6 also supports the finding of collective trauma:

Because you're not working in that process, you don't know what to do. During that, we entered a long idle period. We entered psychological difficulty, I had a panic attack for the first time in my life. It still has effects but it's not as severe as before.

4.3.1.2. Feeling of Loneliness, Exclusion and Worthlessness

The expulsion process caused serious changes in the social circles of academics. The experience of CODE1 illustrates the dynamics of exclusion within the academic community:

... a young doctoral student you've invested so much effort in, contributed so much to their academic existence, cutting their relationship with you. Or for example, meeting on the streets in Izmit, which is not a very big city. For example, assistants from your department who were also your undergraduate students, while some would greet you, others would walk past without saying hello at all, or would talk to you briefly on their feet, looking around in fear.

The experiences of CODE 4 are quite striking:

But from that point on, you know, looking back — the threat in E, the raid on the office, the threatening phone calls I received, and the fact that people at the university — I don't want to say colleagues, let me say co-workers — suddenly started treating me like, "Wow, is CODE4 a terrorist or something?" — all of that emotionally wore me down in many ways.

CODE19's experience exemplifies the dramatic contraction of the social circle:

My social circle suddenly, I can say it almost dropped to zero. About 2-3 people remained around me who talked to me. In the immediate aftermath of my dismissal, my workplace friends collected money among themselves and gave it to me, they cried and so on, but that support disappeared from around you so quickly that I can't tell you - no one called, no one asked. Everyone was afraid to call.

CODE18's experience of "literally being left alone" shows the depth of isolation:

... there, you feel that the circle of students and that environment is gradually shrinking. And at the end of the day, there is no one left in that circle. You are left completely alone. I mean literally all by yourself.

4.3.1.3. Focus and Functioning Problems in Daily Life

The dismissal process seriously disrupted the daily life routines of academics. CODE4's experience of continuous migration exemplifies this situation in a dramatic way:

I'm constantly in a state of migration. I changed three times within a year. After my mother's death in Izmir, I first rented a house in İçerenköy. I stayed there for two or three months. Then I moved to Silivri. This time I'm coming from Silivri to Büyükkada... As if I'm not in that life, as if I'm witnessing that life.

The experience of routine loss of CODE5 illustrates the impact of the loss of essential elements of academic life:

It could be like this. For example, I loved teaching very much. I loved entering classes and talking, teaching lessons. Suddenly, bang. Or think of it this way, I went to school every day. I wake up in the morning, where am I going today? What am I going to do? I need to go somewhere. You can't just sit at home and pass time, quite the opposite.

CODE11's experience of isolation illustrates the dimensions of social withdrawal:

I go home on Friday. I don't leave the house until Monday. I did this many times...

4.3.1.4. Loss of Academic Motivation

The dismissal process had profound effects on the professional identities and motivations of academics. The experience of CODE1 illustrates the impact of the closure of academic channels:

You feel that your academic channels are blocked. For example, I had an active life with books and journal issues coming and going in English and Turkish, with the advantage of having a doctorate from abroad at a good provincial university. But I felt my branches drying up one by one, and even a few started and important book, a large edited book study failed.

The depth of CODE3's demotivation is remarkable:

Being thrown out at the beginning of my 30s, at the beginning of my profession and career, at a time when I could start teaching myself, and staying away for 8 years naturally broke my academic motivation very much. Even now, for example, I have almost no enthusiasm for doing any academic work.

CODE6's experience of complete disconnection with the system exemplifies the most extreme case:

I even have dilemmas about whether to continue my profession or not. Many things have changed, the me at the beginning of this process is not the same as the me at the end, nor will they be.

CODE3 explains that this loss of motivation is not merely due to individual characteristics, but also to the fact that what people have gone through in this process has confined both themselves and their fields and/or research topics to a narrow space:

... I mean, I still don't really have anything geared toward academic research. And one reason for that is, well, as you know too, the academic environment in Turkey is awful. I came back, but of course, it's still a mess. They don't grant equivalency, and the topics people work on are already being criminalized. Like, now even when

people apply for associate professorship equivalency, it can turn into a criminal complaint — by the Interuniversity Board or YÖK. So in my case, the topics I work on — state violence, impunity, serious human rights violations, things like dealing with the past — those are not topics you can really work on within institutional academia, at least not if you want to move up the academic ladder. Basically, the stuff I'm interested in and currently working on, they're not things I could actually submit for associate professorship in Turkey. So yeah, going back to institutional academia would also mean working in areas that are more, you know, acceptable — more acceptable in terms of academic advancement.

4.3.2. Methods of Coping

4.3.2.1. Avoiding Confrontation and Suppressing the Process

Some academics have adopted a strategy of avoiding the confrontation with traumatic experiences. CODE7's experience illustrates this strikingly:

I haven't yet engaged with this process. A reflection or bringing out what's inside me and confronting them. I'm afraid of doing it. I don't want to do it. I throw it back. My wife says now that you have a lot of anger. This anger needs to come out, you're not aware of it.

CODE4's abandonment of striving shows the depth of despair:

I've given up on that now, professor. I mean, I never got into the thing about explaining myself. Whether the person in front of me evaluates me that way, let them think so, and I run away. I always got into something like that. I didn't struggle anymore. I gave up trying.

4.3.2.2. Psychological Therapy and Medication Support

Many academics have received professional psychological support. The therapy experience of CODE3 shows the effect of the process on therapy:

Not for this reason specifically, but I was already receiving it, I was already in therapy, and this process naturally shaped the therapy process seriously, I mean, a very serious lack of confidence, feelings of worthlessness emerged afterward... The dismissal naturally became the main topic of therapy.

CODE13's experience with the HRFT support shows the importance of organized psychological assistance:

There was a network of Turkey Human Rights Foundation here at that time, a solidarity network. They were ensuring that especially dismissed academics received support through this network. I also received support through that network.

CODE9's decision to use medication illustrates the severity of the condition:

For example, I started using medication. There was a period when I could only stand upright with medication and I'm continuing it actually... I'm someone who resists medication, uses as little medication as possible. I requested this myself.

4.3.2.3. Solidarity Support

Solidarity networks have been one of the most important sources of support for academics. The experience of CODE6 shows the sustaining effect of solidarity:

There's a saying that solidarity gives life, and it really was like that. I both gave life and was given life. This isn't just about receiving, it's about receiving and giving. This was something that felt good for both sides during this process... I mean, everyone's life was very difficult. And there was such a sense of identification that even now, I consider any injustice done to them as if it were done to me. You know, the concept of family can also include many unpleasant aspects, but it also carries solidarity and empathy. I built that sense of empathy. I know that if I were to knock on anyone's door, they would take me into their home, share their food with me—and I would do the same. So this experience of victimization created a different kind of belonging for me.

CODE16's experience exemplifies concrete supports:

Friends really looked after us a lot. We didn't see much from unions in terms of legal support, but union friends, let me say, wanted to provide financial aid... The solidarity side was really very important. They don't make you feel alone. There are people behind you.

This solidarity actually shows multidimensionality from personal solidarity to organized solidarity. For example, many Academics for Peace stated that they received very serious support in legal terms. In this sense, although the names of many people are pronounced, they stated that they receive support from many different channels, especially the Contemporary Lawyers Association, the Libertarian Lawyers Association, the volunteer lawyers of Eğitim Sen, the Human Rights Association, and the Turkish Medical Association (TTB). CODE25 describes it as "magnificent":

No, they were entirely volunteer lawyers, ÖHD — that is, the Libertarian Lawyers Association, the Contemporary Lawyers Association, and the union's lawyers. I don't even know how this network was formed, how it came together, how the legal support was organized. Because after Tayyip first shouted at us, when I went to a meeting at the union, there were more lawyers present than us... they had come together, organized just to support us. I don't know how they managed to do that. It was kind of spontaneous — for each case, 3–4 lawyers were involved. Those lawyers were designated and divided the cases among themselves. Later, of course, over time, the number of lawyers decreased — for example, now I am continuing with just one lawyer. That's how the process unfolded, and it was, I mean, a voluntary network, we didn't have to do anything. We found tremendous support — truly magnificent.

CODE1's strategy for turning to academic production shows the creative coping method:

In particular, I tried to solve these depressive states by devoting myself on academic and political production... I don't officially work anywhere, but other than that, I lead a life very close to the life of a faculty member. I am involved in academic and intellectual production.

Focus group interviews also revealed findings that support and complement individual experiences. The experience of ÇOKAT1 shows the severity of the first period:

What was the main factor in surviving in challenging times? Frankly, for me, I had two children and I had no other choice. If it weren't for the children, I think I wouldn't have gotten through that process like this. Because it was a very difficult process, especially the beginning."

The memory of the cake celebration of YÖKAT7 shows the creative dimension of solidarity:

When I came from the road that day, my friends were at the door with a cake in their hands 'GOOD THAT WE WERE DISMISSED - OH HOW WONDERFUL THAT WE WERE DISMISSED' we cut the cake. And we laughed together, we managed to laugh, we laughed at our situation, this was very nice. We laughed together, we cried together. For me, it was a period in which I experienced solidarity in its most vivid form, and of course, that's what made survival possible.

ÇOKAT2's solidarity experience highlights the importance of personal networks:

We can be kicked out at any time, so that you can be prepared. In other words, our solidarity started before. Afterwards, of course, it continued, it was good. That's why I know it's good. We couldn't keep up with the phones.

The psychological effects experienced by Academics for Peace are the result of not a single trauma, but multiple and interacting traumatic experiences. This traumatic process began with a sudden and unexpected loss of academic identity, deepened with social stigmatization and economic insecurity, and ultimately created a need for comprehensive life reconstruction. According to the analysis findings, the psychological collapse experienced by academics cannot be explained by individual factors alone; it is the result of a complex process where systemic pressure, social exclusion, and institutional violence come together.

The multidimensional nature of trauma stems from academics experiencing simultaneous losses in different areas. Loss of professional identity, disruption of economic security, narrowing of social circles, and uncertainty about future plans all occurred at the same time. CODE4's concept of "irreparable " damage best summarizes this situation. This multiple loss experience led to serious psychological

problems ranging from major depression and anxiety disorders to even suicide attempts in some academics.

However, the analysis also reveals why some academics were more resilient. Academics who had strong social capital, were in relatively economically advantageous positions, and could make sense of the process within a political struggle framework suffered less psychological damage. CODE29's 20-year activist background and strong civil society connections, CODE21's retirement advantage, and CODE27's economic security are examples of this situation. Additionally, academics who developed strong attachment to the Academics for Peace identity and saw this identity as a meaningful element of resistance experienced less loneliness and feelings of worthlessness in the process.

The findings regarding the effectiveness of coping strategies are quite striking. Academics who received professional psychological support, participated in strong solidarity networks, and managed to maintain their academic identities through alternative means went through more successful recovery processes. Particularly, therapy networks organized by institutions like HRFT and collective support systems established by Solidarity Academies played critical roles in keeping academics standing. In contrast, strategies such as avoidance of confrontation, complete withdrawal into isolation, and relying solely on medication support were limited in effectiveness, leading to the chronification of problems in the long term.

Particularly noteworthy is that even reinstated academics carry the risk of "re-traumatization." CODE26's experience of "the weight of being the first to return" and CODE25's finding the "reinstatement process more challenging than dismissal" show that the return process also needs to be carefully managed. These findings suggest that systemic solutions may be more effective than individual interventions.

This comprehensive analysis reveals the depth and complexity of psychological effects experienced by Academics for Peace, while also providing important clues for effective intervention strategies. The findings show that violations of academic freedoms create deep wounds not only on an individual level but also on societal dimensions. Therefore, the repair process also needs to be multidimensional and long-term.

First, developing systematic psychological support programs is critically important. By benefiting from the experiences of institutions like HRFT, therapy networks specialized in trauma-informed approaches should be established. These programs should include both individual therapy and group therapy options, and intervention protocols specific to different trauma types should be developed. Particularly, integrative therapy approaches should be adopted for academics who experienced multiple traumas.

Institutional strengthening of solidarity networks with support is vital for both psychological recovery and reconstruction of social capital. By benefiting from the

experiences of existing solidarity academies, sustainable financing models should be developed and these networks should be supported at both national and international levels. Solidarity networks should play an active role not only during crisis periods but also in the long-term recovery process.

Reintegration processes should be designed with trauma-conscious approaches. Considering the risks of mobbing, exclusion, and re-traumatization faced by reinstated academics, awareness programs should be conducted at institutional levels and supportive mechanisms should be established. In this process, personalized support plans should be developed by evaluating academics' individual needs.

Establishing long-term follow-up and support mechanisms is essential for preventing chronic problems. Integrated systems covering multidimensional services such as psychological support, career counseling, legal consultancy, and economic support should be established. These systems should be flexible enough to adapt to academics' changing needs at different life stages.

Finally, comprehensive compensation programs should be developed from a restorative justice perspective. These programs should include not only material compensation but also psychological rehabilitation, career reconstruction, and social prestige repair. Particularly, considering CODE4's emphasized concept of "irreparable " damage, remedial mechanisms should also be included.

These recommendations also offer important lessons for protecting academic freedoms and preventing the recurrence of similar crises. Strengthening universities' autonomous structures, securing academics' freedom of expression, and developing democratic academic culture are necessary to prevent similar traumas in the future. In this context, the experience of Academics for Peace should be evaluated not only as a repair process but also as an important learning opportunity for academic freedoms.

4.4. EROSION/LOSS OF ACADEMIC IDENTITY AND BELONGING

The academic identity crisis and loss of belonging experienced by Academics for Peace after their dismissal have been analyzed through three main sub-themes. The findings show that dismissal is not only an economic and legal process, but also radically shakes the professional identities and institutional belonging of academics.

4.4.1. "Am I an Academic Now?": Loss of Identity and Motivation

One of the deepest traumas experienced by dismissed academics is the questioning of their professional identity. This identity crisis reaches dramatic dimensions, especially among participants who adopt academia as a way of life. The statement of CODE22 summarizes this situation strikingly:

Honestly, I'm not even sure that I define myself as an academic anymore, let me put it that way. I had an academic career for a while, but then I entered a fragmented process. I don't know exactly what kind of work I do anymore.

This quote illustrates how academic identity has become fragmented and obscured. The phrase "fragmentary process" emphasizes the replacement of regular academic work with random, inconsistent activities.

Similarly, CODE26 expresses the identity confusion with the following words:

I'm an academic, I guess. For a long time, I didn't say I was an academic. It still feels very strange to me... My academic side always stayed behind. It stayed so far behind that I wasn't saying I was an academic anymore. Until recently, I wasn't saying it. Sometimes when they asked, I would think first, what should I say?

The phrase "I guess" reveals the depth of identity ambiguity. Avoiding expressing one's academic identity, having problems with identity presentation in social interactions, and hesitating when defining oneself are concrete indicators of identity erosion. The experience of CODE6 shows that the emotional connection with academia has been completely broken:

I have no academic enthusiasm left. When I work with people there... I have no respect for them. I have no respect for the institution. I have no respect for my job. I can't regain these.

This statement shows that the dismissal destroys not only the institutional bond, but also the respect and motivation for the profession. The emphasis on "I can't regain" reveals the irreversible nature of this loss. The words of CODE4 show that academia is not just a profession, it is a way of life:

Therefore, the academy was not just a profession for me, it was a way of life, a living space.

From this perspective, dismissal means not only a loss of jobs but also a destruction of lifestyle. The loss of academia as a way of life radically affects the identity construction processes of the participants.

CODE2's experience shows the special difficulty created by starting academia at a late age:

We started at age 48. Quite a lower position of course... I mean, I hadn't gotten very involved. I started for only 3 years anyway... I got out before fully entering.

This situation reveals the feeling of incompleteness caused by dismissal before academic identity could fully develop. For academics who started late, dismissal means the loss of an identity that had not yet been institutionalized. CODE20's open confession shows the status dimension of academic identity loss:

The open admission of CODE20 shows the status dimension of the loss of academic identity:

I love status. Let me tell you. It is very clear, you know, I made academic progress very quickly too. And like that 'professor, professor' thing.

This quote shows that academic identity meets not only the intellectual dimension but also the need for social status and recognition. Awareness of the loss of status is one of the factors that deepens the identity crisis.

4.4.2. Interruption in Production and Disruption of Rhythm

Academic production is the basic activity that reinforces academics' professional identities. The dismissal process seriously disrupted this production rhythm. The process has been extremely devastating for young academics at the beginning of their careers, especially those in the middle of their doctoral studies. CODE29 makes this very clear when sharing his own experience:

I defended my PhD in 2024. Had I not been dismissed, I would have completed it in 2016. I lost eight years. In those eight years, the courses I would have taught, the experience I would have gained in academia, the articles I would have written, the conferences I would have attended, the theses I would have supervised, and so on... all of these would have greatly contributed to my development as an academic. Their absence... Now I will return to the faculty and... return as a junior lecturer.

Productivity in the academic field often brings with it academic promotion. However, CODE3 highlights that, in some cases, productivity may continue even in the absence of any effort toward such advancement:

I mean, I do academic work — or maybe the outcome isn't strictly academic — but I keep writing, drawing, speaking out... mostly in the field of civil society, with human rights organizations. But like... writing an article, or, I don't know, starting something with an academic promotion perspective — I know I should actually start doing that, but honestly, I just can't bring myself to do it...

CODE4 states that both the interruption of academic production and the disruption of academic routine can bring the person to the point of complete disconnection from academia:

I've already been away from my field for nine years. I've barely done any reading related to it. I even forgot the foreign languages I learned — like French, even though I had studied it...

On the other hand, according to CODE21's account, the process does not seem to have been very negative for academics in the later stages of their careers:

Given my position, as I was approaching the end of my academic career, being distanced from the university did not create a major difficulty, I can say.

YÖKAT2 clearly reveals this distinction in the focus interview:

But despite this, for those people—for us who were dismissed as associate professors, as professors, or at least after completing our PhDs—the blow was far less severe than for the younger colleagues who were left right in the middle of the fire, in the middle of their doctoral studies, with their salaries cut, and abandoned before completing their PhDs. I believe they suffered a much greater blow. Especially in this regard, I must say Kocaeli deserves credit; as I mentioned, we tried to cushion and protect those among us, but there were many things we failed to do. Let me also state that. But such a hardship was experienced in Turkey.

The statement of CODE18 shows the effect of detachment from physical space on work discipline:

... You go in the morning, stay until evening, even if you go on Facebook at the computer, being at that desk, in that room provides you with discipline. I lost that discipline.

This quote shows that academic production has not only mental but also spatial and ritual dimensions. The disconnection from the university environment has led to disruption of study routines and loss of discipline.

The experience of CODE3 illustrates how self-censorship has evolved:

Therefore, for me too, the subjects I work on are issues such as state violence, impunity, gross human rights violations, and confronting the past. It is not possible to study these issues from the perspective of academic promotion within the corporate academy.

This means that certain subjects become "objectionable" within academia and academics have to move away from their fields of study. Self-censorship manifests itself as an internal limitation of academic freedom.

The experience of CODE6 illustrates the technical gap created by the prolonged breakout:

If I hadn't been at work for 9 years, I wouldn't have been able to experience these things anyway. I have been trying to catch up with my field for the last 2 years. So I'm in a very fast-moving field. A 10-year gap is like saying that you are no longer in this profession.

This quote reveals the problem of "technological gap" faced by academics, especially those working in rapidly developing fields of science. In rapidly changing fields, the 9-year break almost creates the necessity of relearning the field.

CODE5's experience illustrates how economic concerns disrupt academic production:

Actually, I continued academic studies but while I was unemployed, but of course a bit more, think of it this way, on one hand you need to earn money, on the other hand I should write and draw something. So, while I'm writing something, a job comes, let's say I need to deal with that job for a month.

This quote illustrates the tension between academic work and earning a living. Constant job search makes academic focus impossible and reduces productivity.

The experience of CODE13 illustrates the academic motivation crisis:

Why am I doing this doctoral thesis? I have often asked myself this question. Why am I doing this doctoral thesis, why am I doing it? I replied that I do it for myself every time and continued.

This inner monologue illustrates the aimlessness of academic work and the loss of motivation. Long-term projects such as doctoral theses become meaningless in an environment of uncertainty.

The statement of CODE3 shows the loss of the goal of associate professorship:

For example, I should prepare for associate professorship but... as I said, because the fields I work in are problematic and currently, very soon again for another reason, dismissal is always a potential threat in front of us, frankly I have no academic motivation again.

This quote illustrates the impact of being under constant threat on academic goals. Future uncertainty makes long-term academic plans meaningless.

4.4.3. Alienation/Belonging Problem on Return

Returning academics find themselves in a completely different institutional environment upon their return. This leads to a crisis of belonging and an experience of alienation. The statement of CODE5 shows how the university atmosphere has changed:

Actually, the things I never dreamed of happened, on the contrary. Sometimes I say it in some places, my friends laugh, but sometimes I say that if the Council of State kicks me out again, I will be relieved... Because I really don't want to go to school... You know, I don't have to go to school and meet such people and so on. Because that old atmosphere really doesn't exist.

This quote suggests that the return is not always positive and can even create paradoxical situations such as wanting to be thrown again. The "absence of the old air" indicates a radical change in corporate culture.

The observation of CODE12 illustrates the change in student-academician relationships:

In our time, students are always like this. On the one hand, we were motherly, they were like our children. We used to behave in fatherly, motherly ways. For example, relations with those students are not like that. There are no students in the corridor anymore. Students do not come to the teacher's offices.

This quote shows how the social dimension of academic life has been eroded. The distancing of student-teacher relationships reflects the change in academic culture. The experience of CODE5, on the other hand, shows a lack of solidarity even among returning academics:

For example, at A University, I don't know specifically about A University, but alone, about 35% of 436 people returned. For example, among us, two of the returning friends retired... What will happen when all of these return? We actually couldn't establish a solidarity relationship with them either.

This shows that solidarity networks cannot be established even among returning academics despite the common experience. This means the individualization of trauma and the weakening of collective coping mechanisms. The statement of CODE18 shows alienation even from physical space:

You become seriously alienated. I mean, the environment felt like something I was very unfamiliar with at first. You feel increasingly alienated from the space and area as well.

This quote shows not only the social but also the spatial dimension of alienation. Academics feel like strangers even in the physical spaces where they work.

The experience of CODE12 illustrates the change in the departmental structure:

The department I came from is a completely different department in the second appointment. In other words, new staff were recruited, it has expanded, and a completely different mentality has filled it. All the foundations of the department have changed.

This quote illustrates how institutional memory has been erased and a new academic culture has been built. Returning academics become foreigners in their own institutions.

The experience of YÖKAT7 reveals in all its strikingness how traumatizing it can be to get together with old colleagues and the difficulty of dealing with new power dynamics:

Let me say that I had serious nightmares about what would happen to me when I returned. Because there's a group of people who I can't call my friends who are left behind, the idea of facing them, the idea of working with them is a terrible thing for me. So it's really a nightmare. Some of the people left behind are people who have been my students and are horrible people. I don't want to be confronted with them again, to enter a Department meeting together, to witness someone who has

been my student impose something on me as the Head of the Department or as the Dean, I don't want these at all. These are really nightmares for me.

Again, in focus group interviews, ÇOKAT5's statement shows the feeling of guilt in returning academics:

It describes the guilt experienced by Auschwitz survivors very well. Although it is not that severe, there is a serious sense of guilt in those who are returning and continuing to work.

This analogy illustrates the depth of trauma and the psychological burden experienced by survivors. The Auschwitz analogy highlights the traumatic dimension of the experience.

The statement of ÇOKAT3 illustrates the systemic problem:

Certainly, periodically, the system constantly spits out researchers and academics who are actually in our qualifications, in our profile, and we stubbornly try to re-enter this system that spits us out.

This quote shows that the academic system systematically excludes academics with certain profiles and that this situation is continuous.

The assessment of ÇOKAT5 illustrates the problem posed by individual turns:

This piecemeal return thing is really destructive in every sense. Both for those who return and for those who don't return and those who remain.

This leads to the fragmentation of solidarity networks and the individualization of trauma.

The Theme 4 analysis shows that one of the most profound impacts of the expulsion process on academics is the erosion of identity. This process manifests itself in three basic dimensions:

1. *Identity Crisis:* Academics begin to question their professional identities and do not even know whether they are academics or not.
2. *Production Rhythm Disruption:* Academic work discipline is lost, self-censorship develops and motivation decreases.
3. *Loss of Belonging:* Returning academics feel alienated in the changing institutional environment and experience reintegration problems.

These findings show that dismissal is not only a legal or economic process, but also radically shakes the professional identities of academics. The concept of "irreparable harm," in particular, highlights the enduring nature of this erosion of identity. From a restorative justice perspective, this situation requires not only financial compensation but also identity restoration and institutional culture change.

4.5. SOLIDARITY NETWORKS/ECOSYSTEMS - THEIR STRENGTHS AND VULNERABILITIES

The solidarity networks and ecosystems of Academics for Peace constitute one of the most critical elements of the expulsion process. The data obtained from this study reveal both the strengths and vulnerabilities of solidarity networks. The findings comprehensively reveal the evolution of solidarity from its establishment to its current state, the effectiveness of different support mechanisms, and the challenges encountered.

4.5.1. Strong Aspects

4.5.1.1. Support of Trade Unions and Rights Organizations

The most fundamental pillars of solidarity networks have been unions and rights organizations. In particular, the support provided by Eğitim Sen (Education and Science Workers' Union) played a critical role in the survival of academics.

CODE4 expresses the economic support of the union after the dismissal:

I can't really say I've been working much. My main source of income is still the payments I receive from the union. I sell books online, but it's stagnant right now...

This observation is also supported by the statement of YÖKAT4:

Of course, Eğitim Sen had a solidarity fee and we met very basic needs. At least a certain thing will come, you know, and it has come for a very long time, it is precious.

The statement of CODE29 clearly summarizes this situation:

Our union offered us financial solidarity. Very important. In other words, it is very important when we think about people who have no income left, and I am noting that this has been going on since 2016 and is still going on... Our union provided legal support to its members. Zero monetary demand.

This statement also shows that union support is not only financial, but also plays an important role in the legal struggle. As stated in CODE18, the union also provided legal support:

No, I went through the entire legal process via the union. Thankfully, the union provided full legal support — both for filing the initial case and for the appeal process, after the university challenged the decision. Other than that, there was no real need for legal assistance. As you know, in the criminal cases, only a few people were detained symbolically. Those cases were mostly just opened to create a pretext for our dismissal. I believe they were dropped anyway after the Constitutional Court's ruling. During that process, I had previously worked with a lawyer who had handled some of my earlier cases. But after the Constitutional Court decision, even that lawyer didn't feel the need to attend the hearing — and

I didn't request it either. So, in the end, it was an administrative court process, and the union mostly handled everything.

The support provided by the Turkish Medical Association (TTB), especially to medical academics, is noteworthy. CODE15's experience illustrates the depth of this support:

I worked as an active member of the Turkish Medical Association since I started my medical profession. And during this period, TTB's lawyer had taken over our physicians' cases. I received great support. I hardly did anything myself. My lawyers guided everything, I can put it that way. It was such strong support—I can't even put it into words. And they did all of this without charging any fee. This is what we call institutional solidarity.

4.5.1.2. Solidarity Academies and Collective Production

In the first period immediately after the peace signing in 2016, solidarity networks showed a very strong mobilization. The experience of YÖKAT6 summarizes this period:

I remember very well that we in Istanbul, since the signing process, after this issue has become a cancer issue since the end of 2016, we gathered two or three times a week in Istanbul, brought them together, showed solidarity together, and held such collective meetings together to see how we could develop methods of struggle and find ways to cope.

In the second stage, the institutionalization of solidarity academies was seen. CODE20's experience with the HRFT is one of the successful examples of this process:

The solidarity process with Academics for Peace naturally meant very different things... It was something that really helped me stay upright, and the HRFT academy that I established with my Peace Academic friends made my life very meaningful.

Like the HRFT, the Uçurtma Cafe in Eskişehir, the Kültürhane in Mersin, the Ankara Solidarity Academy in Ankara, the Izmir Solidarity Academy in Izmir and the BİRARADA Association in Istanbul with the strategy of becoming an umbrella organization were established. Due to the low number of Academics for Peace in other cities, the initiatives continued more in the form of platforms.

The establishment of solidarity academies has been the most concrete example of the will of academics to share knowledge with society. These structures contributed to both the preservation of academic identity and social transformation.

CODE26's experience in Kocaeli exemplifies this situation:

Afterward, before September ended, on September 28, if I remember correctly, we established Kocaeli Solidarity Academy. We tried to do different things there. Outside the university. We didn't even call it alternative. Because when you say

alternative, it means accepting what exists. Because we wanted to transform it, we held seminars, we did a two-year project called Life Knowledge School, we did summer schools, we gave conferences.

CODE13's Izmir experience is similarly important:

Starting open classes with them by forming İzmir Solidarity Academy was very beneficial. I mean, especially in the first two years, we continued those classes very actively. It was quite valuable experiences that would make us rethink even the idea of university, as it was an experience where we shared, publicized academic knowledge in other areas.

CODE27 defines the work done in solidarity networks as follows:

I can say that what we did in the academic field was much more amateur, with the amateur side prevailing over the kind of discipline a regular university brings. We did something in between academic and professional organization or union activity. I can say that we engaged in hybrid kinds of work. At the same time, we also produced outputs. Mostly in the field of education. The biggest shortcoming was contact with more students, with younger students—since that is the greatest source of renewal for an academic.

CODE27 then concretizes what this collective production he described actually was:

Both during the earthquake and the pandemic, we carried out many activities there as a professional organization, as a union. In my view, we also produced genuine academic outputs there. We are currently preparing the thirtieth-month report on that work. We did two studies on malnutrition, on the inadequate nutrition of children. I consider both of them to be academic studies. But we did not follow the classic format anymore—such as ethics committee approval, discussions, and so on. Instead, we approached it more with the appearance of objectivity and a reporting logic, but the way it was carried out was entirely scientific.

CODE20 stated that thanks to the solidarity academies, they had the opportunity to meet people from various disciplines and interact with them:

“... Of course, during the dismissal process, there were actually a lot of positive changes in my life as well. I’ve experienced many things that now make me say, ‘I’m actually glad I was dismissed.’ For example, I got the chance to meet my spouse. And also — I’m originally from medicine — but I had the opportunity to work with many colleagues and professors from the social sciences who, despite being at the same university, I hadn’t really communicated much with before. Our relationship was mostly limited to inviting each other to lectures. But we shared a similar worldview, and after the dismissal, I got to work closely with them. I believe that this time outside of academia actually helped me grow more — even in terms of my academic development.

CODE20 also states the work they do in solidarity academies as follows:

... we wrote a project, and then worked on three consecutive projects focused on human rights advocacy. Through those, we did a lot of work that highlighted both our own situation and the broader human rights crisis in Turkey. I mean, we organized trainings, we held workshops... I still miss it. I really do. I miss that working environment — being able to speak freely like that... I just wanted to say that.

One of the most important functions of solidarity networks has been to provide psychological support. The statement of CODE3 clearly reveals this situation:

In other words, psychological support and legal support were very valuable. In this respect, it was very important for the after acquittals working group to collect data, reach people, find this process and provide evidence throughout all these cases, legal information and support during criminal cases, those were very important for the subsequent struggle.

ÇOKAT6 especially mentions how important the phone calls made after the death of Mehmet Fatih Traş are.

... at the same time, BAK organized solidarity by also taking into account the psychological aspects of this issue—master’s and doctoral students were being called one by one. I think this, for example, has not been sufficiently discussed, but I am sure it touched the lives of many student friends during that period.

CODE23, on the other hand, showed the card sending workshop they organized at BİRARADA to Füsün Üstel, who was imprisoned, as one of the examples of solidarity that was good for her:

At BİRARADA, during the period when Professor Füsün and others were detained, we organized a workshop for them. We designed, created, and sent postcards ourselves. Those were beautiful things.

Again, CODE23 focuses on the strengthening dimension of moving away from the hierarchy in the university environment in Solidarity Academies:

Maybe you remember, BİRARADA was established as an umbrella organization of all solidarity academies. And during the assembly meetings held there, many other colleagues also took part. Being able to speak, to act collectively. As I said, even just being able to listen to one another—that sense of contact, which often turned into the opposite of mere elbow contact, into something closer, into embracing. I mean, outside, if I were to see them, I probably wouldn’t, right? If we were at the university, I would address them as “Professor so-and-so,” maybe just nod at them from a distance. But there, we were able to be much closer. And I personally experienced many examples of a space where neither academic hierarchy nor age hierarchy existed..

CODE25, however, thinks differently on this matter, and their analysis shows that solidarity networks may unintentionally reproduce the very problems of the system:

Because not everything was about the lack of funding. Part of it, I think, was that we carried over the hierarchies and modes of interaction from academia into what was supposed to be outside academia.

This shows us that differences in perception can lead us to very different conclusions and that the inclusiveness of solidarity academies may be limited.

On the other hand, the strong identity of Academics for Peace has been critical for collective resistance. The observation of CODE8 summarizes this situation:

The fact that Academics for Peace could stand upright was very important to me... Among Academics for Peace, one or two individuals, for example A, such people, said we withdraw our signatures, we are against violence on both sides and so on. Doing such things was sad for me. But when considered collectively, the vast majority stood upright, managed to stand upright.

4.5.2. Vulnerabilities and Weaknesses

4.5.2.1. Weakening of Solidarity Support Over Time

The biggest problem of solidarity networks has been that they have lost their power over time. CODE1's experience in Kocaeli embodies this situation:

Kocaeli Solidarity Academy, at a certain stage, as a result of the parting of ways of people who established and devoted effort to Kocaeli Solidarity Academy, including myself, let me say half and half, approximately 50% of founders and active members chose to leave.

CODE17's Izmir experience followed a similar course:

Therefore, in that 6-7-year process, solidarity networks in İzmir Solidarity Academy also loosened to some extent. This is also a very understandable thing, naturally understandable... After a while, everyone feels like this, I think. That's why we're now in the closing phase. We're closing. We made a dissolution decision.

The statement of CODE20 points to a more general problem:

But we couldn't carry out the thing. How should I say? We couldn't carry out the action network, I mean the activism, staying together, keeping this work politically on the agenda. We had very serious damage there.

The inadequacy of economic solidarity has been one of the most critical problems of the process. ÇOKAT6's observation in the focus group interview summarizes this situation:

When we started to form independent institutions in every province instead of continuing in the form of solidarity academies workshops, should I say that we did not understand economic solidarity very well, or it turned out that our practice in this regard was not very developed.

4.5.2.2. Inequalities Arising from Regional and Organizational Differences

The unequal functioning of solidarity networks due to geographical and institutional differences has been an important problem. CODE1's "non-homogeneity" observation analyzes this situation:

We are a non-homogeneous group of people, a group of academics who signed a petition. But we forgot this non-homogeneous state of ours. I am one of those who forgot this, and this is one of the most important criticisms I direct at myself. We thought of everyone who signed as homogeneous, having similar political views, similar social stances and priority orders.

CODE7's experience in Mersin shows regional differences:

We signed as 21 people, we were divided into 21 pieces. We couldn't even manage to stay together as 21 people. And meanwhile we don't have to love each other, we can have personal conflicts among ourselves, but ultimately this is solidarity, a political project.

CODE24's observation of "peripheral cities" emphasizes geographical injustice:

Especially in the peripheral cities, there was not much of a state of standing together. One way or another, even in big cities, there were those closer and those farther away

In its own narrative, ÇOKAT1 states that friends who are victims of emergency decrees do not receive enough support from friends who are not victims of emergency decrees, and supports the view that the solidarity between friends who are victims of emergency decrees has weakened over time:

Of course, some different feelings and solidarity practices between friends who have been subject to a state of emergency decree and who have not been subject to a state of emergency decree are also things that need to be discussed. Because it didn't happen exactly like that. At least I didn't feel that way. Frankly, I felt that very few of the friends who were not expelled were with us. But together with most of the expelled friends, we started to weave this solidarity process. We had problems afterwards. We gradually dispersed, but those very first days were very important to me.

On the other hand, Academics for Peace, who can continue to work at universities, share their experiences as follows:

First of all, the initial, very strong, and still perhaps continuing feeling among those who remained, even after many years, is guilt. It was the same in the trials. We would go into court with 30–40 people; some would receive heavier sentences, others wouldn't. Therefore, I think this sense of guilt has still not faded...The feeling of guilt especially continues here. Yes, our colleagues were dismissed. We stayed, but even though we stayed, how much were we able to speak out against

what the university was turning into? To be honest, I have serious doubts about that as well...

4.5.2.3. "Aid Relationship" in International Programs and Transferring Academic Hierarchies to Solidarity Networks

The approach of international support organizations has been the subject of serious criticism. CODE26's critique of Scholars at Risk sums it up:

To put it very briefly, when a relationship of providing aid rather than solidarity is established with academics who go abroad through programs created by initiatives like Scholars at Risk, which most of us have experienced, this is also quite humiliating.

Here, international institutions are seriously criticized for designing scholarships solely in economic terms and offering no academic contribution. Yet, facilitating the academic work of scholars going abroad should be an essential part of such scholarships.

The analysis of CODE25 addresses this issue at a structural level:

Because we repeatedly saw that they saw us as kind of militant activists in academia, but they don't really see you as an academic and they constantly positioned themselves on a crying and rescue dichotomy.

CODE8's critique of the Humboldt Foundation points to another problem:

The Humboldt Foundation works in an elitist approach, just like the old TÜBA, new Academy of Science in Turkey, and they have understandings that are not in the tradition I come from, in the socialist tradition I am in.

CODE8 also states that this understanding should be questioned, but that this cannot be done through internal mechanisms, and that they should definitely make corrections in their programs in consultation with people who have received scholarships before. CODE7's critique of the Scholar Rescue Fund articulates this problem in even more harsh language:

I received funding from Scholar Rescue Fund... The first thing I thought was, did we do the right thing by taking funds from these people? I felt quite regretful for a while. Because from what I understand, these are Cold War era institutions...

The observation of CODE16 highlights the disparity between the social sciences and the natural sciences:

The fact that many young academics in social sciences were able to find certain special scholarships was always published on our list - there's so and so at such university in Germany, those who will apply there. Colleagues in social sciences were more advantageous.

This shows that international scholarship programs prioritize certain academic disciplines and create interdisciplinary injustice.

The experience of CODE18 reveals the injustice created by the doctoral degree criterion:

For example, SAR (Scholars at Risk) has not given any position to anyone who has not completed their doctorate for years.

This situation has created great injustice, especially for academics with ÖYP (Faculty Member Training Program), because they were dismissed before completing their doctorates.

CODE12's experience shows that the criteria for awarding scholarships are not transparent:

I wish it was more honorable - we say peace, you know. They also demanded academic qualifications when working on real projects. How should I put it? They demanded academic competence but it was very unclear what they based their selection on.

The analysis of CODE18 reveals one of the most tragic injustices in scholarship distribution:

Yet I was dismissed from Dersim. I never had any security concerns. The man dismissed from Erzurum became... I say man because only one person was dismissed. The dismissed man from Erzurum's right to life was at risk.

This statement implies that international organizations prefer academics who are considered more academically "successful" instead of academics whose lives were at risk. This situation shows that academics who were already known in international academic circles were in an advantageous position.

CODE1's critique of the SAR is noteworthy:

I think the people who put effort into Scholars at Risk are very well-intentioned. Also, having lived in the Western world for 12 years, I can see what people who get involved in these things do, how they live. I'm saying this from a place where I can see this picture. But I find this and similar institutions too bureaucratic, trying to apply the Western lens to the East, and sometimes dysfunctional.

These injustices constitute one of the main reasons why international solidarity has turned into an "aid relationship" and create new hierarchies among academics.

When Theme 5 is considered as a whole, we can reach the following conclusions. The solidarity networks of Academics for Peace have historically gone through three main periods: strong mobilization, institutionalization, and disintegration/weakening. In this process, unions and rights organizations provided the most stable support, while solidarity academies offered important experiences but faced sustainability

problems. The strong aspects of solidarity networks include legal support, psychological support, knowledge sharing, and collective resistance. However, inadequate economic solidarity, geographical inequalities, reproduction of academic hierarchies, and problems with international organizations created significant vulnerabilities. These findings show that future national or international solidarity networks need to be organized in a more egalitarian, sustainable, and inclusive manner.

4.6. EROSION OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND INSTITUTIONAL DECAY

This section includes the evaluation of the data obtained from the interviews with the Academics for Peace within the framework of "Theme 6: The Erosion of Academic Freedom and Institutional Decay". Theme 6 analyzes the transformations created by the dismissal process not only at the individual but also at the institutional level and the structural collapse of the higher education system in Turkey.

4.6.1. Individualized culture, dysfunctional boards and a climate of silence

There is strong evidence in the research findings that universities are moving away from their core missions. The assessment of CODE13 clearly summarizes this situation:

Actually, a lot can be said about the general environment of the university. In other words, there is no attempt to produce any scientific knowledge there, and you must be in a dream to talk about a critical point of view, and maybe there is no need to say these things too much. This is the state of most of our universities. Maybe it was like this before, but what more can we say, it has become ordinary, accepted, normalized.

This quote shows that academic institutions have lost their function of producing science and that critical thinking is systematically hindered. The phrase "normalized" emphasizes that this has now become an accepted norm.

CODE13 criticizes the distortion in the academic evaluation system as follows:

It is actually a place where academic performance is measured only by the number of TÜBİTAK projects or the number of academic studies that receive incentives, and it does not matter whether you contribute anything to the students, whether you have a place in the lives of the students, that is, whether the courses given add something critical to them, etc., none of these matters.

This finding shows that quantitative criteria take precedence over qualitative academic values in universities and the teaching function is trivialized.

CODE28's experience exemplifies how public science projects systematically collapse:

There are 47-48 food engineering departments in Turkey. There are dozens of nutrition and diet sections. Again, dozens of medical faculties have public health departments. All of these are actually institutions and academic institutions. For the last four years, following the pandemic, we have been experiencing a food crisis unprecedented in the history of the Republic. There has never been a period when prices increased eight to tenfold to this extent—except during times of war or famine. And I will ask a very simple question. There is not a single statement, not a single report made by these dozens of departments regarding this problem.

This situation is a concrete indicator of the silence of academic institutions in the face of social problems and their loss of awareness of public responsibility. In the research findings, it is seen that a systematic culture of silence is also dominant in universities. CODE4's observations reflect this situation strikingly:

... our colleagues who remained in academia [told me that], after you left, not only did you disappear, free thought left here. Critical thinking left. We can't express it. Even in political science courses, we can't discuss some things openly. Because both the concern that something might happen to me and such self-censorship occurred.

This quote illustrates how the expulsion silences the entire academic community, not just those directly affected. The phrase "Free thought left here" reveals the extent of the climate of fear created by the expulsion in the academic environment. CODE15's observations show the distant attitude among colleagues in the post-reintegration period as another reflection of this silence:

However, in general, there was hesitancy in expressing these feelings, in visiting, which became an established attitude after returning. Yes, we chatted. As if nothing had happened. We continued. But the number of colleagues who came to visit me, who came to visit my office, or who participated in the press statement made on the day I started work was 3-4 faculty members. Now I explained this as a reluctance to be visible.

The findings of CODE17 reveal the dysfunction of academic boards:

There is a loss of dignity. People do not reflect on the work they do. Not only do they fail to think individually, but they certainly do not think collectively either—by which I mean through meetings of academic committees. No academic council meets in our faculty.

...

No one objects to anything, no one opposes anything, no one creates a demand for anything to be corrected in this direction in universities.

CODE5 explains concrete examples of this situation with the example of tea prices:

Let me give you a very simple example. After I returned, there was a place that students used on one side. They demolished it and made it a café... One tea costs 15 liras. The cheapest coffee was 45 liras... There was a mailing list that included the entire University A... I wrote there, saying things like, 'How can tea be sold for 15

lira, or coffee for 45 lira?’ Not even one of our colleagues wrote a response saying yes, how can this be, they didn't. Nobody even responded.

CODE1's observations clearly reveal the change in the university environment:

That a transformation was experienced in the university environment, specifically in the context of University O which is the subject of our conversation, that student contact and the quality of courses declined significantly, that university administration seeks almost nothing other than publication, especially foreign publication, publications that comply with various criteria, that courses are not conducted properly in this reluctance, that students cannot develop a collective spirit, I received very negative comments.

The analysis of CODE3 explains the process of transforming universities into state apparatus:

Universities in Turkey are in a terrible state. These are for example the issue at Boğaziçi... Now directly in Turkey, universities, institutions, both universities and like non-existent, universities like boards, holding academic, academic advancement and academic... What is it called? evaluation processes. These now work as an apparatus and even a hitman of political power.

Again, the experiences of CODE3 show how universities have been transformed into intelligence apparatuses:

As I said, in an equivalence application, for example, your file goes to MİT [National Intelligence Organization] before being concluded and not only the file you submitted but your entire personal life is scrutinized, a criminal complaint can be made from a doctoral equivalence application you submitted."

Most recently, YÖK's directive to universities not to use gender expressions, its request to hospitals for lists of those who applied for adaptation surgery in the last 10 years, they now function as a profiling, intelligence and really criminalization apparatus.

As a part of the individualized culture in universities, very serious changes are observed in the student profile. CODE5's observations illustrate the dramatic change in the student profile:

In other words, there is almost no student who I can call a socialist, or a leftist. I even told a few students. Look, make this café something, protest, will such a thing happen? There are no students here to say. They are all either apolitical or right-wing or something... As most of them are apolitical.

The observations of CODE14 also support the above observation:

Despite being about a 10-year process, despite being final year students, a more distant, more apolitical generation from Turkey's events has come. There are even several generations in between I think. The second years were like that too. They

had never taken face-to-face classes. They had never seen a book. Pandemic, plus earthquake. They took online education. They couldn't read.

This quote shows that not only political consciousness but also basic academic skills are being eroded. Again, on the student front, the findings of CODE17 show the collapse of the quality of education in universities with the attendance problem:

I found the university like this, frankly, when I returned... This situation has deepened considerably in these two years. First, students don't come to school. This is a very serious problem.

...

Therefore, such degeneration, impoverishment, loss of prestige, becoming dysfunctional are happening. Our university D is especially experiencing this. That's what I noticed.

The experience of ÇOKAT7 shows that returning academics experience institutional alienation:

So that department was not the one I left. I didn't belong there anymore. That's how I started to feel. As a matter of fact, I was given an office again. My name was hung in the office, on the door of the office. But I didn't take any of my belongings to the office.

The analysis of YÖKAT7 in the face-to-face focus group interview highlights the structural breakdown of the system:

Everything was very bad. A common demand cannot be developed. Where will we integrate?

The dramatic observation of YÖKAT3 summarizes the seriousness of the situation:

We are actually the first whose diplomas are cancelled. Everyone's diploma can be destroyed, cancelled overnight. Diplomas are given without diplomas; existing ones are cancelled. How will we integrate into this system?

Many other findings that the collapse mentioned here is part of a comprehensive strategy also support the above observation of YÖKAT3. For example, CODE21 defines where the process of Academics for Peace has evolved as follows:

And as a result, such an environment emerged. Among the students, progressive, democratic, revolutionary students were suppressed by nationalist students, who established dominance. And from the perspective of faculty, a university structure came into being that was dominated by right-leaning, authoritarian, totalitarian members of staff... In other words, we later realized that this was something that had also taken place in other institutions and was, in fact, an operation conducted from a single center.

4.6.2. Differentiated Experiences in Private Universities

This sub-theme analysis examines the experiences of lawlessness and insecurity experienced by Academics for Peace working in foundation universities. The findings reveal that private universities have different but unique problems compared to public universities.

The case of CODE22 exemplifies the legal paradox in private universities:

Well, I was working at a private university, and I was dismissed from there. In other words, my civil servant status was taken away from me without me ever being a civil servant. Something utterly absurd happened. They even confiscated my green passport when I didn't even have one — it made no sense, but that's what happened.

In this case, private university academics were sentenced to the same punishment as public university academics, but they did not have the same legal protections.

The experiences of CODE8 reveal the systematic lawlessness in private universities:

I had to file two full jurisdiction lawsuits in order to claim what I was owed from University Ş. And they refuse to disclose what my salary actually was. The only way to determine it is by comparing the payrolls of colleagues at my level. But they don't provide those payrolls either. Instead, the payrolls they submit belong to Azerbaijani academics employed by University Ş. Since their residence permits are tied to their employment contracts, they cannot speak out. They explained their situation to me. So, the university sends their payrolls, making it look as if my salary matched theirs. In other words, they are trying to mislead the court. In fact, in most private universities, lawlessness and crude fraud, I would say, are the norm— something that is ordinary and part of daily practice...

This quote shows the lack of salary transparency at private universities, creating arbitrary differences between academics in the same position. The expression "daily" emphasizes that this lawlessness has been normalized.

CODE8's observation highlights the psychological impacts of the insecurity that comes with being an opponent/dissenter in private universities:

That's why you feel like someone who is constantly trying to get a stone up a slope every day. But again, if we are realistic, I think it is very important to be realistic. You also know that it is not possible.

This metaphor illustrates that working at private universities requires a constant struggle, and even success does not provide security.

CODE22's experience at University B illustrates how institutional trust is undermined:

... They probably did something like this. They dismissed me. In case the wind turns the other way, I think after dismissing me for being a signatory, they submitted something inside so that an investigation related to FETÖ would be opened about me, which we still don't know. Because if not this, then that, to clear themselves.

This narrative suggests that private universities focus on securing themselves rather than protecting their academics, seeking to fabricate additional charges for this. The experience of CODE26 exemplifies how private universities use contract precariousness as a means of pressure:

As I said, there was always the possibility of being dismissed again even before being dismissed for the second time. Now after being dismissed for the second time, it exists doubly. Because I was dismissed once through dismissal. I'm waiting for its appeal. Then I was dismissed because no reappointment was made. Now I'm waiting to see whether or not reappointment will be made in September.

This means that the university suspended the academic again by not renewing the contract, even though he returned with a court decision. The experience of CODE3 at University F shows the difference between private universities:

Yes, I mean, it's very convenient. Like this, I love F really. At F, as I said, even when I was dismissed by an emergency decree, I gave quite a few external courses, and both the faculty and university administration is a place that opens space for academic freedom, lets academics be free, gives importance to participation, and I never had any problems at F from the beginning.

This experience highlights the importance of corporate culture, noting that not all private universities exhibit the same oppressive approach.

The situation of private university academics is handled in a different legal framework than public university academics. This situation means different penalties for the same "crime" and undermines the principle of equality. The example of University F shows that academic freedoms can also be protected in private universities. This situation reveals that corporate culture and management approach are decisive.

The experiences of lawlessness and insecurity in foundation universities are different from those of public universities, but they also contain serious problems. First, lawlessness has become a "daily" practice in private universities. Salary injustice, contract insecurity and arbitrary practices have been normalized. Second, private university academics experience double victimization: They have been punished by a state of emergency decree and have not had the same legal protections because they are not public employees. Third, the decisive role of corporate culture can be seen in the example of University F. This shows that academic freedoms can also be protected in private universities, but this is a matter of institutional preference. These findings reveal the necessity of developing special protection mechanisms and strengthening institutional accountability systems for academics working in private universities.

The Theme 6 analysis as a whole reveals the extent of the structural collapse experienced by the higher education system in Turkey in the post-2016 period. This collapse took place on three main axes:

First, there has been a systematic erosion of academic values. Basic academic missions such as producing science, developing critical thinking and taking social responsibility have been abandoned, replaced by quantitative performance indicators and ideological alignment criteria.

Secondly, institutional decision-making mechanisms have become dysfunctional and have been replaced by a fear-based management system. Academic boards do not meet, and solidarity between colleagues is replaced by individual survival strategies.

Thirdly, universities have ceased to be educational-research institutions and have been transformed into extensions of the state apparatus. Profiling, criminalization and systematic exclusion mechanisms have become part of the institutional routine.

These findings underscore the need for comprehensive reforms to safeguard academic freedom and redemocratize universities. At the same time, it shows that the experiences of Academics for Peace are not only stories of individual victimization, but are symptoms of the structural transformation that higher education in Turkey has undergone.

4.7. WORKLOAD, ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE AND STUDENTS ON RETURN TO THE ACADEMY

Theme 7 examines the practical challenges, institutional barriers, and re-established relationships with students faced by expelled Academics for Peace in the process of returning to universities. This theme, based on the data obtained, reveals that the reinstatement process is not just a legal victory but also a multidimensional struggle for reintegration.

4.7.1. Excessive/Sudden Course Load and Adaptation Difficulties

One of the main problems faced by reinstated academics is that they face a sudden course load after 6-8 years of interruption. The experience of CODE2 summarizes this situation clearly:

They gave too many courses. I'm hearing the names of some courses for the first time. I mean I said, if you're not thinking of me, think of your students... Commercial law course. Well, let's say that's not too far...

This quote reveals that university administrations follow a conscious and systematic policy of obstruction against academics who have been reinstated. The fact that academics are forced to teach courses they do not know, outside their field of

expertise, both reduces the quality of education and creates psychological pressure on them. CODE25 has a similar experience:

Let me start with teaching. Teaching... Well, first... I was reinstated in November. I knew I would be teaching in the second semester. And the thing was, you know... I didn't have a single note. I mean... I hadn't looked at anything for seven years. And all of a sudden, I was faced with seven courses. This wasn't a specific wrongdoing directed at me—everyone in the department teaches that many courses. But of course, it was very challenging.

In the face-to-face focus group, YÖKAT7 says:

They don't let them teach. They don't give graduate doctorate students. They try to interact as little as possible. I suppose they think we were engaged in things like terrorism propaganda or something. In other words, [the reinstated Academics for Peace] face such reactions.

But not all experiences are negative. The experience of CODE17 points to a completely different experience:

They kindly offered me courses, but I said that I wasn't really intending to teach that semester. I said I didn't have any particular request in the first semester, because the course schedules were being set exactly on the day I returned, and so on. The department chair asked politely, but I didn't really accept. In the second semester, I taught one course. This year, I taught another. So, I have been teaching one or two courses at a time.

This example shows that some academics may be selective about their course load and experience a gradual adjustment process.

CODE14's experience reveals the physical challenges of the return process:

Frankly, I had a hard time. First, I had to work again in another city. My whole routine was disrupted. I still have difficulty in order and planning. In general, I couldn't do that much order and planning after I was kicked out. I was happy, but I had to travel, two lessons, return again, travel by plane all the time. On weekends to see my son or to see him more often. Because we didn't change his school.

This quote indicates that the restitution process has upended not only academic but also personal life arrangements.

4.7.2. Contact with Students

One of the most striking situations faced by reinstated academics is the widespread ignorance of students about the Academics for Peace process. CODE5 describes this situation as follows:

Undergraduate students, most of them were in secondary school when I was expelled. In other words, they came to university, but most of them were already in middle school when I was expelled. 6.5 years have passed.

CODE13 makes similar observations:

The students did not know that I was an Academic for Peace. In fact, most of the students did not even know that there was such a thing as an Academic for Peace. Those dates seem to be long gone.

Some academics adopt a strategy of openly explaining their identities to students. The experience of CODE11 shows the positive results of this:

.... I introduced it especially as an Alevi in the classes. You know, I am this person, I went through such a process. I signed for this, and now I have come back with the court decision, so I explain all of them to the students in the first class and the feedback is more positive.

One of the strong themes that emerged in the interviews is the aspiration of academics to teach. The experience of CODE16 makes this longing very clear:

Now, of course, it was like a fairy tale for us. I was back after eight years. In this process, I realized that the heaviest punishment that can be given to an academic is to prevent him from teaching.

This quote shows how deep the longing to teach is and how its prevention is experienced in the dimension of psychological torture. The return experience of CODE13 describes the enthusiasm with which this longing was met:

I started classes. Of course, it was very exciting for me to be able to start teaching. Because when I started my doctorate, as an expelled academic candidate, I had never experienced this. And it was very important for me to be able to achieve this, to return to this, to experience this excitement.

CODE26's experience shows what it means to teach even in challenging circumstances:

So let me tell you the only moment I enjoyed. When I walk into the classroom and I'm with the students. It was difficult at first. Because I realized that I had difficulty positioning myself. After so long... But the students knew... I only experienced the times when I felt relatively good in the classroom.

CODE14's experience:

I miss going to class very much.

This brief but intense statement illustrates the depth of eight years of longing. CODE28 expresses his longing to teach as follows:

Let me be honest, the thing that made me happiest was the idea of teaching again. Because during that period, my bond with the students was never broken.

CODE18 expresses the importance of interacting with the students, that is, contacting, through lecturing:

The negatively affected part is your relationship with the students. I didn't give a lecture, and I still don't. Since I am a research assistant, I do not have such an obligation. ... You know, they don't let things happen anymore. But I think it was the worst part. So your relationship with the students is all about it. In other words, it reaches the point of rupture.

These quotes illustrate that the longing to teach is not just a professional need but an existential one. For academics, lecturing is a key component of their identity and central to their life purpose.

One of the most striking dimensions of the research findings is the dramatic change in the student generation. When the academics who were dismissed by a Decree Law for signing in 2016-2017 returned in 2023-2024, they encountered students who were of secondary school age at that time. They found that collective memory has been erased, political consciousness has eroded, and academic skills have declined among this new generation of students. Despite all the difficulties, the fact that the relationships that academics establish with students are mostly positive shows that their passion for education continues. This situation reveals:

- The resilience of academic identity
- The power of the educational mission
- The importance of intergenerational bonding

The analysis of Theme 7 displays that the process of returning to academia is a multidimensional and complex experience. The returned academics compare their legal victories to practical obstacles, struggle with institutional resistance, but find hope in relationships with students. This process requires not only an individual but also a systemic transformation.

4.8. EXPERIENCE ABROAD: BREATHING SPACE, LIMITATIONS AND UNCERTAINTY OF RETURN

This section examines the overseas experiences of Academics for Peace in four main dimensions; language and cultural barriers abroad, the crisis of belonging and the sense of transience, uncertainty and tension in the decision to return, the importance of international support and academic networks. The interviews reveal that the experience abroad is both a "breathing space" and a complex process in which deep uncertainty and crisis of belonging are experienced.

4.8.1. Language and Cultural Barriers Abroad

The most concrete obstacle faced by academics abroad is language and cultural barriers. These barriers are fundamental to academic integration. The experience of CODE19 in Germany exemplifies this situation strikingly:

Germany, as you may have heard from here and there, is a country where the language barrier is incredibly high. If you don't have the language, you have nothing in many sectors... Because everywhere demands harsh German. It's not so easy now, we came here at age 40. After this age, you can't learn second, third languages so quickly, time needs to pass.

This quote highlights the critical role of the age factor in language learning. It is an unrealistic expectation that academics over the age of 40 would successfully continue their active business life, keep a healthy family-work balance, and exhibit academic performance in a new language. The experience of CODE26 in France shows the direct impact of the language barrier on academic studies:

Of course, my not knowing French was also a factor and the French not wanting to speak English, not speaking it, multiplied my difficulties there both academically and in daily life.

This situation reveals the inadequacy of international scholarship programs in terms of language support and the additional challenges posed by host countries' attitudes towards English.

The discrimination of third world countries in the experience of CODE22 points to deeper structural problems:

There was a philosopher man I admired very much when I was in Germany. I think he was a good academic. I liked his stance very much. Once, in a meeting, the man said that our conference was going to be held in Norway. We said that Norway is very expensive. He said, "So are we supposed to live our entire lives according to you? Are we supposed to adjust everything to Third World countries? Enough already."

This quote illustrates the extent of not only linguistic but also economic and cultural discrimination faced by academics abroad.

4.8.2. Crisis of Belonging and Sense of Temporariness

The most traumatic dimension of the experience abroad is the state of being in the position of a "guest" all the time and not feeling like they fully belong anywhere.

CODE3's PAUSE fellowship experience sums up this crisis most clearly:

I received the scholarship for 2 years. As I said, almost everyone who goes there with PAUSE scholarship is considered as a guest. You don't actually become a direct part, a subject of the academic environment there, you have a short-term

temporary presence there... Therefore, I never felt I belonged to the academic world there.

This state of "not being a subject" means losing one of the basic elements of academic identity. Academics are seen only as people who receive economic support and are not accepted as equal partners in scientific productivity and academic contribution.

CODE19's experience of detachment from things shows the concrete manifestations of this sense of impermanence:

We, none of the academics here could bring them. My books are still in Turkey. That made me feel so bad. I felt very bad. For the first time there, I felt so stateless... Our photos are still in Turkey. They still haven't come. My wife lost her mother and father for example. All the photos are still there.

This quote shows that scholars are not only physically disconnected but also emotionally and historically. Books and photographs are material manifestations of academic and personal identity, and breaking away from them deepens the feeling of "statelessness". CODE7's transnational life experience reveals the complexity of this crisis of belonging:

That situation definitely exists. And it is a state that will never end. Maybe this won't be for the children, but it will be for me and my wife. We don't belong here. It cannot be said that we have been discriminated against... But despite this, you are not from there.

This phrase "never-ending state" illustrates the lasting effects of the exile experience. Even if they are not discriminated against, the academic does not feel that he belongs to that land and this situation turns into an existential problem.

4.8.3. Uncertainty and Tension in the Return Decision

The decision to return to the university poses one of the most difficult dilemmas for academics. This decision is not just a matter of individual preference, but also a matter of political stance and vision for the future. CODE6's radical break decision illustrates the extreme of this uncertainty:

The place I will return to again is Cyprus. You know, the people in Cyprus can fire me. I will return to another university. Because I now see Cyprus as my homeland. Turkey can no longer be my homeland.

This quote illustrates a transfer of citizenship, not just geographical, but emotional and political. The complete severance of ties with Turkey and the construction of a new "homeland" reveal the depth of the trauma caused by the expulsion.

The final rejection decision of CODE19 takes an even harsher stance:

Definitely not. I have no desire regarding returning to academia or anything else. If my way opens one day to go to Turkey for vacation or something, the only thing I'll do is go to the dentist. Other than that, I have no desire... I can't imagine myself there and I tell my wife things like that. You come with me too, otherwise I'll definitely strangle someone there.

In this statement, the return is not only denied, but also an emotional intensity that has the potential for violence. The phrase "strangling someone" illustrates the dimensions of accumulated anger and frustration.

The strategic evaluation of CODE8 offers a more analytical approach:

In order for me to be able to start working somewhere in Turkey—given that the entire university system has been dismantled, and in fact all universities, with the exception of a few, have been taken over by the regime—my chances of working at an institution in Turkey are very slim. On the other hand, another important condition that would enable me to return to Turkey and do something there would be the emergence of circumstances, so to speak, that make it worth going back. I can motivate myself with the responsibilities I assign to myself. For this reason, if such conditions were to arise, I might consider returning. But under the current circumstances, returning and working is out of the question. To give a very simple recent example: just last week, a friend of ours was arrested simply for speaking their mind—speaking their mind about very basic things; Ash Aydemir.

This approach suggests that the decision to return requires consideration of systemic conditions, not just individual ones.

4.8.4. The Importance of International Support and Academic Networks

International support mechanisms are both vital for Academics for Peace and are the subject of serious criticism. CODE3's analysis of the collapse of international solidarity offers a critical perspective:

During the period when these funds, scholarships were intense, academics at risk were also something for Europe, for European states and institutions there. At the same time, a proof of how much academic freedom guarantor they are... but now all these institutions are collapsing of course, in the Palestine-Israel issue, actually when you think of those dismissed, fired, criminalized - students - you see that there isn't real solidarity, real academic freedom..

This analysis reveals that international support institutions exhibit selective solidarity and apply double standards in the Palestinian-Israeli issue. The criticism that the claim of being the "guardians of academic freedom" is only valid in certain subjects is very important.

CODE6's emphasis on transnational networking includes an alternative strategy proposal:

But I think the real story for the signatory academics is through the international network. Because I started to see that this issue is unsolvable in Turkey.

This approach highlights the strategic importance of international networks in the event of a blockage of national solutions.

The experience of CODE19 shows how effective international solidarity can work:

After I was expelled, I was a part of an international organization during the period I was expelled. I was part of the International Political Psychology, International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP) community. Now it was very good for me to be a part of ISPP. Because ISPP immediately formed a support group within itself. They supported us. Through them, we were able to reach people among the Academics for Peace.

This example illustrates how pre-existing academic networks can transform into effective support mechanisms in times of crisis.

However, CODE10's criticism of being late points to systemic issues:

Too late. What we will tell them is too late. What are you asking after this time? Meanwhile there are academics at risk, colleagues of mine who left. I mean, how can this person go, how can he go even though he is not at risk?

This criticism emphasizes that the timing of international support is wrong and that there is injustice in the distribution of resources. Although there is more limited data on overseas experience in focus group studies, there are some important findings.

The impact of passport restrictions in the focus group of YÖKAT3 emphasizes:

I couldn't get a passport for about four years, so I wasn't able to go abroad, even though I had received a very good job offer at the time. At the beginning, I had the ambition to do something. But I also didn't want to go abroad because of family issues—my mother was ill, and so on. So I couldn't leave during that period. By the time I finally obtained a passport four years later, I was in a completely different state of mind.

This shows that international support mechanisms have become ineffective due to political restrictions in Turkey.

The Theme 8 analysis reveals that the experience abroad has a paradoxical nature for Academics for Peace. On the one hand, it provides academic freedom and economic security, but on the other hand, it creates a deep crisis of belonging and identity problems. Language and cultural barriers, combined with the age factor, create serious integration problems. The expectation of academics over the age of 40 to perform academically in a new language is unrealistic. The crisis of belonging turns into an existential problem, not just a geographical one. Staying in the status of "guest" eliminates the right to be an academic subject. The decision to return becomes a matter of political stance and vision for the future rather than individual choice. While

some academics decide to break radically, others adopt a conditional return strategy. International support mechanisms exhibit selective solidarity and double standards may be applied, as seen in the case of Palestine. This situation calls into question the claim of universality of the discourse of "academic freedom".

In conclusion, while the overseas experience may provide temporary relief, it does not constitute a long-term solution. While transnational networks are gaining prominence, democratization at the national level and the restoration of academic freedom remain a key priority.

4.9. RIGHTS ADVOCACY AND REIMAGINING THE UNIVERSITY

The 9th theme of this research, which examines the experiences of Academics for Peace, covers the struggles of academics to defend their rights and their visions for the future after the expulsion process. This theme is shaped around suggestions and expectations for both the elimination of existing rights violations and the democratic transformation of the university system. The data obtained from the study show that academics do not only fight for individual rights, but also want to develop collective strategies for systemic transformation.

4.9.1. Advocacy of Rights

4.9.1.1. Acceleration and Implementation of Legal Processes

Academics make serious criticisms about the functioning of legal processes. CODE5 emphasizes the necessity of political pressure with the following words:

Now, on the other hand, we need to come together as Academics for Peace, talk together, find a way to accelerate this and put pressure on the Council of State. Now this is a political thing. It's not really legal.

This statement shows that legal processes have taken on a political character rather than being technical. The experience of CODE5 reveals that delays in the implementation of court decisions are arbitrary.

CODE11 provides concrete suggestions by stating that legal defense mechanisms should be strengthened:

Therefore, we must create something that will strengthen our legal defense mechanisms as soon as possible. I attach great importance to this... For example, we should have a legal unit. The union can do this, it can walk through the union.

This proposal highlights the inadequacy of individual legal struggle and the necessity for collective legal strategies. The idea of democratizing legal knowledge with the support of technological infrastructure is notable. CODE15 proposes direct warning for the courts:

First of all, I even told our friends in Istanbul. I think it would be useful to hold a meeting with the BAK Law group as soon as possible and to give a warning by our lawyers to the courts of appeal that have been waiting for three years after this Council of State decision.

This approach reflects a strategy of active legal struggle rather than passive waiting.

4.9.1.2. Political Ownership and Agenda of Decree Files

The problem of political ownership of the victims of the emergency decree is one of the important findings of the research. CODE3 analyzes this situation through Kurdish identity:

In terms of Decree Laws, but to the unions, our own unions, political parties and political actors, the issue of the Decree Law is not limited to us, of course, with the Academics for Peace, but in this matter, I put aside the FETÖ suspects who are not reinstated at the moment. When we look at the Decree Laws that have not been returned, it is seen that most of them are Kurdish public officials.

This analysis reveals that there is strategic targeting on the basis of ethnic and political identity in the victimization of the emergency decree. The observation of CODE3 is integrated with the suggestion that the peace process should include the agenda of the Decree Law:

I think this upcoming process, the political process should have an agenda, the issue of the Decree Law and reinstatements, that is, if there is to be a peace process, a peace agenda, so the people targeted should be a part of it.

CODE9 states the necessity of maintaining the importance of the emphasis on peace:

In other words, I think we should never forget the reason for our dismissal. In other words, the demand that united us was a demand for peace, a demand for peace, that is, a demand for social peace.

Likewise, CODE15 proposes that solidarity academies focus on peace studies:

What was the subject of your signature, the issue of peace. Now we can spread it to the Middle East geography we are in and even to the world. The need for a ring of fire, that is, peace, has become more and more vital.

4.9.1.3. Reconstruction of Universities in a Democratic and Participatory Manner

One of the most important findings of the research was that the process since 2016 was a conscious intervention in universities. CODE28 explains this as follows:

Social problems, those public intervention tools, institutions, ways and procedures have been turned upside down. The university also got its share of this. In other words, for example, I am in a position to interpret the use of this Peace declaration

as a means of liquidation. I can see this more clearly in the intervening time. ... And I interpret this process as the elimination of academics who strive to do science from a public place within the university and have an understanding that prioritizes social problems.

CODE1 stated that the conservative transformation in universities was carried out through more "moderate" people:

In other words, they formed a committee of moderate, calm professors who were not aligned with any specific ideological or political side, that is, they had these moderate people do the execution within the university, I want to say that. There wasn't even an actual result from the investigation. Nothing came of it. But the process itself was ugly. At least, for me — for example, I try to explain the difference between assigning someone like INT1 to my case and assigning, say, a fascist or a racist. Having INT1 on such a committee would actually upset me more — that's what I've been trying to express.

CODE 4, on the other hand, stated that the expulsion process was not only punitive, but also carried out for the purpose of an ideological transformation by ignoring merit in universities:

... However, the decrees didn't just result in our dismissal. Managers who weren't considered loyal were removed one by one. My institute director at the time was dismissed due to alleged links to FETÖ. He later returned, but not to the same university. The rector at the time was also almost immediately removed from office, and a new one was appointed in his place. As a result, even the few administrators who had been selected based on merit have now completely disappeared. There's nothing left there that I can rely on. Unfortunately, I would say the situation has only gotten worse..."

YÖKAT7 shares this with us in the focus group with an even more concrete example:

I am talking about University A. A faculty, a university faculty, came almost to the point of disappearing. It is important to remember that the Faculty of Political Science and the Faculty of Communication at University A were the bearers of a very significant tradition. What happened there did not happen only to us; a critical tradition that earlier generations had labored for and carried forward to a certain point faced a serious blow and an interruption. From that point on, it has become very difficult to see the Faculty of Communication at University A as a continuer of that tradition. Because although the colleagues who remained there made serious efforts to maintain their motivation, they have now largely withdrawn. They do not even want to go to the school anymore. We used to feel glad thinking that those who remained could at least keep alive part of the institution, part of that tradition, simply by being there. But even that suffered a major setback—there was an erosion there.

For this reason, academics put forward a comprehensive vision of transformation regarding the democratization of the university system. CODE8 emphasizes the necessity for systemic reorganization:

I think universities should be re-established to a large extent. Years ago, I wrote about this in Bianet. I think universities should be re-established.

This approach is not a reform but a revolutionary transformation proposal.

CODE10 proposes a return to the strong university tradition with a historical perspective:

Turkey's university tradition is a strong university tradition. They just need to look at this. I mean, how did the universities in the seventies, which was the same in the early eighties, how did there actually be more democratic, pluralistic and truly science-producing and social benefit cadres with more democratic freedom of expression?

CODE17 emphasizes the fundamental importance of the principle of democratic governance in the university:

Therefore, I think we have a very important path to take regarding a form of governance and decision-making that many people participate in. I don't even know to whom I am saying this, but this is one of the most important issues. It is the same in the university, at the local level, and at the central level as well.

4.9.1.4. Transformation of Solidarity Academies into Permanent Networks and Alternative Academy Models

The experience of CODE26 shows how quickly solidarity networks organize:

We were the first to be expelled from the Public University. On September 1, 2016. Then, before the end of September, it was September 28, if I remember correctly, we established the Kocaeli Solidarity Academy. We tried to do something different there. Outside the university. We didn't even say an alternative. Because when you say alternative, it means accepting what exists.

This quote indicates that a solidarity structure was created just 27 days after the dismissals (after September 1, 2016). The expression of YÖKAT2 supports this speed:

We held a big meeting in the first week of these problems. We immediately established the Kocaeli Solidarity Academy. Right after that, we had a school experience called the Life Science School, which we continued for two and a half years.

The repetition of the word "immediately" suggests that this organization was not spontaneous but based on pre-existing social capital and organizational capacity. The two-and-a-half-year continuity reflects the will to create a structural alternative beyond the immediate response.

While CODE23 emphasizes how important it is for Academics for Peace that these solidarity academies continue to exist, it also proposes solutions for sustainability

and emphasizes that Academics for Peace who are still working should embrace these solidarity academies more.

But at the end of the day, I am aware of how valuable it is to have even a door open. So, for example, I am in Istanbul, there is an association called BİRARADA, knowing that I will be able to go there. So I think it is very valuable to be able to keep those places open. And at this point, we may have some demands from friends who are not in solidarity academies, but who are still attending the university. At least in order for these institutions, these solidarity academies to continue, even if there is no staff working, it is important that they can still be standing, that they are a place that brings us somewhere. For this, they should at least provide solidarity support.

CODE9's proposal addresses the practical problems faced by solidarity academies:

Maybe it can be centralized. What I mean by being centralized is not this. It's not a top-down thing. You know, because there are a lot of expenses, rents and so on. I think the activities are spread to the provinces and keep the cross-solidarity networks with other institutions, especially the union.

The analysis of this quote reveals three fundamental problems: First, economic sustainability ("rents cost a lot"). Second, democratic legitimacy concern (emphasis on "not top-down"). Third, the need for scale expansion ("extending to provinces"). CODE9's emphasis on unions shows a strategy of alliance with existing institutional structures.

CODE15's similar approach proposes a different solution to these problems:

Solidarity academies may be merged. You know, it may not be correct from the locals, but it may be beneficial for the groups carrying out the work to continue their work in the same way.

The phrase "may not be true from the locals" suggests that centralization is not a natural process but should be considered due to pragmatic requirements.

CODE4's "free university" proposal offers a radical alternative to the traditional academic structure:

It can be something that will supervise the university, maybe question the work at the university, or something that academics can do outside what they cannot do at the university, in closer ties with the public and the public, you know, something with a somewhat free university format that they can benefit from even if they are not university students.

There are three notable functions in this quote: "supervision", "questioning" and "connecting with the public". This approach argues that academia should not only produce knowledge but also critically evaluate the existing system. The emphasis on "benefiting even if they are not university students" reflects this vision of democratizing knowledge.

CODE28's approach marks a more radical break:

... It is necessary to create new grounds for doing science, professor. If you ask where this is, it is very difficult for me to answer this. But I would like to point out the places outside the university.

The hesitation in the phrase "it is very difficult for me to answer" suggests that alternative models have not yet been fully conceptualized. However, the emphasis on "outside the university" reflects a belief in the necessity of transcending the existing institutional framework. CODE20's proposal identifies the concrete tools of alternative academia:

Everyone is somehow part of the system. That's why perhaps we, as Academics for Peace, can also do something. We can develop something against this academic corruption. For example, I think the HRFT Academy should have been developed further. I wish it had its own journal. I wish it had its own ethics committee. In fact, we established an ethics committee within HRFT, related to human rights, because they don't provide one. Even for an ethics committee, we need an independent ethics committee. We need our own independent journals. We need quality things where all these will be exposed, supervised, where these people cannot do this so easily, we need justice... Human Rights Foundation of Türkiye (HRFT; Türkiye İnsan Hakları Vakfı, TIHV) Academy should have developed further, for example. I wish it had its own journal. I wish it had its own ethics committee.

This citation reveals the three key components of alternative academia: "independent journals" (publishing autonomy), "ethics committee" (academic review), and "disclosure mechanism" (accountability). The phrase "these people can't do it so comfortably" reflects a critique of the lack of accountability in the current system.

The critical approach of CODE17 addresses the sustainability problem of solidarity organizations:

Therefore, if we are going to be an association where everyone contributes, let's continue, if not, if not everyone can contribute, let's quit. So I think this is something that needs to be applied to society at large.

This pragmatic approach highlights the tension between idealistic goals and genuine engagement. The phrase "which should be applied to society at large" shows that the problem is not unique to academics, but a general problem of democratic participation. CODE26's approach offers solutions to these problems:

For me and for some of us, the most important reason and function of these solidarity academies and these associations was solidarity... No matter what, our priority should always be solidarity and there should be a positive language for this.

The emphasis on "positive language" suggests a model of constructive solidarity over confrontational activism.

Academics evaluate both successes and shortcomings in the institutionalization of solidarity networks. CODE1 shares its critical approach to the support offered by solidarity academies:

I particularly recommend that the support steps to be taken after the decimation created by the Decree Laws in Turkey, in Turkish universities, should be developed as projects that directly touch human lives, not in the form of indirect message in a bottle.

This critique emphasizes the need for support that focuses on tangible life circumstances rather than symbolic supports. CODE4 develops an alternative academy proposal:

I think I would like this to evolve into something like an idea core of alternative academia. If something happens about this, I would like to do my best.

CODE7 critically assesses the lack of social support:

We could not show the society a different kind of life so that the society would follow us. When you look at it from this point of view, society is rational by not following us. But I think society also pays a huge price.

The findings of the online focus group interviews try to explain the reason for this lack of social support and offer a suggestion for what an alternative academic structure should look like:

We had not yet been expelled from the university. When I went to a meeting in a bookstore here, I said that this process would start at the university and weaken the democratic identity of the whole city. At that time, one of the listeners raised his finger and reacted by saying what the university has done for the city so far and now it is waiting for support from the city. In other words, this was an example that explained in a very meaningful way that we were actually closed into the campus of universities closed with those walls. I think these solidarity academies were a will to break these campus walls. In other words, when we tried to do it in Kültürhane, it was an important experiment for the publicization and democratization of knowledge. Therefore, even if we return to the university or not, as ÇOKAT3 said, I think it is very important, we need to think about the return of the university to a democratic and public structure. (ÇOKAT4)

The analysis of CODE11 highlights the need for solidarity networks to be permanent, not temporary:

First, we will not return in one day. Even if the courts decide. Therefore, since the peace process, democratization process is a process of one step forward, two steps back, even if we are reinstated today, victims of another democracy demand will emerge tomorrow on another issue.

This perspective suggests that solidarity networks must respond not only to the current crisis, but to systemic and recurring problems. The evaluation of ÇOKAT1 from the focus group study also supports this continuity requirement:

I think establishing solidarity academies was a very, very necessary and important task, I have been in it for a long time. As BİRARADA, we are still trying to keep it alive and we are trying to continue it, which I think they are the structures that should continue..

The phrase "We are still trying to keep alive" suggests that institutionalization requires a continuous effort.

When these quotes are analyzed, it is seen that solidarity academies are both examples of successful organizations and structures with sustainability problems. Alternative academy models have not yet been fully conceptualized but can be considered as creative responses to the inadequacy of the current system.

4.9.2. Future and Return Conditions

4.9.2.1. Those Who Want to Return Unconditionally

Some of the academics want to return to the university without any conditions. The statement of CODE2 summarizes the approach of this group:

There is... My old conditions can be possible for me. Just one thing of course. I love the city M. It's a bit difficult because it's very far from my family and such. But the living arrangement there is very comfortable..

CODE13 expresses his passion for teaching with the following words:

I want it so much. Actually, I want it very much. I mean, as I said, that teaching part, doing something with the students. Especially in philosophy, the pleasure of raising such a subject and discussing it for two hours is very, very valuable to me.

CODE14 states that despite all the difficulties, he retained his desire to return:

Other than that, I still want to go back to work. But like this, I didn't give many lectures on online platforms, but I listened to my friends and participated. That lesson, when I see them, I realize that I miss them more. So I really missed teaching.

CODE27's approach illustrates the pragmatic dimension of unconditional return:

I wouldn't expect any conditions, really. If I return to academia, I'll come. I never even thought of a special condition. After all, we need to come and say we exist at our own university with all our stance.

The statement of CODE23 shows us that among the Academics for Peace, there are those who have lost every academic motivation for return and want to return only to receive a regular salary:

But now, unfortunately, I don't see returning to academia from such an idealistic perspective, but only as a job security.... My expectation from returning to work is that if I get my retroactive rights, at least I will clear these debts. That is, both the debts we took on from the Eğitim Sen Union and those we borrowed from others around us, as well as closing the credit cards, overdrafts, and so on.

However, while returning unconditionally, they are actually dreaming of collective returns, being aware of where they are turning. CODE29 expresses the negativity of the conditions in general terms as follows:

It is like this in Turkey, let's say, but also in Italy, in Argentina, and in the United States it has already been the case. There are only a few places in the world where autonomy and academic freedoms are recognized. The university I would like to return to, under ideal conditions, unfortunately does not exist today—I am aware of that. But then again, even now I am not working under ideal conditions. In fact, my working life has never been ideal. At least in academia I want to pursue the work I was trained for, and despite all the difficulties, to touch the life of a student, to produce an article, to read a text, to broaden a horizon, to chase after a letter, a word—these are the things I want.

4.9.2.2. Principled/Freedom and Full Rights-Based Conditional Return

Another group of academics requires the fulfillment of certain conditions for return. CODE1's approach reflects the perspective of this group:

Like many individual issues, despite everything, I'm talking with the comfort of having a personal conversation. Like someone who is very at peace with himself, not exaggerating himself, but since I've been trying to live such a political life for years and have gone through the ordeal of this in very terrible places, I have no intention of tolerating or bowing to the slightest disrespect, the slightest thing within the institution.

CODE8's mission-driven pivot approach is noteworthy:

Another important condition that will enable me to return to Turkey and do something is the creation of conditions, so to speak, that are worth my departure. In other words, let's say I start working as a dean at a university and I can be involved in some important processes at that university in order to reverse the injustices committed at that university.

CODE9 emphasizes an egalitarian understanding of justice:

The thing that would make me feel best would be being able to reach somewhere related to social peace... Only then and equalized justice. They made that uncertainty permanent by not dismissing all of us. They didn't take all of us back.

Focus group studies have revealed findings that support and deepen the themes in individual interviews. In the online focus group, the need for collective turnaround was highlighted:

Instead, I think a legal regulation should be made on this issue. In other words, there is a need for a legal regulation in which all kinds of rights can be restored in the return of Academics for Peace who have been unjustly dismissed from the university in this way. (ÇOKAT7)

This piecemeal return process is really very destructive in every sense. Both for those who return and for those who don't return and those who remain... we repeated slogans like we won't really be considered to have returned until everyone returns. (ÇOKAT5)

In the face-to-face focus group, integration issues were raised:

There can be no fair integration. A friend of ours goes to university, what he faces from the department, the Head of the Department, the dean is simply mobbing, he does not know what strategy to develop against it. (YÖKAT7)

CODE20 emphasizes the need for international sanctions:

In other words, I don't know about these academic freedoms, Turkey should be punished. I think some criteria should be brought to YÖK or TÜBİTAK, that is, from outside, for example, I don't know, in things related to these European funds, and they should be narrowed.

The analysis of Theme 9 shows that Academics for Peace are not only seeking individual rights but also developing collective strategies for systemic transformation. In the dimension of rights advocacy, the politicization of legal processes and the limited social support stand out as the main problems. Regarding the democratization of universities, a revolutionary transformation vision has been adopted, not a reform.

In terms of return conditions, there are two basic approaches among academics: pragmatic (unconditional) and principled (conditional). Both groups share common concerns about protecting their academic identity and doing free science. These findings suggest that the perspective of restorative justice cannot be limited to individual compensation but must also include systemic transformation.

5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This research reveals the depth of the multidimensional trauma experienced by Academics for Peace since 2016 and the dimensions of systemic rights violations. The findings show that the dismissal process does not only create individual grievances, but also that academic freedoms in Turkey are systematically eroded and the higher education system moves away from democratic values. In this context, multi-layered and long-term policy interventions are needed to solve the problems.

5.1. Evaluation of Key Findings

The most striking finding of the research is that although legal gains have been achieved, the actual integration of academics is systematically prevented. This situation shows how much the principles of the rule of law are damaged at the university level in Turkey. The experiences of being dismissed for the second time, the non-implementation of court decisions and institutional obstruction practices reveal that the problem cannot be solved only by legal regulations, and that institutional culture change is also necessary.

The trauma experienced in the economic dimension is not just about the loss of income. As seen in the cycles of borrowing, property sales and the metaphor of "building a life from scratch twice", there has been a multiplied process of impoverishment. While the systematic support of Eğitim Sen is vital in this process, it has been observed that other solidarity networks have sustainability problems. The unequal distribution of international support and the risk of turning into an "aid relationship" require critical evaluation.

The psychological effects analysis shows that academics have experienced multiple traumas. Serious psychological problems such as depression, anxiety and even suicide attempts reveal the need for systematic psychological support. What is particularly noteworthy is that some academics have natural resilience factors (strong social capital, political identity, economic advantage) that accelerates the recovery process.

The erosion of academic identity is one of the most profound effects of expulsion. The question "Am I an academician now?" reflects the loss of academia as a way of life as well as the shaking of professional identity. The disruption of the production rhythm, the development of self-censorship mechanisms and the problem of technological deficit have seriously affected the professional capacities of academics.

The analysis of solidarity networks shows the evolution from the period of strong mobilization to the process of disintegration/weakening. While the consistent support of trade unions and rights organizations and the creative experiences of solidarity academics have yielded significant gains, the inadequacy of economic solidarity and the reproduction of academic hierarchies have created significant vulnerabilities.

5.2. Policy Recommendations

5.2.1. Urgent Interventions

It is critical to take collective steps to speed up legal processes and to put in place sanction mechanisms against university administrations that prevent the implementation of court decisions. A comprehensive emergency decree victim reinstatement law should establish the legal framework to ensure full restoration of

rights and prevent future arbitrary dismissals. In other words, legal arrangements should be made to regulate the situation of all victims of emergency decrees, including Academics for Peace, to ensure the full restoration of their rights and to prevent future arbitrary dismissals.

In the economic compensation dimension, the full calculation of the losses of the aggrieved academics and the payment of fair compensation should be carried out by taking into account inflation and opportunity costs. An emergency economic support fund should be established for academics who have not yet been returned, and existing union support should be strengthened. Special education and research scholarships (for academic integration) and project supports should be provided for academics who have been away from academia for a long time to follow the developments in their fields.

Psychosocial rehabilitation programs should be developed with trauma-informed approaches by benefiting from the experiences of institutions such as the HRFT. In addition to individual therapy, group therapy sessions and peer support programs should create safe spaces where shared experiences can be shared. Special counseling services should be provided to address the effects of the expulsion process on family relationships.

5.2.2. Systemic Transformation

The democratic restructuring of universities is the most critical proposal of the research. It is necessary to limit the powers of the Council of Higher Education, to guarantee the administrative and academic autonomy of universities and to adopt participatory management models. It is important that academic evaluation criteria are removed from quantitative performance indicators and redefined to include educator quality, social contribution and critical thinking production.

In order to strengthen academic freedoms, it is necessary to ensure the guarantee of freedom of expression at the constitutional level and to establish effective remedies in case of violations. Expanding academic unionization rights and unions having a say in university administration are critical for increasing democratic participation. Mechanisms should be developed to ensure the representation of different views in universities and academic homogenization should be prevented.

Independent academic ethics committees should be established to strengthen accountability mechanisms and effective supervision should be provided regarding the use of public resources, academic appointment processes and management decisions of universities.

5.2.3. Advocacy Strategies

At the national level, it should be ensured that the issue of Academics for Peace is kept on the agenda of political parties and that the victimization of the emergency decree is handled as a part of the peace process. Joint advocacy activities should be carried

out by establishing wide alliance networks with human rights organizations, professional chambers and non-governmental organizations.

At the international level, systematic lobbying activities should be carried out before international organizations such as the ILO, UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and institutional accountability measures should be demanded against Turkey. Solidarity networks should be established with academic freedom advocates around the world and the situation in Turkey should be kept on the agenda on international academic platforms. Systematic studies should be carried out to include the issue of academic freedom as a critical criterion in the negotiation processes with the EU.

For mobilization within the academic community, it should be ensured that the sustainability problems of existing solidarity academies are solved and new participants are included in the process. These alternative platforms that will enable free science production outside the university should be developed and strengthened with institutional support. It should be ensured that young academics are included in the process and that the awareness of academic freedom is transferred to new generations.

5.3. CONCLUSION

This research reveals that the experience of Academics for Peace is a concrete indicator of the systematic erosion of academic freedom in Turkey. The interventions proposed for the solution of the problem aim both to eliminate urgent grievances and to prevent the recurrence of similar crises.

The findings of the research show that the protection of academic freedoms is not only a matter of individual rights but also an indispensable condition for the sustainability of democratic societies. The struggle of Academics for Peace is not limited to Turkey, but is critical in understanding the effects of rising authoritarian tendencies on academic freedom around the world. Therefore, the success of the struggle in Turkey will also set an important example for the protection of academic freedom at the global level.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that the findings of this research serve as a call to action not only for policymakers, but also for the academic community, civil society and international solidarity networks. The protection of academic freedom is an indispensable condition for the sustainability of democratic societies, and this struggle is our common responsibility.

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Appendix A: Themes and Sub-Themes

THEME 1: REINTEGRATION HINDERED DESPITE LEGAL GAINS

- 1.1. *Repeated dismissal/repeated liquidation*
- 1.2. *Non-execution or delay of court decisions*
- 1.3. *Administrative obstacles at the university (not giving rooms/courses/tasks after return, i.e. position barriers and "Uncertain Status")*
- 1.4. *Exclusion and stigma in the university environment*
- 1.5. *Prolonged appeal and uncertainty processes*

THEME 2: ECONOMIC INSECURITY AND SURVIVAL/LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

- 2.1. *Borrowing and selling assets/property (house, savings), retirement*
- 2.2. *NGO and family solidarity (Eğitim Sen, KODA, BAK, THIV, etc.)*
- 2.3. *Working in precarious low-income jobs outside the field of expertise (canteen, construction site, private sector, second-hand bookstore)*
- 2.4. *Overseas scholarships/survival with funds/temporary breathing*

THEME 3: PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS AND COPING

- 3.1. Psychological consequences
 - 3.1.1. Depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, insomnia
 - 3.1.2. Feeling of loneliness, exclusion and worthlessness
 - 3.1.3. Problems with focus and functioning in everyday life
 - 3.1.4. Loss of academic motivation
- 3.2. Coping methods
 - 3.2.1. Avoiding confrontation and suppressing the process
 - 3.2.2. Psychological therapy (therapy and medication)
 - 3.2.3. Solidarity support (NGOs, family, friends,

THEME 4: ACADEMIC IDENTITY AND BELONGING EROSION/LOSS

- 4.1. "Am I an academic anymore?": loss of identity and motivation

4.2. Interruption and disruption of rhythm in production

4.3. The problem of alienation/belonging on return; Distance from colleagues and institutions

THEME 5: SOLIDARITY NETWORKS/ECOSYSTEMS: THEIR STRENGTHS AND VULNERABILITIES

5.1. Strengths

5.1.1. Support from trade unions and rights organizations

5.1.2. Solidarity academies, alternative courses, collective production

5.2. Vulnerabilities

5.2.1. Solidarity support has weakened over time)

5.2.2. Inequalities arising from regional and organizational differences

5.2.3. Experience of "aid relationship" and hierarchy in international programs

THEME 6: THE EROSION OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND INSTITUTIONAL DECAY

6.1. Individualized culture, dysfunctional boards and a climate of silence

6.2. Lawlessness and insecurity in foundation universities

THEME 7: WORKLOAD, ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE AND STUDENTS ON RETURN TO ACADEMY

7.1. Excessive/sudden course load and difficulty in adaptation

7.2. Contact with the student (mostly positive) but low engagement

THEME 8: EXPERIENCE ABROAD – BREATHING, NERVOUSNESS AND UNCERTAINTY OF RETURN/ TRANSNATIONAL EXILE AND THE DILEMMA OF RETURN

8.1. Language and cultural barriers

8.2. Crisis of belonging and sense of impermanence

8.3. Uncertainty and tension in the decision to return

8.4. The importance of international support and academic networks

THEME 9 ADVOCACY OF RIGHTS AND REIMAGINING THE UNIVERSITY

9.1. Defense of Rights

9.1.1. Accelerating and implementing legal processes

9.1.2. Political ownership and putting the decree files on the agenda – full restoration of rights

9.1.3. Reconstruction of universities in a democratic and participatory manner

9.1.4. Transforming solidarity into permanent, institutionalized networks and supporting alternative academic models

9.2. Future and Return Conditions

9.2.1. Those who want to return unconditionally

9.2.2. Conditional return based on principle/freedom and full rights