

## Turkey: Inside and Outside the University

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### Abstract

Four STS (science, technology and society) collectives (from Kenya, Turkey, Japan, and Ecuador) presented their archives and accounts of their collective work at two meetings of the Society for the Social Study of Science (4S) in Sydney 2018, and New Orleans 2019. These presentations are not only very interesting in themselves, but are housed on a digital platform (Platform for Experimental Collaborative Ethnography or PECE) that poses the question—and attempts to build a solution—of how ethnographic materials can be digitalized and made available for productive further activity. As one possible response, four *engagements* texts are published on STS-Infrastructures: “KENYA: Techpreneur, Transnational Node, Kibera” (2023a), “TURKEY: Inside and Outside the University” (2023b), “‘Japan’/Japan On Line: NatureCulture” (2023c), and “ECUADOR: Thirdspaces amidst Social Conflict” (2023d), along with a consolidated list of references entitled: “Bibliography for Varieties of STS” (2023e). All of these are extensions of the overarching text published in the *Engagements* genre of the *ESTS* journal entitled: “Varieties of STS: Luminosities, Creative Commons, and Open Curation” (2023f). This *engagement* focuses on Turkey.

### Keywords

Turkey; creative commons; open curation; NatureCulture; PECE platform; STS across borders; space; place

### Introduction

Turkey is offered by Aybike Alkan, Duygu Kaşdoğan, and Maral Erol as a landscape of three fragmented luminosities—of universities, art-science discussion spaces (including a documentary film) outside the university, and journal experiments with situated perspectives of mental health patients and their psychiatrists. These are spaces of STS par excellence, but, as they argue, they are also spaces of struggle against the twin incursions of state control and neoliberal market evaluative metrics and criteria of value. The stakes are high. Defending the autonomy of the university, of a free press, and of freedom of opinion in the public arena have all come under increasing attack by the Erdogan government. Within the university there are struggles for intellectual autonomy, democratization of knowledge production, and cross-disciplinary fertilization; and these goals, in part, can be aided by work adjacent to the university in newspapers, and art-science sites such as IstanbulLab sets up.

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How then does a new quasi-discipline find its footing? At least three types of answers are illustrated, each with limitations and criticisms: (in the first half) competing for accreditation and ranking on the international stage (Bilkent); alliance with state science policy agencies (METU and Tubitak), and (in the second half) the pragmatic indirection of the “probing arts” (IstanbuLab, newspaper opinion columns, *Sizofrenji*). A modest suggestion is to pay attention also to STS scholars working on Turkey who live outside Turkey, and in so doing expand narrow reference frames of STS as defined in Europe to broader anthropological STS ones concerned with more comparative and substantive issues.

Pedagogy is not just learning frameworks, but also creating new research goals and projects in which students can exercise their own ingenuities. Although it promises to post videos, the PECE platform could be at its most vivid through that form, as in the one video posted so far.

### Institutional History of STS in the Academy

Science, Policy Research Unit (SPRU) at Sussex University . . . [as] the most developed and successful [STS and Policy] institution in the world, is taken as a model [for METU]. ([Türkcan \[1995\] 2018](#), cited in [Alkan, Kaşdoğan, and Erol 2023](#))

“university for people” . . . a place where love and joy of the search for knowledge can flourish and remain vibrant . . . against the neoliberal university [that has become] too technical and instrumental, mainly serving the industry and profit.” (Ahmet İnam, cited in [Alkan, Kaşdoğan, and Erol 2023](#)).

The effort to introduce STS into the university system, which is how Alkan, Kaşdoğan, and Erol begin, is a chapter in the long histories of university reform and the struggles they have involved. One thinks of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Alexander von Humbolt, and Immanuel Kant in Germany and the creation of both the research university and a national culture grounded in national literatures and histories ([Readings 1997](#)); of Durkheim in France, with important influence in Turkey, and the creation of sociology as a field of statistics and structures not reducible to individual psychologies or older notions of honor and status ([Fournier \[2007\] 2013](#); [Keck 2023](#), of biomedicine and psychiatry in Iran negotiating between French and American pedagogies and the needs of a theocratically legitimated aliberal republic in Iran ([Behrouzan 2016](#)), of the take-over by accounting systems, rankings and metrics attuned to the needs of an increasingly neoliberal world ([Readings 1997](#)), and of the many start-up universities across Asia in the beginning of the twenty-first century with their different goals and missions (e.g. [Fischer 2009b, 2013, 2018, 2023g](#); [Günel 2019](#); [Subramanian 2019](#); [Choudaha 2020](#)), and of course of the university reforms in Turkey under Atatürk influenced by the migration of European refugees from Nazi Europe.

The 1990s was a new era for university formation in Turkey with the approval of private non-profit universities, the first of which was Bilkent (short for “science city”) founded in 1984 west of Ankara; followed in Istanbul by Koc in 1993, Sabancı in 1994, and Bilgi in 1996. In 1995 as Bilkent was seeking

accreditation from the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET),<sup>1</sup> which requires at least some teaching of ethics, electrical engineering professor Haldun Özaktas turned the ethics requirement into a compulsory STS course within the engineering curriculum. Because, as he told Alkan (2019) (and in his 2013 article), students were wary of any material that was not technical, he used newspaper articles as the reading material and fodder for discussions. This, they accepted, allowing them to discuss things familiar from the news. Ethics, he also noted, as most STS and social science scholars would agree, tends to be focused on individual decision making rather than social responsibility or how social forces are shaped. He attributed this bias to Anglo-Saxon individualistic and puritan foundations, saying it was less relevant for a developing society where political and economic policy is under daily discussion. The term “science city” should also resonate with science cities elsewhere in the world being created in the 1980s (University of California, Irvine, Tsukuba Science City north of Tokyo in Japan) (Traweek 1988, 1995); and in the 2000s the nascent Yachay City of Knowledge in Ecuador (along with more or less successful initiatives in Dubai, One North in Singapore, and elsewhere). Bilkent today has a student body of 12,000, and is associated with a fast growing cyberpark (or techno park) with some 240 tech companies, including a micro-nano chip factory, and four thousand personnel.

But it was the premier public technical university, Middle East Technical University (METU) that first most solidly installed an STS program, building on its connections with the Scientific & Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK), newly established in 1993, and as Ergun Türkcan told Alkan, Kaşdoğan and Erol (2023), also sharing with them the archive of letters written to support the establishment of METU’s Science and Technology Policy Studies Program (TEKPOL) (Türkcan [1995] 2018). It was the time, they point out of major political economy changes. The World Trade Organization had just been established in 1995, the transition to the knowledge economy was in the air, and Turkey’s “Seventh Five Year Plan” was being promulgated. It is thus interesting that Turcan names SPRU at Sussex, known as a science and technology and policy center, as the most obvious model for TEKPOL.

Yet at the same time, METU sociology professor Hasan Ünal Nalbantoğlu made a pitch for TEKPOL’s autonomy, and keeping a critical distance from becoming merely a research unit for the government. The tension should be familiar to any STS scholar: insider-outsider access versus cooption and loss of critical perspective, and incentives to be supportive of how policy struggles within government are resolved. Nalbantoğlu argued that Turkey needed to set an independent course rather than merely following to global trends, and that it had the scientific creative workforce to do so. And METU professor of philosophy, Ahmet İnam, took it a step further, calling for the university to become less technical, and more of an open learning platform that privileged the joy of learning over the grind for grades, publications and rankings.

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<sup>1</sup> ABET is US-based. A Turkish accreditation, MÜDEK is anticipated to replace ABET. MÜDEK is a member of the European Network ENAEE (see further Özaktas 2013, 1445).

What Alkan, Kaşdoğan, and Erol do not tell us is what has become of TEKPOL, what sorts of work its students produce—one suspects the chilling effect of the government’s fear of criticism and its insistence on useful technicity. I remember, when I was trying to survey STS and science initiatives in the Muslim world ([Fischer 2009a](#)), that I was always being referred to TUBITAK, but with the kind of half-hearted warning one gets everywhere about bureaucracies, that they might not be terribly helpful beyond the laying out of organizational realities. That is, I did not learn much about vision leaders who were presumably negotiating for academia amidst the new challenges of WTO, the “Seventh Plan,” and the political economy. The sense was that all was new and unsettled, and that I was coming too soon. Only sustained ethnography *in situ* could have bridged this time warp, something that Alkan, Kaşdoğan, and Erol are trying to provide.

The third place that Alkan, Kaşdoğan and Erol describe is Istanbul Technical University, where three women—professor Hacer Ansal, professor Yıldız Sey, professor Gülsün Sağlamer—initiated the first graduate program in STS. Hacer Ansal had studied at SPRU after her engineering training and sensed that such training did not answer the important social questions. Aside from her work on science, technology and industrialization, she was part of a research group on women and technology.

I remember their visit to MIT on their tour of STS programs. The format they settled upon, Alkan, Kaşdoğan, and Erol, tell us was to ally *with*, and enroll *with*, Wiebe Bijker’s European Study of Science and Technology (ESST) consortium which would offer a first-year curriculum to all schools involved, and then a second-year curriculum could be customized for Turkey, initially for also European students to come to ITU and study disasters and housing problems in the wake of the 1999 Marmara earthquake in which over 17,000 people were killed and 60,000 buildings were badly damaged. This seemed an exciting and promising beginning, especially since Sağlamer was president of European Women Rectors Association, a founding board member of ITU’s Technology Park and Incubation Centre, and ARI Techno-City; and Yıldız Sey had been an ESST Administrative Board Member. But the Turkish financial crisis of 2001 caused a reduction in funding and after six years the program was closed. We don’t know what happened to the first six cohorts of students or what projects they worked on, but the program brochure stresses public control and guarding against the misuses of science and technology, and addresses itself to the needs of engineering students. The program was restarted in 2016, as the only Masters. program with a thesis requirement. And it would be good to know again how that program has fared.

A few other spots of illumination are mentioned, but not pursued: A non-thesis Masters begun at Ankara University in 2013, a network of STS scholars (STS Turkey) founded in 2017, and an STS encyclopedia (*iris*). The STS Turkey network website lists seven interesting scholars, two teach at METU, one each at ITU, the Orient-Institut Istanbul, Ozyegin, Bilkent, and Bilgi. Five of the seven are US-educated, one German-educated, and one Britain-educated. Three are women. One has experience at NASA and the Earth-Life Science Institute in Japan, and is interested in collaborative science, virtual teams, data management, design thinking, and adaptive systems theory; one is co-director of a graduate program in Design, Technology and Society; one works on social media and politics in Turkey; one works on engineering, health care, and

biotechnopolitics (3-D printing, enhancement); one has worked on autism, another on reproductive technology, and two teach and research industrial design.

There are, no doubt, more STS scholars scattered about, including a number who work on Turkey but reside abroad, including Gökçe Günel whose newest project follows Turkish floating oil refineries from the Persian Gulf to West Africa; Canay Özden-Schilling whose newest work is on the port of Mersin and its connections to the port of Singapore; Burcu Mutlu who works on reproductive travel and transnational biopolitics between Turkey and Cyprus; Esra Özkan who shifted from work on artscience in Turkey and Turkey's early initiatives toward what today is called a . . . splinter Internet (with different content for Turkish and English pages), to executive coaching in the US; and Aslihan Sanal, who worked on the moral economies of organ transplantation in Turkey. Medical sociologist Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good notes in a blurb on the back of the book that Sanal's work "reaches far beyond that of transplant patients and the organ trade in Turkey, taking in global flows of knowledge and ethics around brain-death, organ donation, and standards of care, as well as the worldwide organ trade, in which organs are exchanged legally and on the black market. There is nothing else like it in the ethnographic literature on comparative high-tech medicine.

Among the interesting features of Sanal's study is the delineation of the competition between two different organ sharing systems, one based at Istanbul University predicated on a socialist moral economy of public goods, and one based in Ankara predicated on market mechanisms and (with medical innovation) working to keep organs shared from Europe vital for longer than European guidelines.

Other sparks noted by STS scholars are worth STS attention. One is the GMP [good manufacturing process certification] stem cell facility in Trabzon ([Fischer 2009b, 97](#)). The Advanced Technologies Industries (the acronym ATI meaning "future" in Arabic or *atiyeh* in Persian) is interesting for two different reasons: first it raised money from local entrepreneurs and then investors elsewhere on the promise of producing autologous stem cells (for bone marrow transplants) for patients across the country; and second it styles itself as heir to S. T. Aygun whose portrait adorns an entry stairway. Aygun, a virologist and veterinarian, is celebrated as a pioneer of stem cell and tissue engineering—he was opposed to experimenting with live animals—and is credited with blocking the importation of Thalidomide to Turkey from 1958–62, and preventing the tragedy of deformed babies that affected many in Europe and Africa (the US had a similar hero). The network by which I was able to visit this Trabzon facility was through Sanal's introducing me first to a prominent liver transplant surgeon returned to Istanbul from Wisconsin, who in turn urged me to visit, and arranged the visit, to Trabzon. Brian Silverstein's work on the social life of numbers provides an STS account of the development of agricultural statistics that were important to shaping the debates on whether and when Turkey might achieve accession to the European Union ([Silverstein 2018, 2020](#)).

The point of citing these "other sparks" (and no doubt there are more) is not just for an additive listing, but to stress, as Angela Okune and Leonida Mutuku put it, to avoid telling only "deficit narratives," ([Okune and Mutuku 2023](#)) to recognize Turkish creativity-discovery, and to track that professionals have transnational educations, connections, and networks.

## Outside the University: IstanbulLab, Film, and Blurred Genre Journal

### IstanbulLab

The IstanbulLab is analogous, perhaps, to Angela Okune's Research Data Group in Nairobi, in that both are largely outside university structures (even if some members hold university positions) and outside start-up or formal NGO structures, as well as being (like PECE itself) multiplex archiving and community building endeavors. IstanbulLab is described as being primarily a loose organization that has held a series of community talks on STS matters at a public venue, with audiences sometimes as many as a hundred. There have been, so far, apparently five such public events with an invited speaker: Geert Lovink from Amsterdam on the challenges of finding the social in a digital and technological world that seems to have no place for such thinking (2018); Kaushik Sunder Rajan from Chicago on judicialization of health care in South Africa (2019); Wiebe Bijker from Maastricht on the democratization of knowledge (2019); Ulrike Felt from Vienna on technopolitical imaginaries (2019); and Reşit Canbeyli from Bogaziçi in Istanbul on building a psychology lab (2018). As an extension, there is also a running blog which contains at least two more long interviews: one with Eyal Weizman from Goldsmith's in London (Kaşdoğan, Bayram, and Weizman 2019); and one with Begüm Adalet from Cornell (Ekinci and Adalet 2019). This is an impressive set, but only the latter two and Lovink's dialogue with Ebru Yetişkin are available on PECE. There is a short video clip with filmmaker Can Candan who is making a documentary about a Lt. Colonel from 1933 who claimed to have discovered a new atomic model which he presented to Atatürk, but whose claims were rejected by other Turkish scientists at the time as not being novel or important (Erol, Alkan, and Candan 2019). The video (the only one presented) makes clear how vivid the medium could be, and makes me wish there were video recordings of the discussions with the other invitees. There is nothing wrong with this fragmented documentation: that is part of the process of putting together a voluntary effort of this sort; but it is a feature of the pressures, as Lovink notes in his dialogue with Yetişkin, on independent artists to find monied partners with the consequent danger of cooption.

Something of the vital quality of these talks is given by Umut Türem, an associate professor of law and society at Bogaziçi University, who was invited to moderate the talk by Kaushik Sunder Rajan. It seemed an odd mix, Türem noted,

... an academic talk ... organized by a group of volunteers, animated by an insistent focus on "justice," taking place in an "art venue" and "open to the public." [Yet it was a] "highly successful blend of social science, political intervention, and art ... [It was] academic yet did not exclude the people on the street (Kaşdoğan and Umut Türem [2019] 2023, 2–3).

The notion of judicialization of health care comes from work in Brazil by Joao Biehl and Adriana Petryna where the Constitution guarantees universal health care, but neither the federal government nor the states have the money to actually provide this. A stop gap solution is for patients to sue in court to get the medications and treatments they are entitled to, and the courts side with them in order to put pressure on the government. Sunder Rajan's work in South Africa is about how constitutional thought is evolved in comparison and contrast to other configurations of Anglo-Saxon law in India and the US. It should be noted in passing that Sunder Rajan's visit included not only the talk referred to above, but also a "more academic"

lecture at Koc University, a session with graduate students around an early chapter of his recent book *Multisituated* (2021), a radio interview with a radical radio station, and a closed reading group with Marx scholars around some writing on Marx that Sunder Rajan had written. It was the day after the (first) mayoral election that Ekrem İmamoğlu won, so there was also a sense of hope and that something might be in the air.<sup>2</sup>

I think it might be important to give some further indication of the quality of the discussions, and the thoughtful and challenging level at which they operate. I do so by reprising two: the discussion with Geert Lovink, which raises the issues of what and how digital media (like PECE) operate in political space; and that with Begüm Adalet which raises the questions both of how disciplines are formed in relation to politics (the Cold War and the notions of “modernity” and “modernization,” in her case), and how comparative work is to be done (Turkey as model or as exception). This latter discussion might be re-run in our heads as about STS over the past hundred years with regard to Turkey (some markers are given in [Fischer 2023a](#)).

Adalet’s book, *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey* (2018), was influenced by a movement in political science (her field of training) reacting against the exclusive focus on quantitative measures, big-data, and game theory. She took on board the STS idea that theories do not merely describe or measure, but are interventions that help produce the very phenomena, transforming the objects of study. Turkey, she argues, was “an active location” where “visions of development and statecraft and were worked out and repackaged into modernization theory” and then took these to other places in the Global South. She reflects on the work of the Social Science Research Council’s Committee on Comparative Politics, the Council on Foreign Relations, Daniel Lerner and especially Dankwart Rustow, whose papers she was given access to by his widow, and whose notes she read through while sitting at his desk, thereby becoming aware of the “moments of anxiety, doubt, and hesitation in social scientific knowledge production.” She tells Mehmet Ekinçi in her interview available in the IstanbulLab’s blog:

Each conversation about Turkey as a ‘model’ of modernization (whether an experiment of democratization in the early 1950s or as an example of military-led modernization in the early 1960s) also entailed anxieties about whether or not the political experiences of the country were exceptional, particular, or unique. ([Ekinçi and Adalet 2019](#))

Students of my generation remember those discussions about how to best do comparative politics and models of development quite vividly, and as being similar to today’s “anxieties” about the use of digital tools and algorithms, as comes out so clearly in Geert Lovink’s discussion with Ebru Yetişkin in which the tools even more obviously shape the object of study.

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<sup>2</sup> Email communication from Sunder Rajan, January 3, 2023.

The discussion between Lovink and Yetişkin is a bracing symmetrical exchange, done by email after the IstanbulLab event, in which it is not clear who is interviewing whom, who is guiding the discussion, or who is challenging or probing whom. Ostensibly it is part of Lovink's book tour for *Social Media Abyss* (2016), but Yetişkin comes across as no mere interviewer asking questions, but a critical thinker of equal weight, often countering with more pragmatism about the world than Lovink's nostalgia for Critical Theory or tactical media. Yetişkin begins by noting that in *Social Media Abyss*, Lovink asks what "the social" is in social media, and that he argues the self has become a "special effect" of software, that feedback features prove addictive to users, and that "the social makes no reference to the Social Question, nor does it contain any hidden reminder of socialist thinking or socialism as a political program." (Lovink 2018). Programmers "glue" users to data objects who then themselves become data objects. Lovink responds by saying that social scientists in particular (presumably including STS scholars) have allowed themselves to become technologically ignorant, and that we and future generations (if they are to be political citizens) must raise our technical knowledge. "How realistic is this 'will to deconstruct' in a technical age in which even experts only have partial knowledge?" he asks. Yetişkin advocates for deploying distributed actions of hybrid entities as a form of para-tactics to explore the inner workings of algorithmic governmentality. What used to be called "tactical politics" and "media activism"—flash mobs, memes, hoaxes—have been absorbed by entertainment, marketing and government propaganda; and so, a new paratactics must be found that operates alongside structures of domination by reusing, exposing and subverting those very algorithmic domination practices. This leads into a discussion of temporary and local alternatives to the financial system: micro-credits and barter, crowdfunding, peer-to-peer banking, time banks, mobile money, and crypto-currencies. Lovink counters that most such experiments are "in the hands of an aggressive right-wing libertarian technical class of geek-entrepreneurs" and that there is little construction of any counter-movement. The discussion turns to the non-monetary use of block chain, for instance, in securing election voting, though Lovink points out that this would require having "our" hackers "on board" to permanently test the systems, but that, in any case, voting is less important than reigning in campaign financing. He notes, situating himself, that such micro-exchanges became critical during the Dutch austerity years of 2011–13, when the cultural budget was slashed and artists and cultural critics had to scrounge to stay alive (he's for a universal basic income). At issue, Yetişkin notes, is what the late Michel Foucault called "care of the self," that is, how to minimize domination. Lovink, ever the Kittlerian (his self-designation) technologist, says eco-feminist and post-colonial critiques of technology should move on from identity politics to "the next stage" and "start building applications, programming languages, smartphones" (citing the Fairphone™ built in Amsterdam intended to minimize its ecological footprint by using less rare metals). It would have been nice had he also cited Okapi ("kangaroo"), the Democratic Republic of Congo affordable phone, tablets, and other devices, designed by now MIT-based Congolese nuclear scientist Jean Bele Mongu, and being distributed from Kinshasa around Africa and elsewhere. Yetişkin has the last word pointing out that "building a collective curatorial research paratactically is a way of staying close to the messy everyday" rather than luxuriating in abstractions. This sounds aligned with the philosophy of PECE and its work with local advocacy groups in toxic landscapes.



### STS Documentary Film

The one video that is on IstanbulLab's PECE platform is an eight-minute clip of a longer interview with filmmaker Can Candan ([Erol, Alkan, and Candan 2019](#)), who is doing a documentary, *Nuclear Allaturca*, about an amateur scientist Sitki Bey who, in 1933, said he had discovered a new atomic model and managed to show it to Ataturk. Sitki Bey becomes a quest figure. No one has heard of him, until Can Candan happened to stumble upon an article in the Cumhuriyet newspaper from January 20, 1933 and then a series of follow up newspaper items discussing his claims until March of that year. Ataturk arranged a meeting with Salih Mujrat Bey (presumably the physicist Salih Murat Uzdilek who taught at ITU) and other unnamed scientists who dismissed Sitki Bey's claims. Can Candan says he identified Sitki Bey's family by reading wedding and funeral ads in local newspapers in Bursa, Sitki's hometown, managed to talk to relatives, which led him to the location of an apartment building in Istanbul (which had been demolished and rebuilt with a different name), where a granddaughter of Sitki lives. Can Candan refers to Sitki's private archives, saying that there are only two copies of the original Cumhuriyet article, one in the Cumhuriyet archives, and one in Sitki's. But nothing on the PECE contributions tells us what the family name of Sitki is (or his real name) or how to locate Sitki's archives (if they exist). Indeed, one wonders if there is not some confusion (or camouflage) with the more famous Sitki Üke, a close friend of Ataturk (both from Thessalonica). Sitki Üke was a general, whereas Sitki Bey is said to have been a lieutenant colonel. The goal of accessibility in PECE for researchers is in this instance limited or embargoed. One does not know if the emergent story is genuine or satire, or if it is a less well-developed road not taken similar to the story in the film *The Lebanese Rocket Society* ([dir. Hadjithomas and Joreige 2012](#); [Salman 2019](#)).

The case of Sitki, however, is a hook for the discussion of building nuclear power plants in Turkey: transnational megaprojects. Outside the US, France, South Korea and Japan, nuclear power plants are usually not built by one country alone, and involve complicated financial entanglements. Atomic energy was touted after World War II as a symbol of modernity, dangerous, but handled correctly, a turn-key for electricity. If Kenya's Techpreneurs are contradictory and entangled, even more so Turkey's nuclear energy plants. Like many countries, Turkey begins with two small nuclear research reactors, one in 1958 and one in 1979. But with the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant meltdown and radiation release in Ukraine, plans for nuclear power plants came to a halt in 1988. There have been efforts to build nuclear power plants at Sinop along the Black Sea (with Russian and Japanese help), at Igneada west of Istanbul (with American technology), and Akkuyu on the south coast in Mersin Province (with Russia). Again, after the Fukushima disaster in 2011, plans came to a halt, and Sinop was abandoned both because of new safety requirements and the fall of the Turkish lira. But Akkuyu is continuing with a target of opening the first of four reactors in 2023. It is to be a Russian built-owned-operated plant, financed by a subsidiary of Rosatom, and to be operated by Akkuyu Nukleer (the Rosatom subsidiary) and TSM Enerji (a Turkish registered firm owned by three Russia-based companies) ([Al-Monitor and Gosselin-Malo 2022](#)).

### Blurred Genre Journal: *Şizofrenji*

In some ways, the most exciting item in the IstanbulLab showcase is the discussion of the journal *Şizofrenji*, in STS terms a rare example of breaking the policed boundaries of the quasi-discipline, both genre-wise and

as visiting an overlapping (shared?) field. It is not unlike Umut Türem (above) claiming that his moderating an STS talk was visiting an unfamiliar (but familiar) field, apart from his own field of law and society (many in law and society are also STSers). And certainly, for many of us *Şizofrenji* sounds like a visit to our own overlapping (indistinguishable?) medical anthropology and psychological anthropology subfields. It is moreover a wonderful return to some moments of experimental enthusiasm in the history of psychiatry and the movements against incarceration-in-the-name-of-asylum, or “deinstitutionalization” in colorless policy language, or from the great confinement to liberation of the self in Foucault. One thinks of Felix Guattari’s *La Borde*, of Franz Fanon’s efforts to rework an asylum in Algeria, as well, of course of Italy’s Franco Basaglia’s “democratic psychiatry,” piloted in Gorizia and fully implemented in Trieste, which inspired *Şizofrenji*. An almost STS-like analysis of the Basaglia movement and the efforts especially in English to dismiss and demonize it can be found in John Foot (2014). Foot notes Basaglia’s inspiration from Erving Goffman, Michel Foucault, Jean-Paul Sartre’s existentialism, and Primo Levi’s phenomenology (as well as others), thereby also showing Basaglia as part of a widespread moment of enthusiasm (in the Marxist sense of a moment of enthusiasm as one in which possibilities open up). Within STS and anthropology, the idea of a journal that is able to creatively and productively mix academic, literary, visual, and other genre forms was foundational to the early days of the journal *Cultural Anthropology* and its companion book series *Late Editions*, and of course has been taken up in various forms in other journals and now online platforms.

The historian of psychiatry at Istanbul University, Fatih Artvinli, has thus done us an enormous service in rediscovering and describing the vitality of the wildly popular “underground” magazine from the 1990s, which began as a xeroxed 24-page zine in 200 copies and grew to over 3,000 copies by its third issue. Based at Bakirköy Mental Hospital, Istanbul’s largest, under the lead of psychiatrist Fatih Altınöz, it created its title from words for two of the most feared mental and physical diseases (schizophrenia and syphilis). But key to its mood is also a *Mad Magazine* ethos that Artvinli describes from his moment of discovering the magazine in his local library in a small town on the border with Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union and images on television coming from the American invasion of Iraq: the world was mad, and, as its slogan proclaimed, “we are in suspicion, totally” (Artvinli and Şen 2019). The magazine included stories, essays, poems by patients, psychiatry assistants, and also well-known poets and writers, on topics from mental illness experiences to psychiatry and anti-psychiatry, the pharmaceutical industry, literature, popular culture, football, and music. When it disbanded six years later, it did so, explaining, “We are seeing that human conditions like schizophrenia that were detained behind the walls six years ago, have overflowed beyond them, globalized, and everyone is going nuts now” (ibid.). As Lovink might say, time to move on to the next stage from the local heterotopia to the more general Social Question.

It is thus regrettable that *Şizofrenji*, a joint production of patients, psychiatrists, writers, and others, articulating experiences from the “situated knowledge” perspective of patients, and visual imagery through which their experiences are often expressed (in dreamwork to themselves, in stories, drawings, and paintings for others) should not be available on PECE. What a wonderful project for a student or professor associated with the IstanbulLab to translate, annotate, and make available for comment in Turkish as well as in English or other (minor and major) languages. A joint project for a community future, and a decade’s

register of changing discourses, attitudes and feelings about mental illness and politics, different from the decade before and the one after.

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### Author Biography

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