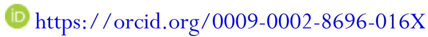
WASTE DONATIONS: Shopkeeper–Waste Picker Relations in Istanbul and the Limits of Hospitable Giving

KEVIN YILDIRIM
University of Cambridge


https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8696-016X

One June day in 2021, I stood on a quiet street outside an aluminum workshop in Dudullu, a working-class district on Istanbul's northeastern periphery. In the midday heat, I watched my friend and interlocutor, a fifty-year-old man named Bilal, enter the one-story building. Inside, a male employee wearing overalls greeted him by name. He directed Bilal to a corner of the workshop, where a small pile of cardboard rested on the cement floor. Bilal walked over and gathered the materials in his hands. He then carried the cardboard out of the workshop, thanking the worker as he left. "Did you pay for that?" I asked him in Turkish. No, Bilal answered, "there's no money" (*para yok*). He flattened the cardboard boxes, shoved them into his large plastic pull-cart, and hauled his load down the street (Figure 1).

Throughout the afternoon, Bilal's pull-cart came to hold nearly fifty kilograms of recyclable plastic and paper. Apart from finding discarded items in municipal dumpsters—how waste pickers in Istanbul typically locate recyclable objects—Bilal also gathered at least half of his materials from a group of people whom he called his "customers" (*müşteri*). The employee in the aluminum workshop had been one of roughly twenty-five people who regularly gave Bilal recyclables. Originally from a town in the Azad Kashmir region of Pakistan,

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY, Vol. 40, Issue 3, pp. 383–409, ISSN 0886-7356, online ISSN 1548-1360. Cultural Anthropology *is the journal of the Society of Cultural Anthropology, a section of the American Anthropological Association.* Cultural Anthropology *journal content published since 2014 is freely available to download, save, reproduce, and transmit for noncommercial, scholarly, and educational purposes under the Creative Commons BY-NC 4.0 license. Reproduction and transmission of journal content for the above purposes should credit the author and original source.*
DOI: 10.14506/ca40.3.01

Bilal had come to Turkey six years earlier to earn money and support his family. Having worked as a waste picker for the majority of this time, Bilal was experienced and effective in his job, and he was fully aware of the advantages of sourcing recyclables from local shopkeepers.[1] For one, doing this allowed him to avoid handling dirty, non-recyclable waste in municipal dumpsters. It also added a social dimension to what could otherwise be a stigmatized and alienating mode of informal work.

As I followed Bilal on his collection route that day, I grew curious about his customers, and why, in a city with thousands of waste pickers, they would give their recyclable waste to *him*. Later that afternoon, I began to learn why during a conversation I had with Bilal and his favorite customer, Ahmet, who was in his forties and owned a small bakery on a main street in the neighborhood. A Turkish citizen of Kurdish ethnicity, Ahmet had migrated with his family to Istanbul

Figure 1. Bilal pulls his cart down a residential street in Dudullu. Photo by Kevin Yildirim.

from the province of Van in southeast Turkey in the late 1990s. He had just opened his bakery that winter, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and by his own account, business had been slow. That afternoon in June, the three of us sat on the bakery's unfinished terrace drinking Coke. When I asked Ahmet about their relationship, he put a hand on Bilal's shoulder and said, "Everyone's not like Bilal. He is a good and honest [*dürüst*] person who keeps his word. When he calls and says that he is going to come to collect [recyclable] materials [*malzeme*], he comes." Ahmet said there was only one other waste picker with such a strong reputation in the neighborhood: a former dentist from Afghanistan, though he couldn't remember his name. But these are honest people, he told me, implying that others were not. Plus, Ahmet continued, Bilal had left his family and children in Pakistan to come to Turkey and earn his "bread money" (*ekmek parası*)—a term in Turkish that denotes money hard earned from honest work, enabling the poor to survive. Knowing that Bilal was in need and far from home, Ahmet felt obliged to "give him [recyclable] materials to benefit him" (*yararlansın diye ona malzeme veriyoruz*). While Ahmet gladly helped Bilal in this way, he also clarified that any assistance was conditional. "Bilal is a good person," he reiterated. "If someone lied to me, I wouldn't do the same for that person."

By giving his waste to Bilal for nothing in return, Ahmet was helping a poor migrant waste picker while also—however inadvertently—reproducing a hierarchical relationship with him. In this article, I suggest that these types of recyclable waste transfers constitute a novel type of hospitable giving in Istanbul. Since 2011, millions of irregular migrants and asylum seekers have come to Turkey from the broader Middle East, and these demographic changes have introduced significant challenges to a country already suffering from prolonged economic crises (Tuğal 2021). In response, the Turkish state has established various programs to accommodate persons displaced by war and economic deprivation. Occasionally, state officials have also enlisted citizens to help with migrant integration. This has included calls for citizens to pursue relations of harmonization (*uyum*) and hospitality (*misafirperverlik*) with migrants to promote social cohesion in cities across the country. Encouraging citizens to help migrants and asylum seekers in need of temporary assistance, these officials have invoked cultural and Islamic tropes of hospitality, kinship, and care (Düvell 2018). In turn, scholars have explored the impact of hospitality rhetoric on national political discourse (Babül 2024), mutual aid in urban neighborhoods (Alkan 2021), and the construction of religious and ethnic identity (Dağtaş 2017). Building on this body of work, this article examines everyday labor encounters (Fikes 2009) in Istanbul's

recycling sector to argue that the hospitable treatment of migrants is not strictly a humanitarian act or altruistic concern. It also constitutes a relationship that integrates migrant workers into a precarious urban economy.

When citizens give recyclable materials to migrant waste pickers for free, they transfer items that workers can sell for cash to support themselves and their dependents. But receiving these materials also embeds migrant workers in Istanbul's informal recycling sector, where they endure difficult, hard-to-overcome social and working conditions. As Waqas Butt (2020) has observed in Lahore, non-reciprocal, one-way transfers (Pickles 2019) of recyclable materials can segregate those who produce waste from those who receive it. And yet, in Istanbul, the short-term effects of these transfers leave both shopkeepers and waste pickers satisfied. Shopkeepers dispose of unwanted waste from their small businesses and feel virtuous about helping the poor, while waste pickers access a cleaner and more consistent supply of materials that can be sold for money.

Alongside the practicalities of this interaction, I also came to witness a hospitable dimension to these labor encounters. In what follows, I interpret these *waste donations* as a particular type of conditional hospitality (Derrida 2000) that reproduces social stratification between relatively well-off citizens and poor migrant workers. This is because shopkeepers tended to give waste to migrant waste pickers if and when they believed the donation was likely to inspire a particular kind of immaterial return. Shopkeepers offered a variety of reasons for their actions, but I argue that all were inspired to give by the prospect that waste donations reproduce the *moral authority* of the citizen-shopkeeper over the migrant-waste picker. I use *moral authority* to refer to a relation in which one party claims, however implicitly, a non-legal right to assert how society ought to be organized. By analyzing different types of waste donations through the lens of moral authority, I argue that migrant hospitality reproduces existing inequalities between citizens and migrants by representing a service relation—between shopkeeper and waste pickers—as a hospitable relation between host and guest. Although anthropologists have contended that informal recycling labor can free the poor from the constraints of wage labor (Millar 2018), success for migrant waste pickers in Istanbul often depends on cultivating obsequious and dependent relations (Ferguson 2013) with citizen-shopkeepers. This, I suggest, limits the potential of hospitable giving to improve the well-being of precarious migrant workers.

Unlike other examples of migrant hospitality, where citizens offer universally valued resources like food or shelter (Alkan 2021; Katz 2022), waste donations prove unique because they place very little material burden on shopkeepers. In fact, they help shopkeepers dispose of unwanted items produced in the course of running small businesses, namely, cardboard boxes and plastic crates used for shipping commodities. This allows these transfers to persist in virtual perpetuity, beyond the temporary duration of most hospitable relations (Agier 2021; Ben-Yehoyada 2015). It also encourages analysis of the longer-term impact of hospitable giving in contexts of urban labor, which counters an "ethics of immediacy" (Mittermaier 2014) that lauds the benefits of aid on the here and now. Advocating for a longer-term view, I show that while waste donations help build solidarity between citizens and migrants, they also distribute resources to migrants through bias, compassion, and service rather than a universal logic of welfare provision. The dangers of such an approach lie in it favoring certain waste pickers over others, encouraging migrants to adopt subservient attitudes to local shopkeepers and creating a migrant waste labor regime distinguished by its servility to citizen workers. In the conclusion, I suggest that the long-term impacts of this form of hospitable giving shed light on the precariousness of not only the migrant recycling worker as "guest" in Turkey but also the citizen-shopkeeper as "host."

My data and argumentation draw from fifteen months of cumulative ethnographic study into migrant-citizen relations within Turkey's vast informal recycling sector, which I largely conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. My broader research asked how the recent arrival of irregular migrants into the recycling sector has changed how citizens in Turkey conceive of economic and political justice. This article contributes to this project by analyzing how shopkeepers explained the merits of donating waste to select migrant waste pickers.

WASTE PICKING IN ISTANBUL

For decades, segments of the urban poor in Turkey have earned money by collecting and reselling recyclable waste. These itinerant waste pickers (*kâğıt toplayıcıları*) sell their collections to informal recycling businesses located in urban neighborhoods.[2] They operate largely in public space with no legal permissions or protections, exploiting a legal loophole that permits the collection and resale of items from public waste receptacles. With few specialized skills and minimal investment needed to buy a pull-cart and retrieve recyclable waste, the job has

a low barrier to entry. Consequently, it attracts individuals who struggle to find formal employment elsewhere and offers an important if unstable source of income for some of the most marginalized members of society. Before 2011, waste pickers were primarily ethnically Roma or Kurdish citizens of Turkey (Dinler 2016), with occasional participation from poor ethnic Turks. Since then, the workforce has absorbed a significant number of irregular male migrants, with my interlocutors estimating that there are at least 10,000 migrant waste pickers in Istanbul alone. In my field site of Dudullu, foreign waste pickers proved the norm, with multiple long-term residents telling me that "Turks don't do this job," as if working informally with domestic waste was socially unacceptable for ethnic Turks. However, other segments of the local recycling sector were owned or staffed by ethnic Turks, including the scrap metal trade and municipal waste-collection organizations.

Precarious labor conditions defined the migrant recycling workforce. Migrants would typically work as waste pickers for only short periods before finding better jobs elsewhere in Turkey, returning to their home countries, or attempting to transit to Europe. In Dudullu, they were often employed by ethnically Kurdish citizens of Turkey who owned small recycling depots. On condition that migrant waste pickers sold their collected recyclables to the depot at preferential rates, depot owners often provided migrants with housing, either at the worksite or in crowded rented apartments. While this arrangement created opportunity for exploitation—depot owners could coerce waste pickers into accepting exceptionally low rates—it also provided a stable cash income for waste pickers, who could earn more than minimum wage if they worked long hours. Still, many were slow to accumulate savings. Waste pickers commonly had outstanding debts to smugglers, lenders in their home countries, or depot owners, and most sent much of their income to family members as remittances.

Working on city streets posed further challenges for migrant waste pickers. Unlike migrant workers employed in the agricultural, textile, or domestic care sectors, migrant waste pickers worked largely in public urban space. While collecting recyclables from businesses, houses, and waste receptacles, migrants routinely encountered local shopkeepers, residents, and municipal authorities. Their success in the job depended partially on how successfully they navigated these interactions, since an encounter gone wrong could expose migrants' illegal status and result in detention or deportation. The migrant waste-picking labor force in Turkey has in fact faced periodic mass arrests since the mid-2010s, often

coinciding with peaks of anti-migrant sentiment. To minimize these risks, migrant waste pickers typically attempted to adapt to the expectations and routines of area citizens.

Waste pickers could also benefit economically by forming strong relations with local residents, with many finding it more efficient to organize their routes around businesses and residences that regularly left out large amounts of recyclable waste. For shopkeepers, discarding recyclables like this not only eased their own waste disposal but also offered the satisfaction of helping those in need. And when it suited shopkeepers' own interests, this could even become a self-conscious effort at symbiosis. For instance, employees at a print shop in Dudullu told me that they left small piles of paper waste outside their front entrance every day. Unlike Ahmet the baker, they didn't personally know any of the seven or eight waste pickers who gathered the materials—only that they were foreigners (*yabancı*) who lacked better job opportunities. Regardless, they claimed that the arrangement benefited both parties. The business had recently downsized and was no longer able to store and directly sell its own recyclable paper waste. It now depended on foreign waste pickers to collect it, which could otherwise require alternative, pricier disposal methods. While there was little personal engagement between them, the two parties had nevertheless developed a mutually obligatory relationship by transacting with one another over time, fitting James Carrier's (2018) definition of a moral economy. Shopkeepers were obliged to leave out recyclables, while waste pickers had to collect them in a manner that suited the shopkeepers.

In Istanbul, unlike in cities in Vietnam (Nguyen 2019) or Pakistan (Butt 2020), waste pickers do not tend to purchase recyclables from shopkeepers or residents. While some Istanbul shopkeepers avoided migrant waste pickers due to a perceived lack of economic benefit, others saw opportunities to enter into a relation of mutual obligation with them. For these shopkeepers, the absence of money enhanced the social value of waste donations, transforming them into what some shopkeepers described as a favor (*iyilik*). Had these waste pickers been Turkish citizens, as most were before 2011, such interactions might well have been analyzed as examples of favors (Ledeneva 1998) or polluted gifts (Parry 1986; Raheja 1988). However, in the early 2020s, the predominance of *foreign* migrants among waste pickers led shopkeepers to view waste donations as a means of supporting the temporarily displaced in particular. This development prompts consideration of how shopkeepers imagine these materials as helpful transfers given to guests.

In this context, waste donations might be better understood through the lens of *hospitable* giving. This approach is productive not merely because waste donations are given to needy individuals temporarily far from home but also because shopkeepers' willingness to assist was contingent on waste pickers meeting particular expectations. This conditionality echoes Jacques Derrida's (2000) idea that hospitable acts inherently involve hosts maintaining control over their domain (see also Shryock 2012). As I expand on later, waste donations were underpinned by shopkeepers' implicit assertions of authority over spatial realms—the shop, the neighborhood, the nation—a characteristic that distinguishes hospitable giving from gift-giving (Candea and da Col 2012; Ben-Yehoyada 2015). To develop this aspect further, the next section introduces the broader contexts of migrant hospitality in contemporary Turkey.

MIGRANT HOSPITALITY IN TURKEY

During the 2010s, millions of people came to Turkey from neighboring countries in search of safer and more prosperous living conditions. Most notably, the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011 caused millions to flee to Turkey. While many eventually moved on to European countries, as of 2024, about 3.2 million Syrians still lived in Turkey. Throughout the 2010s, the sudden influx of Syrians led the Turkish government to establish new policy frameworks for migration management. However laudable, the rollout was inconsistent and ambiguous (Düvell 2018). Due to clauses in Turkey's signing of the Geneva Convention, the country is only legally required to offer refugee status to those entering from Europe (İçduygu and Şimşek 2016). Hence, when Syrians began to arrive in large numbers in 2013, Turkey was not legally obligated to recognize them as refugees. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AK Parti) instead established a so-called Temporary Protection Regulation in 2014 that gave millions of Syrians temporary protection status (Baban, Ilcan, and Rygiel 2017). While this regulation provided access to health care, education, and social assistance for Syrians, the expectation was that they would soon return to their homes, and they were not offered pathways for permanent settlement in Turkey (Koca 2016).

Since 2011, migrants, asylum seekers, and those under temporary protection in Turkey have faced difficult working conditions. For Syrians, obtaining formal employment requires an application for work permits through potential employers, which effectively prevents most from securing legal permission to

work (Badalič 2023). The prospects for legal integration and formal employment prove even slimmer for the hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan who entered Turkey clandestinely during the past decade. These migrants, who benefited from Turkey's relatively lax border policies throughout the 2010s, lack even the opportunity to apply for temporary protection status. In all, these varied groups face a situation of "differential inclusion" (Baban, Ilcan, and Rygiel 2017), referring to "the everyday ways that legal status, migration and employment policies, and social marginalization—gendered and racialized—stratify [migrants'] experiences" (George and Borrelli 2024, 532). The framework of differential inclusion clarifies how a migrant-governance approach based on humanitarianism rather than the universal provision of rights creates uneven economic outcomes for diverse migrant groups (Ramsay 2020), including within informal labor markets.

Beyond legal frameworks, differential inclusion emerges within broader systems of humanitarian governance. Scholars have shown that global aid provision is shaped by affect, emotion, and moral evaluation, which speaks to how ostensibly universal doctrines of human rights become filtered through the subjective biases and judgments of otherwise well-meaning benefactors (Fassin 2012; Muehlebach 2012; Ticktin 2011). In Turkey, attempts to shift government responsibility for migrant integration onto the general population testify to how rights-based and sentiment-driven approaches to migrant well-being are not opposed, but inextricably linked. In the mid-2010s, as the Turkish state provided accommodation, legal status, and resources for many displaced Syrians, officials also called on Turkish citizens to pursue relations of "harmonization" (*uyum*) with newly arrived migrants in their everyday lives (Carpi and Şenoğuz 2019). Whether in public announcements or pro-government media outlets, this call was often substantiated through invocations of the role of compulsory charity in Islam and the cultural importance of hospitality in Turkey (Dağtaş 2017; Alkan 2021; Babül 2024). As Franck Düvell (2018) notes, President Erdoğan exemplified this approach by referring to Syrian guests as "Muhajirun" (early converts to Islam who emigrated from Mecca to Medina) and Turks as "Ansar" (the helpers and hosts of Muhajirun). In a 2015 speech during a fast-breaking meal at Ramadan, at a so-called accommodation center with both refugees and UN representatives in attendance, Erdoğan (2015) further declared that "in our culture, guests are a divine gift [*bereket*], an honor, and a joy. You [speaking to refugees] have brought us a divine gift; you have honored us with your presence."

Emphasizing language of generosity over rights (Özden 2013), this approach influenced migration discourse in the years to come, aligning with what Didier Fassin (2012) terms "humanitarian government."

The problem with these calls is not that they are malevolent but that material circumstances and public sympathy are volatile bases for providing welfare to migrants. In 2015, Turkey began negotiations with the European Union (EU) with the aim of stemming migrant arrivals into Greece and Bulgaria, which culminated in a 2016 deal that provided Turkey with six billion euros in funding to support Syrian refugees and improve migration management. By referring to migrants as "guests" during this period, Turkish officials strategically positioned their nation as benevolent to both domestic and Western audiences. As Elif Babül (2024) observes, host-guest dynamics typically extend beyond bilateral relations, with hosts often invoking third parties to bear witness to claims of upstanding hospitality. But despite these rhetorical moves, everyday public interactions between citizens and migrants often cast doubt on the prospect of sustained harmonious relations between the two groups. Officials' early claims that Syrians would stay in Turkey only temporarily backfired, leading to growing public perceptions that foreign migrants had overstayed their welcome and now threatened national security and prosperity (Koca 2016). Ongoing economic crises in Turkey have further intensified anti-migrant sentiments, which have occasionally resulted in displays of xenophobic violence. As a waste labor activist in Istanbul once told me, "When the people are hungry, it's difficult to share bread with foreigners" (*toplum açken yabancılarla ekmek paylaşmak zor*).

For shopkeepers in Dudullu, however, sharing *recyclable waste* with migrants came more easily, demonstrating how the qualities of the item being shared influence the practice of hospitality. When citizens help migrants in need by giving them "garbage" (*çöp*) instead of food, household goods, or shelter, a number of distinct social dynamics result. For one, migrant waste pickers' eagerness to accumulate recyclable waste distinguished them as a group within the neighborhood. Instead of flattening hierarchies between donor and recipient—as Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins (2020) shows is the case with donated bread in Palestine, owing to the near universal reverence for bread among her interlocutors—waste donations reproduced a relation of difference between waste pickers and shopkeepers because the recyclable materials in question were wanted only by waste pickers. Recyclable waste accordingly functions as the inverse of Annette Weiner's (1992) inalienable possession. Rather than objects whose extraordinary

value renders them ungiftable—and whose immobility structures social boundaries between insiders and outsiders—recyclable waste was considered valueless by Dudullu shopkeepers, marking anyone in pursuit of it as different. This undesirability of recyclable waste is also why, counter to the temporal limits of most hospitable encounters, waste donations could occur in virtual perpetuity. The recipient never risked "overstaying their welcome" as a guest, or depleting the host's limited stock of valuable resources, because the host was parting only with materials they would otherwise throw away.

The absence of material reciprocity in waste donations, however, reinforced the shopkeeper's sense of authority. As Julian Pitt-Rivers (2012) has argued, hospitable relations are based on an imbalance of power between hosts and guests, which temporarily grants the host sovereignty over those they welcome (Derrida 2000). With this in mind, hospitable giving becomes a vehicle for hosts to assert how materials or access should be allocated to those under their responsibility. Crucially, the perceived worthiness of others is determined not only by collective social norms but also by individual and perhaps unpredictable preferences (Cabot 2013). In contemporary contexts of migrant hospitality, these preferences may include hosts' claims to special knowledge about migrants' origins or circumstances. Such encounters between migrants and citizens transcend more traditional frameworks of hospitality based on religious obligation, like Islamic almsgiving (Benthall 1999) or ritualized hosting practices (Humphrey 2012). Accordingly, contemporary hospitality is bound by customary belief and liberated by voluntary "expression of personal commitments" (Agier 2021, 43).

These dynamics underscore the ambiguity and unpredictability inherent in hospitality, which has long been a focus of anthropological inquiry. Hospitality operates in an innately uncertain social space: it suspends conflict rather than settling it (Pitt-Rivers 2017, 178), "blurs the distinction between a discourse of rights and a discourse of generosity" (Rosello 2001, 9), and contains an innate "scalar complexity" (Shryock 2012, S20) that links interpersonal interactions to international relations. In the Istanbul recycling sector, hospitable *labor encounters* reveal new ambiguities in the host-guest relationship. When hospitality occurs within economic relationships between shopkeepers and waste pickers, it testifies to Georgina Ramsay's (2020, 5) insight that there can exist a blurred line "between humanitarian interventions and economic exploitation." Analyzing waste donations as both humanitarian acts and economic transactions, I explore how the imbalances of authority that typically govern hospitable relations shift

when hosts and guests are also customers and service providers. The resulting relationship is neither purely hospitable nor strictly transactional.

MORAL AUTHORITY AND HOSPITABLE GIVING

Relations of *moral authority*, I argue, offer a productive framework for grasping the common aspects of hospitable giving to migrants in Istanbul's informal recycling sector. I define moral authority as a relation in which one party claims a non-legal right to assert how society ought to be organized, whether on the scale of a one-to-one relationship or of broader social structures. In these terms, claims of moral authority seek a right to determination that resembles one of Derrida's (2005, 13) many explications of sovereignty as "having the power to decide." Yet compared to the more commonly used analytic of sovereignty, moral authority is better placed to theorize hospitable relations as they occur in labor encounters. Moral authority can conceive of hosts' insistence on "setting the agenda" with guests (Rabinowitz 1997) without invoking the multiple, and at times confusing, spatial scales of sovereignty. Moral authority also directs attention to the often-unspoken expectations and stipulations that motivate the relatively well-off as they distribute resources to those in need (see Godelier 1999, 12), which elucidates mutually obligatory relations between two parties on unequal economic terms. Two testimonies from Istanbul shopkeepers will help me demonstrate how relations of moral authority influence everyday hospitable interactions.

For some shopkeepers, giving recyclables to migrant waste pickers prompted reflections on the encounter's international significance. A corner store owner in Dudullu named Niyazi, a man in his mid-forties, testified to this. One afternoon, when I asked Niyazi about his recycling habits, he pointed to a pile of flattened cardboard boxes in the corner of his shop, previously used to ship cigarettes and potato chips. When the cardboard accumulates, he explained, he leaves it on the sidewalk, and a collector will come by to pick it up within thirty minutes. Though Niyazi did not know any of the collectors personally, he had developed clear ideas about their identities and life circumstances. This impersonal arrangement was in fact the most common type of interaction that I observed between shopkeepers and waste pickers during my fieldwork. In his case, Niyazi said that most of the local collectors were young Afghan men who had come to Turkey because they needed money. He told me that he sympathized with the Afghan people because their country had been ruined by decades

of war with Russia and the United States. And from a documentary he had recently seen on television, he had learned that Afghans were hardworking and talented shepherds. All they want is "olives and bread," he said, and he was happy to help provide them with this.

This labor encounter was made possible by the relative economic value of cardboard waste. Niyazi explained that the price of recyclable paper was too low for him to store and sell himself. "It's garbage [*çöp*]," he said. "What's the price of paper [per kilo]? Forty to sixty *kuruş*? If it were one or two lira, I'd deal with it, but at the moment, it's not worth it." Niyazi had succinctly described how an informal service economy had developed through interactions between those who generated unwanted recyclables and migrants who needed the income. Shopkeepers like Niyazi considered it acceptable to give away recyclables without any compensation because the quantities of materials were small and held little economic value. Niyazi surmised that urban recycling must work differently in Europe. Then, unprompted, he began to tell me about perceived differences in how European countries and Turkey approach foreign aid and intervention. From behind his counter, he explained that France and Belgium had committed terrible atrocities in Africa out of financial interests. In contrast, he said, Turkey's current diplomatic and aid presence in Africa sought no financial reward: Turkey is there to "help people," he said. I had heard this story from many people during my fieldwork, particularly those with nationalist political views, like Niyazi. He was a second-generation migrant from the conservative city of Rize in Turkey's eastern Black Sea region, the hometown of President Erdoğan and a hotbed of Turkish nationalism.

Like the print shop employees I mentioned earlier, Niyazi benefited from waste pickers' removal of unwanted materials from his shop. But unlike them, Niyazi derived a deeper satisfaction from these encounters because they perpetuated a historical narrative in which Turks developed benevolent relations of dependence with poor Muslims around the world. This claim was based on an implicit connection between his own good deeds and what he considered a national ethic of unconditional generosity. It also mirrored pro-government discourses that often portrayed the Turkish nation-state as a magnanimous actor in an otherwise immoral world. Indeed, Babül (2024, 2) could almost be describing Niyazi—rather than hospitality rhetoric from Turkish state actors—when writing that host-guest metaphors in Turkey "are used to assert power and leverage both domestically and internationally by exerting sovereign control

over a post-imperial nation-space, performing neo-imperial guardianship over the downtrodden (especially the Muslim community/*umma*), and claiming an ethno-religious, civilizational morality that exceeds the legalistic logic of human rights and entitlements." For Niyazi, donating waste enacted a sovereign claim—one founded on an assumed comparison that overlooked differences in scale between local and national contexts (Candea 2012)—such that helping Afghan waste pickers provided an opportunity to enact a moralized, national citizenship.

However, shopkeepers in Dudullu varied significantly in how they justified giving recyclable waste to migrants. For instance, Ahmet the baker, whose explanations of waste donations opened this article, did not make the same type of sovereign claim that Niyazi did when explaining his actions. On another visit to Ahmet's bakery, I spoke with him one on one, and he expanded on his relationship with Bilal, the waste picker from Pakistan:

> [Bilal] left his home and came to Turkey. He came into the country illegally. His economic situation is very difficult . . . . God forbid, if things get bad in Turkey, my family and I might . . . for example, go to Pakistan. Or maybe I'll go to another country. And if I am in Pakistan, if through some means I can get in contact with Bilal, what will he say? 'Ah, this man helped me a lot in Turkey, I won't leave him in a bad place, so I'm going to help him.' Yes, there are Muslims and different kinds [of people], different sects [*mezhepler*], but in the end, what are we dealing with? Human beings. And when human beings help one another, it is something very special.

While Niyazi had invoked a particularly nationalist ethic of helping dependent foreigners, Ahmet referred to the virtue of treating other people as he would wish to be treated. He disregarded sectarian differences to promote universal solidarity. For Ahmet, donating waste to Bilal was justified because the pair resembled each other. Niyazi, in contrast, had stressed the differences between an Afghan and a Turk. Recalling Pitt-Rivers's (2017) argument that reciprocity serves as the foundation of hospitality, Ahmet invoked the chance, however unlikely, that Bilal could one day host Ahmet in Pakistan. And as a Kurd in Turkey, Ahmet sympathized with Bilal in part due to their shared experiences of displacement and marginalization. Moreover, Bilal had been a baker himself in Pakistan, and even though Bilal currently earned his livelihood from Ahmet's recyclable waste, I had also witnessed the pair bond over their shared work history.

Yet Ahmet's sympathies should be contextualized against his earlier qualification that he helped Bilal specifically because the waste picker was "honest" and "a good person." Ahmet justified donating waste to Bilal because the transfer created an interdependent relationship between himself and a migrant waste picker who aligned with his vision of the deserving poor. The act was not motivated by Bilal's nationality, or any positive contribution to Turkey's reputation, but by Ahmet's commitment to fostering a relation of reciprocity with someone far from home and of good character. With recourse to a universal ethic of reciprocity that sought a relation of interdependence with his "guest," Ahmet's position differed fundamentally from Niyazi's, which was founded on a model of humanitarian governance in Turkey that sought relations of dependence with the global poor so as to enhance its national prestige. Just as "differential inclusion" shapes the precarity of migrants in host societies, citizens' diverse social positions and perspectives generate differing senses of entitlement and obligation, which influence how hospitable interactions with migrant workers unfold (see Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2018, 3).

While hospitable encounters like these can be seen as tests of a host's sovereignty (Shryock 2012), analyzing these cases by identifying a common sovereign claim among shopkeepers would raise the following questions: What exactly does sovereignty here refer to, and does sovereignty claimed on different spatial scales not alter social relations in important ways? If sovereignty refers to power relations that test, engage, or reproduce state power, then Niyazi's testimony invokes sovereignty much more directly than Ahmet's. But if sovereignty is conceived more diffusely as any claim of control over a space or person, then both shopkeepers might be said to make sovereign claims. However, to adopt sovereignty as an analytic in this case would then overlook the significance of how this control is justified, and what type of dependent, conditional, or reciprocal relations it produces between shopkeeper and waste picker (see Ferguson 2013). Following Rebecca Bryant and Madeleine Reeves (2021), I am therefore less interested in asking what specifically sovereignty is, or how hospitable relations might generate sovereignty, and more committed to understanding how citizens respond to potential challenges of their sovereignty (here, in the form of immigration) by forging mutually obligatory relations with migrants that nevertheless contain aspirations to determine specific social arrangements.

Although some scholars emphasize the role of solidarity and mutual obligation in relations of migrant hospitality (Alkan 2021; Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyaeh

2018), their work often undertheorizes the power imbalances that can determine and result from these relations. For instance, Hilal Alkan (2021) suggests that middle-class Turks in Istanbul have forged mutually obligatory relationships with newly arrived Syrian migrants by hospitably gifting them household goods. Alkan uses this ethnographic insight to suggest, contra Derrida (2000), that a focus on *hostility* between citizens and migrants blinds us to the relations of care and trust produced through hospitable giving. While this analysis correctly follows the potential for more positive outcomes in migrant hospitality, it disregards the potential for relations of mutual obligation to be informed by distinct imbalances in authority, particularly if "gifts" or transfers remain unreciprocated. Here, the literature on waste work offers important insights. Butt (2020) shows that a lack of reciprocity between producers and collectors of waste can turn the provision of an urban service into a means of reproducing social stratification along lines of ethnicity, caste, or citizenship. In Turkey, this stratification typically occurs along a "hierarchical ethno-religious order of belonging" (Babül 2024, 13), where citizens' treatment of migrants varies according to their respective identities and social positions. In the case of waste donations, while these transfers enable relations of mutual obligation to develop between citizens and migrants—dynamics couched in the language of hospitality—they also result in shopkeepers having the power to dictate the terms of the transfer. Rather than positioning migrant hospitality as either purely altruistic or innately hostile, I suggest that the concept of moral authority can address relations of symbiosis and hierarchy at once—thereby capturing the ambivalences of hospitable relations as they occur within Istanbul's informal recycling sector.

WORKING UNDER MORAL AUTHORITY

If moral authority can better attend to these ambivalences of hospitality, then what effect do relations of moral authority have on migrant labor in Istanbul's recycling sector? Can we de-exceptionalize irregular migrants by treating them also as workers involved in a broader political economy that subjects many types of persons—not just the displaced or stateless—to conditions of precarity (Allison 2012)? In this section, I heed Ramsay's (2020) call to develop new critiques of humanitarianism by exploring the links between moral economy and political economy. To do so, I suggest that hospitable giving to migrant workers can deepen, rather than flatten, hierarchical labor roles. This is because the conditions of hospitality align readily with service relationships built on the

transferring of recyclable waste, materials that are worthless to producers yet vital for recipients' livelihoods. Examining what James Ferguson (2021) terms "the politics of distribution"— that is, the question of who gets what, and why—reveals how the conditions that shopkeepers place on waste donations create uneven access to resources among migrant workers.

The primary condition that governed the provision of waste donations was the conduct of waste pickers. Shopkeepers in Dudullu would withdraw any offerings of free recyclables if collectors scattered waste around storefronts, loitered, or disturbed local residents. Bilal, the waste picker from Pakistan, summarized this condition to me as, "if you make no problems, you have no problems." This adherence to neighborhood standards represented a form of discipline imposed on migrants by local residents, workers, and authorities (Rozakou 2012). Those unable or unwilling to adhere to these standards of conduct typically left the waste-picking workforce—either voluntarily or driven by the municipal police (*zabıta*). Those who complied were granted conditional access to work within what Sébastien Chauvin and Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas (2012) call a "moral economy of deservingness," where irregular migrants gain probationary rights to citizens' recyclable waste provided that they act appropriately. Scholars studying Europe have noted that migrants who can effectively display their suffering are sometimes granted preferential treatment in asylum processes (Fassin 2009). In this case, migrant workers gain acceptance from Turkish citizens by conforming to expectations of propriety in public urban labor practices.

A second condition lay somewhat beyond the waste picker's control. Successful recipients of waste donations were often obligated to fit into shopkeepers' visions of the deserving poor through their social and political identities. Niyazi the shopkeeper, for example, was willing to help Afghan waste pickers because he considered them the dignified victims of war and poverty. Bilal had also indicated that his popularity in the neighborhood resulted from his country of origin and religion. When he first started working, Bilal only gathered recyclables from public waste receptacles. But soon after, he started to engage local shopkeepers in search of a cleaner and more consistent supply of materials. He would approach local workplaces, greet employees with *selamünaleyküm*,[3] and ask politely for any paper or plastic waste. His requests were typically refused until he became recognizable to shopkeepers and disclosed that he was from Pakistan. Bilal claimed that this opened doors for him because "Turkish people love Pakistan." While a generalization, his observation reflects a real tendency among Dudullu

residents to favor migrants from Pakistan over those from Syria, for instance, owing to perceived historical and religious connections between Turkey and Pakistan. Bilal insisted it was harder for Afghan or Syrian waste pickers, as local residents often stereotyped them as thieves (see Yildirim 2025).

These prejudices indicate how the "racialized visibility of politically 'out-of-place' others serves as a reminder of the provisional, negotiated, and precarious social relations of hospitality" (Harney and Boccagni 2023, 328). The "guest" in these encounters does not resemble Pitt-Rivers's (2012, 504) idea of a total "stranger" who is "unknown" and "potentially anything" to hosts. Rather, the guest is a migrant worker who participates in public labor encounters, where they are subjected to variegated treatment because their behavior, origins, and labor resonate in particular ways with the host population. While this arrangement benefited Bilal, it meant the exclusion of others—those from other countries, those less observant of religious customs, or those deemed less "honest." The hierarchical relations produced via waste donations therefore extend beyond individual relationships between shopkeepers and waste pickers to structure the politics of distribution *among* waste pickers themselves.

Waste donations stood apart from other forms of more anonymous mutual aid common in Istanbul during my fieldwork, including those aimed at offsetting the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the reemergence of a tradition called *askıda ekmek*, a practice allowing bakery customers to "pay bread forward," so that those in need can acquire food without openly asking. The opposition-run Istanbul municipality similarly introduced a digital platform called Askıda Fatura (Pay Bills Forward) in 2020 that allowed donors to anonymously pay the utility bills of registered users who lacked the finances to do so. In both cases, the virtue of generosity lay in the donor's anonymity, recalling the Turkish saying, "The left hand mustn't see what the right hand gives" (*Sağ elin verdiğini sol el görmemelidir*). The phrase was also used to describe municipal welfare provision during the pandemic by Istanbul's mayor, Ekrem İmamoğlu, as a backhanded critique of President Erdoğan's tendency to give to the poor ostentatiously and with expectations for political support in return—this despite the virtue of anonymous giving in Islam (Benthall 1999). Waste donations in Dudullu operated through a different logic, one predicated on the recipient's visibility and the donor's perception that the migrant worker represented a particular type of deserving foreigner in need of assistance.

For shopkeepers, interactions with migrant waste pickers were also influenced by the shifting and ambiguous qualities of waste materials themselves. Scholars have shown that waste is not inherently worthless but rather contains latent value that certain people or classificatory systems momentarily do not recognize (Reno 2015; Alexander and Sanchez 2018). Recycling work accordingly often focuses on the transformation of waste materials from one category of valuation to another (Doherty and Brown 2019) and creates encounters between people in diverse social and economic positions (Halvorson 2018). In Istanbul, this indeterminacy becomes evident in how shopkeepers speak of recyclable waste as both "trash" (*çöp*) and a "material" (*malzeme*). Similar to the leftover bread examined by Stamatopoulou-Robbins (2020, 151) in the West Bank, the value of paper and plastic discards in Istanbul was unstable, their "semiotic and material statuses . . . constantly in flux."

This fluidity made waste donations possible, as both parties recognized that paper and plastic waste carried multiple, shifting values and meanings (Alexander and Reno 2012). As with Anna L. Tsing's (2015) analysis of matsutake mushrooms, the status of recyclable waste materials shifted from commodities to gifts, then back to commodities again. Shopkeepers received goods to sell wrapped in paper and plastic packaging, transferred the packaging to poor migrant workers for free, and these workers then re-sold the materials for money. Enabled by striking economic inequality in Istanbul, these labor encounters demonstrate that the precise values of donated waste are highly context-dependent. For shopkeepers, discarding paper and plastic packaging was justified because its exchange-value was so low that it was virtually nothing, or "garbage" (*çöp*). But this same waste carried a significant use-value as a channel of hospitable aid, which established power-laden relations of mutual obligation with migrant waste pickers.

When discussing these ambiguities, shopkeepers and waste pickers often attempted to represent complex material and social dynamics in simpler, more palatable terms. This tendency effectively downplayed the hierarchical relations of dependency created by waste donations. For example, Bilal, the waste picker from Pakistan, called Ahmet the Kurdish baker his "customer," although no money was ever exchanged between them. This choice of language dignified his receipt of waste by reframing it as a market transaction rather than an act of hospitality or charity. Ahmet, meanwhile, described his donations to Bilal as potentially reciprocal, which ignored the improbability of Bilal's ever being

able to reciprocate. Both statements speak to how waste donations leave both parties immediately satisfied, since the transfer can be spoken about in acceptable terms and the relationship is mutually obligatory. And yet, both statements also obscure the long-term dependency created by these donations, since the transaction is one of conditional hospitality rather than mutual self-interest in a commercial exchange. Hence, while this mode of waste work reproduces social segmentation over the long term, the rhetoric of hospitality emphasizes immediate mutual satisfaction when embedded in service relations.

These relational power dynamics extend beyond the immediate contexts of the transfer by giving shape to two distinct labor regimes within Istanbul's informal recycling sector. Defined as "the assemblage of elements that set the conditions under which people work" (Li 2017, 247), labor regimes encompass the broader political, social, and economic conditions that govern labor. In this case, a citizen labor regime produces recyclable waste and occasionally offers it to members of a migrant labor regime, whose lack of legal status has pushed them into jobs rejected by most citizens. Waste donations not only create moral economic relations between citizens and migrants but also transfer valuable resources between two distinct groups within the political economy of consumption, waste, and reuse in urban Turkey. Waste donations configure these dual labor regimes by assigning participants to the roles of either giver or receiver of waste, enacting a relation difficult to overcome. As Ramsay (2020, 8) notes, precarity does not emerge from a moral economy of deservingness, but from the "exploitative ways in which refugees become incorporated into the political economy of the nation in which they have sought refuge." While hospitable discourses may explain why shopkeepers donate waste to migrants, they do not account for how such donations create a type of migrant *worker* who must acquiesce to shopkeepers for marginal improvements in their strenuous jobs. In the coming years, as more and more displaced persons are likely to ask for material assistance from citizens in the countries where they seek refuge, the presence of the needy will prompt considerations of whether or not it is just to help. Anthropologists need to be aware that giving valued resources to migrant workers like this is not a neutral exercise in humanitarianism, but a transfer with significant aftereffects.

A final episode with Bilal clarifies the limits of hospitable giving for migrant waste pickers in Istanbul. On a break from his collections one summer day, I sat with Bilal on the curb of a side street, opposite a vacant lot. As we drank cans

of iced tea, Bilal breathed heavily, exhausted from hauling his cart around the neighborhood in the heat. Then he touched the area above my right kidney. In English, he said "here hurts." He grimaced, leaving me unsure how to respond. The usual advice, that perhaps he should see a doctor, seemed inappropriate. Bilal lacked the legal status required to visit a state hospital or the funds needed for private health care. As an informal migrant worker, occupational health was a risk that he had to bear on his own. Much of the city, in fact, remained off limits to him: COVID-19 restrictions prohibited those without national ID cards from using public transport or entering many private businesses in Istanbul. Moreover, informal recycling work provided virtually no paths toward Turkish citizenship, political representation, or less precarious forms of work. For Bilal, the only opportunity at gaining legal residency in Turkey was to return to Pakistan and apply through official channels from his home country—a plan he talked about regularly, his wishes bookended with "inshallah." It struck me that, for all of the donations of waste he received from local shopkeepers, Bilal's relationships with these men offered him little lasting support. They helped him earn a meager wage and, occasionally, they might result in a highly conditional friendship. But when Bilal was arrested and deported in the fall of 2021, in a raid targeting the migrant recycling workforce in Dudullu, just a few months after I conducted the research for this article, there was nothing any of the shopkeepers could do to help. Bilal had faced the risks of working as a waste picker himself, and he faced the consequences alone too.

CONCLUSION

If Weiner's (1992) ultimate insight was that inalienable possessions create social differentiation by being kept, then what might focusing on what is *withheld* from migrant waste pickers reveal about waste donations? As indicated by the troubles Bilal experienced with his health and deportation, hierarchies between shopkeepers and waste pickers were produced not only through the transfer of alienable waste materials. Also significant were the privileges that shopkeepers had, broadly construed, that were *not* given to waste pickers: material resources, citizenship rights, and access to government services. For migrant recycling workers in Istanbul, their job did not provide the flexible and liberating livelihood that Kathleen Millar (2018) describes for *catadores* in a Brazilian garbage dump, where informal waste picking offered workers greater autonomy than formal wage labor did. Neither did waste labor allow migrant workers in Istanbul

to represent their work as a positive and moral form of urban citizenship (Fredericks 2018). Rather, for many migrant waste pickers in Istanbul, recycling labor meant entering into obsequious relations of dependence with citizens whom they encountered as they worked in public urban space.

While anthropologists of charitable giving in Islamic contexts have foregrounded an "ethics of immediacy" that attends to the virtues of helping in the here and now (Mittermaier 2014), assistance aimed at migrants specifically must consider the longer-term impacts of humanitarian giving. Short-term aid, like waste donations, can provide useful material support and help migrant workers develop relations of mutual obligation with citizens, but it can also reinforce migrants' dependency on their shopkeeper benefactors. When resources are distributed according to subjective criteria—including the whims of compassion, social preference, or political conviction—the result is uneven welfare provision that reflects the biases of donors just as it does their earnest goodwill. This article has critiqued everyday humanitarian approaches to migrant integration by showcasing an example from Istanbul, where the hospitality extended to migrant workers embeds them into a precarious urban recycling economy. Even though waste donations prove satisfactory for both parties in the immediate term, an ethics of immediacy would obstruct attention to how the recipients of waste donations are not only objects of humanitarianism but also participants in capitalist work, and thus involved in longer-term (unmet) ambitions of sustaining life, rather than merely addressing present needs.

One way to understand the ambiguities of hospitable giving is to utilize the concept of moral authority. While shopkeepers justified their act of donating waste to migrant workers with diverse invocations of their own sovereignty, they consistently sought a right to assert how society ought to be organized when assisting migrant waste pickers. But these claims of moral authority might do more than reveal the hierarchical dynamics behind good deeds. Perhaps they speak to a broader, if uneven, uncertainty that occurs when social prosperity is sought through discourses of humanitarianism and compassion. Just as the Turkish state's emphasis on harmonization might increase the precarity of migrants—by subjecting their material well-being to the whims of citizens—so, too, might it call attention to the instability experienced by Turkish citizens. As my ethnography demonstrated, labor encounters with migrants challenged Istanbul shopkeepers to locate or rediscover sources of authority in their own lives—whether in Niyazi's national identity or Ahmet's ethical principles. Perhaps these divergences could be analyzed to understand hospitable giving as a window into

the precarity of hosts as well, even as citizens consistently claim moral authority over their guests. When embedded in labor relations, hospitable giving does not simply align with the conventions or rituals of hospitality—or its expected outcomes. Rather, we might explore hospitable giving to migrants also as a genuine way of helping others while seeking some elusive sense of security for the self, thereby de-exceptionalizing the migrant as a precarious individual.

ABSTRACT

In Istanbul, shopkeepers frequently dispose of their paper and plastic waste by giving it to select migrant waste pickers. This article examines these waste donations as a novel form of hospitable giving in Turkey, a country that has hosted millions of irregular migrants and asylum seekers since 2011. By analyzing the mutual obligations these donations create and the diverse ways that shopkeepers justify helping migrants, the article argues that waste donations occur primarily when they enable shopkeepers to reproduce their moral authority over migrant waste pickers. In doing so, it explores two related issues: the consequences of the state's retreat from providing universal welfare opportunities to irregular migrants; and the embedding of migrant hospitality within service relations in a precarious urban economy. The article concludes by rethinking informal waste labor and host-guest dynamics through the lens of dependent relations. [hospitality; waste; migration; labor; moral authority; dependency; Turkey]

ÖZET

İstanbul'daki esnaflar, kâğıt ve plastik atıkları sıklıkla kendi seçtikleri yabancı kâğıt toplayıcılarına vererek bertaraf etmektedirler. Bu makale, 2011'den beri milyonlarca düzensiz mülteci ve sığınmacıya ev sahipliği yapan Türkiye'de, bu tür atık bağışlarını misafirperverliğin yeni bir şekli olarak incelemektedir. Atık bağışlarının yol açtığı karşılıklı yükümlülükleri ve esnafın yabancılara yardım etmeyi meşrulaştırma yolları analiz edilerek, bu tür bağışların öncelikle esnafın yabancı atık toplayıcıları üzerinde ahlaki otoritesini sağlayabildiği durumlarda gerçekleştiği ileri sürülmektedir. Bu doğrultuda, iki bağlantılı konu incelenmektedir: devletin düzensiz göçmenlere evrensel sosyal koruma sağlamaktan çekilmesinin sonuçları; ve hiçbir güvencesi olmayan sokak ekonomisinde faaliyet gösteren atık toplayıcılarıyla esnaf arasındaki misafirperverliğe dayalı hizmet ilişkilerinin doğurduğu etkiler. Makale, enformel atık işçiliği ve ev sahibi–misafir dinamiklerini, bağımlılık ilişkileri merceğinden yeniden gözleyerek sonuçlanmaktadır. [misafirperverlik; atık; göç; emek; ahlaki otorite; bağımlılık; Türkiye]

NOTES

Acknowledgments Thank you to my interlocutors and collaborators in Turkey, even if they are not quoted or discussed here, particularly my uncles Hayati and Harun for their assistance. I'd also like to express my gratitude to Andrew Sanchez, Yael Navaro, Andrea Muehlebach, Ekaterina Mizrokhi, Tim Burger, Kieran Way, Theo Hughes-Morgan, and Julia Perczel for their comments. Thank you to the anonymous reviewers for their sustained and helpful engagement with this article, and to the editorial collective and administrative team at *Cultural Anthropology*, with special mention to AbdouMaliq Simone. I presented earlier versions of this article at the Social Anthropology PhD Writing-Up seminar in Cambridge, led by Harri Englund and the EASA panel on "Economic Moralities" in Belfast, co-organized by Chelsie Yount and Stefan Leins, and I thank everyone who commented on the essay in those spaces as well.

1. I use *shopkeeper* as a translation of the Turkish *esnaf*, which denotes shopkeepers, craftspeople, and tradespeople and hence refers to a larger category of worker than the English term does.
2. Literally, "paper collectors."
3. A greeting that announces the speaker as a Muslim.

REFERENCES

Agier, Michel

2021 *The Stranger as My Guest: A Critical Anthropology of Hospitality*. Translated by Helen Morrison. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Alexander, Catherine, and Joshua Reno

2012 Introduction to *Economies of Recycling: The Global Transformation of Materials, Values, and Social Relations*, edited by Catherine Alexander and Joshua Reno, 1–32. London: Zed Books.

Alexander, Catherine, and Andrew Sanchez

2018 "Introduction: The Values of Indeterminacy." In *Indeterminacy: Waste, Value, and the Imagination*, edited by Catherine Alexander and Andrew Sanchez, 1–31. New York: Berghahn Books.

Alkan, Hilal

2021 "The Gift of Hospitality and the (Un)Welcoming of Syrian Migrants in Turkey." *American Ethnologist* 48, no. 2: 180–91. https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.13012

Allison, Anne

2012 "Ordinary Refugees: Social Precarity and Soul in 21st Century Japan." *Anthropological Quarterly* 85, no. 2: 345–70. https://doi.org/10.1353/anq.2012.0027

Baban, Feyzi, Suzan Ilcan, and Kim Rygiel

2017 "Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Pathways to Precarity, Differential Inclusion, and Negotiated Citizenship Rights." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 43, no. 1: 41–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1192996

Babül, Elif

2024 "Compulsory Guesthood, Social Cohesion, and the Politics of Hospitality in Turkey." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 30, no. 2: 379–98. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.14063

Badalič, Vasja

2023 "Trapped in the Underground Economy: Syrian Refugees in the Informal Labour Market in Turkey." *Third World Quarterly* 44, no. 5: 967–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2023.2170224

Ben-Yehoyada, Naor

2015 "'Follow Me, and I Will Make You Fishers of Men': The Moral and Political Scales of Migration in the Central Mediterranean." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 22, no. 1: 183–202. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.12340

Benthall, Jonathan

1999 "Financial Worship: The Quranic Injunction to Almsgiving." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5, no. 1: 27–42. https://doi.org/10.2307/2660961

Berg, Mette Louise, and Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh
2018 "Introduction to the Issue: Encountering Hospitality and Hostility." *Migration and Society: Advances in Research* 1, no. 1: 1–6. https://doi.org/10.3167/arms.2018.010102
Bryant, Rebecca, and Madeleine Reeves
2021 "Introduction: Toward an Anthropology of Sovereign Agency." In *The Everyday Lives of Sovereignty: Political Imagination beyond the State*, edited by Rebecca Bryant and Madeleine Reeves, 1–18. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
Butt, Waqas
2020 "Waste Intimacies: Caste and the Unevenness of Life in Urban Pakistan." *American Ethnologist* 47, no. 3: 234–48. https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12960
Cabot, Heath
2013 "The Social Aesthetics of Eligibility: NGO Aid and Indeterminacy in the Greek Asylum Process." *American Ethnologist* 40, no. 3: 452–66. https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12032
Candea, Matei
2012 "Derrida en Corse? Hospitality as Scale-Free Abstraction." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18, no. S1: 34–48. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2012.01759.x
Candea, Matei, and Giovanni da Col
2012 "The Return to Hospitality." *Journal of the Royal Anthropology Institute* 18, no. S1: 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2012.01757.x
Carpi, Estella, and H. Pınar Şenoğuz
2019 "Refugee Hospitality in Lebanon and Turkey: On Making 'the Other.'" *International Migration* 57, no. 2: 126–42. https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12471
Carrier, James
2018 "Moral Economy: What's in a Name?" *Anthropological Theory* 18, no. 1: 18–35. https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499617735259
Chauvin, Sébastien, and Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas
2012 "Beyond Informal Citizenship: The New Moral Economy of Migrant Illegality." *International Political Sociology* 6, no. 3: 241–59. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-5687.2012.00162.x
Dağtaş, Seçil
2017 "Whose Misafirs? Negotiating Difference along the Turkish-Syrian Border." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49, no 4: 661–79. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743817000642
Derrida, Jacques
2000 *Of Hospitality*. Translated by Rachel Bowlby. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
2005 *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michale Naas. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
Dinler, Demet
2016 "New Forms of Wage Labour and Struggle in the Informal Sector: The Case of Waste Pickers in Turkey." *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 10: 1834–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2016.1175934
Doherty, Jacob, and Kate Brown
2019 "Labor Laid Waste: An Introduction to the Special Issue on Waste Work." *International Labor and Working-Class History* 95: 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0147547919000048
Düvell, Franck
2018 "From Migration Transition to Integration Challenge." *New Perspectives on Turkey* 58: 179–200. https://doi.org/10.1017/npt.2018.5
Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip
2015 "Hiçbir Mazlumu Zalimin Pençesine Terk Etmedik ve Etmeyeceğiz" [We have not and we will not abandon any oppressed person to the clutches of the oppressor]. Talk at the Midyat Housing Shelter, June 20, 2015. Available at https://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/410/32769/hicbir-mazlumu-zalimin-pencesine-terk-etmedik-ve-etmeyecegiz

Fassin, Didier
2009 "Another Politics of Life is Possible." *Theory, Culture & Society* 26, no. 5: 44–60. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409106349
2012 *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*. Translated by Rachel Gomme. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Ferguson, James
2013 "Declarations of Dependence: Labour, Personhood, and Welfare in Southern Africa." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 19, no. 2: 223–42. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.12023
2021 *Presence and Social Obligation: An Essay on the Share*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.
Fikes, Keisha
2009 *Managing African Portugal: The Citizen-Migrant Distinction*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
Fredericks, Rosalind
2018 *Garbage Citizenship: Vital Infrastructures of Labor in Dakar, Senegal*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
George, Glynis, and Erika Borrelli
2024 "The Differential Inclusion of Migrant Farmworkers and the Landscape of Support in a Migrant-Intensive Region in Ontario, Canada." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 25: 529–52. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-023-01076-y
Godelier, Maurice
1999 *The Enigma of the Gift*. Translated by Nora Scott. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Halvorson, Britt
2018 *Conversionary Sites: Transforming Medical Aid and Global Christianity from Madagascar to Minnesota*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Harney, Nicholas DeMaria, and Paolo Boccagni
2023 "Calibrating Home, Hospitality, and Reciprocity." *Anthropological Theory* 23, no. 3: 313–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/14634996221118140
Humphrey, Caroline
2012 "Hospitality and Tone: Holding Patterns for Strangeness in Rural Mongolia." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18, no. S1: 63–75. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2012.01761.x
İçduygu, Ahmet, and Doğuş Şimşek
2016 "Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Towards Integration Policies." *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 15, no. 3: 59–69.
Katz, Irit
2022 "Camps by Design: Architectural Spectacles of Migrant Hospitality." *Incarceration* 3, no. 1: 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1177/26326663221084586
Koca, Burcu Toğral
2016 "Syrian Refugees in Turkey: From 'Guests' to 'Enemies'?" *New Perspectives on Turkey* 54: 55–75. https://doi.org/10.1017/npt.2016.4
Ledeneva, Aleyna
1998 *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking, and Informal Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Li, Tania Murray
2017 "The Price of Un/Freedom: Indonesia's Colonial and Contemporary Plantation Labor Regimes." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59, no. 2: 245–76. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417517000044
Millar, Kathleen
2018 *Reclaiming the Discarded: Life and Labor on Rio's Garbage Dump*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
Mittermaier, Amira
2014 "Bread, Freedom, Social Justice: The Egyptian Uprising and a Sufi Khidma." *Cultural Anthropology* 29, no. 1: 54–79. https://doi.org/10.14506/ca29.1.05
Muehlebach, Andrea
2012 *The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Nguyen, Minh T. N.
2019 *Waste and Wealth: An Ethnography of Labor, Value, and Morality in a Vietnamese Recycling Economy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Özden, Senay
2013 "Syrian Refugees in Turkey." MPC Research Report. Fiesole, Italy: Migration Policy Centre. https://hdl.handle.net/1814/29455
Parry, Jonathan
1986 "The Gift, the Indian Gift, and the 'Indian Gift.'" *Man* 21, no. 3: 453–73. https://doi.org/10.2307/2803096
Pickles, Anthony J.
2019 "Transfers: A Deductive Approach to Gifts, Gambles, and Economy at Large." *Current Anthropology* 61, no. 1: 11–29. https://doi.org/10.1086/706880
Pitt-Rivers, Julian
2012 [1977] "The Law of Hospitality." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2, no. 1: 501–17. https://doi.org/10.14318/hau2.1.022
2017 *From Hospitality to Grace: A Pitt-Rivers Omnibus*. Edited by Giovanni da Col and Andrew Shryock. Chicago: HAU Books.
Rabinowitz, Dan
1997 *Overlooking Nazareth: The Ethnography of Exclusion in Galilee*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Raheja, Gloria Goodwin
1988 *The Poison in the Gift: Ritual, Prestation, and the Dominant Caste in a North Indian Village*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Ramsay, Georgina
2020 "Humanitarian Exploits: Ordinary Displacement and the Political Economy of the Global Refugee Regime." *Critique of Anthropology* 40, no. 1: 3–27. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X19840417
Reno, Joshua
2015 *Waste Away: Working and Living with a North American Landfill*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Rosello, Mireille
2001 *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
Rozakou, Katerina
2012 "The Biopolitics of Hospitality in Greece: Humanitarianism and the Management of Refugees." *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 3: 562–77. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2012.01381.x
Shryock, Andrew
2012 "Breaking Hospitality Apart: Bad Hosts, Bad Guests, and the Problem of Sovereignty." *Journal of the Royal Anthropology Institute* 18, no.S1: 20–33. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2012.01758.x
Stamatopoulou-Robbins, Sophia
2020 *Waste Siege: The Life of Infrastructure in Palestine*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
Ticktin, Miriam
2011 *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt
2015 *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
Tuğal, Cihan
2021 "Turkey at the Crossroads?" *New Left Review* 127 (January-February): 25–54.
Weiner, Annette
1992 *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Yildirim, Kevin
2025 "The Denial of Moral Complexity: Accusations against Migrant Waste Pickers by Turkish Scrap Dealers in Istanbul." *Journal of Cultural Economy*. https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2025.2501979