

REFUGEES: WHAT DROVE THEM TO TURKEY?

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Introduction

This summer, from August to September, I made internship in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees –UNHCR- in the Durable Solutions Unit –DSU- Branch Office of Ankara. What I was responsible for was to write the summaries of the life stories of refugees who were waiting to be accepted by a resettlement country. The stories attracted my attention very much and I wanted to get involved into the issue much deeper through a research.

What I deal with through my research are the interviews of the asylum seekers. Those interviews are done by specially educated people in the UNHCR and the status of refugee is given according to those interviews' legal and credibility analysis. I will try to draw a general picture of the motives of those asylum seekers for coming –rather escaping- to Turkey.

Actually, due to the notion of confidentiality, it is not allowed to publicize or use the interviews. Yet, since I am not going to emphasize any names, personal information (occupation, age, family, relatives...), and/or identifying features, I took permission from the UNHCR office in Ankara for making such a research. Thus it is only possible to talk about the narratives in general terms, yet some quotations –again without identifying features which could introduce the individual- from the interviews will be used to tell the stories more remarkable and realistic.

Refugees or asylum seekers, who had come to Turkey, are of very different nationalities and coming from very different parts of the world. I chose three countries from where the majority of refugees are coming. These are Iran, Iraq, and Somalia. Of course the country-of-origins are not limited to three, but UNHCR in Ankara deals with the people from those three countries most.

Although I knew many cases by heart through my internship, I spent a few more days in the UNHCR Branch Office of Ankara to examine the files of the refugees from Iran, Iraq, and Somalia. From each country I looked over five files which were chosen randomly. Five may seem thimbleful, but I saw that they would be enough to give us a general understanding of the issue. I read their interviews and the legality and credibility analysis. Since giving any detail about the person is forbidden, I mostly focused on the story itself independently from the refugee.

It is not very easy to make categorizations among the motives of people regardless of their country of origins, thus looking at them within their own country groups would be better. Each country is peculiar in itself and this peculiarity affects people differently, still it is possible to have a look at the common and different points of the narratives. Such categorizations are better made in general terms. Consequently the main grouping occurs between the countries and then the individual narratives are examined within those groups. When all the groupings and examinations are done, it would be easier to analyze the similarities and the differences in the motives of the people.

Additionally, since I am dealing with the people who had come to Turkey, Turkey needs specific attention. Looking at the position of Turkey in the world in terms of the refugees, Turkey is seen as a unique case. This uniqueness comes both from the law –in the sense of the legal procedure which is applied to the asylum seekers and, related with this, from the geographical position of the country –in the sense that it is like a transit point.

Consequently, taking refugees and asylum seekers into consideration, I will try to draw a general picture of Turkey on those issues and emphasize the distinctiveness of the situation. The number of the refugees or asylum seekers coming to Turkey each year and the way Turkey deals with them are significant since they constitute important debates in the adaptation process of Turkey to the European Union.

General Information

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was founded in 1950 by the General Assembly of UN in the purpose of providing help and protection to the refugees. UNHCR was authorized to regulate and lead the international movements made to protect the refugees universally and to solve the problems of refugees.

The 1951 Convention (also called The Refugee Convention or Geneva Convention) relating to the status of the refugees is the key legal document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of the states. The 1967 Protocol (also called New York Protocol), additionally, removed geographical and temporal restrictions from the Convention.

The Convention applies to the refugees who are only the concern of UNHCR, i.e. the refugees who are the concern of UN agencies other than UNHCR are not covered in the Convention (UNHCR, Convention and Protocol: 6). For example, refugees from Palestine who are the concern of UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and refugees who are of equivalent position with the nationals in the country of refuge are not applied the Convention.

The most important shortage of the Convention is about the limits of its scope. It covers the people who become refugees as a result of the events occurring before 1 January 1951. To compensate this shortage, the 1967 Protocol, by which all the refugees were covered according to the definition of the refugee in the Convention but without limit of date, was signed.

As of 1 November 2007, there are 141 states parties to both the Convention and the Protocol (UNHCR, State Parties: 1). It is not an obligation to be a party to both, states can be parties to one of them as well. Article 1 of the Convention cover the events either “occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951” or “occurring in Europe or elsewhere before 1 January

1951” and each state shall make a declaration at the time of signature, ratification or accession to specify which of the meanings it applies.

Turkey ratified the Convention in 1962 and acceded the Protocol in 1968. At the time of ratifying the Convention, Turkey declared that it adopted the geographical limitation that it is of concern of the events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951. Turkey maintained its declaration upon accession of the Protocol. As of 1 March 2006, Turkey is one of the four countries (others; Congo, Madagascar, and Monaco) that still maintain this geographical reservation (UNHCR, Declarations and Reservations to the Convention: 1).

Turkey’s reservation can be expressed as; it applies the Convention only to the people who have become refugees as a result of the events occurring in Europe and no provision of the Convention may be interpreted as giving rights greater than those of Turkish citizens in Turkey (UNHCR, Declarations and Reservations to the 1967 Protocol: 4). The geographic side of this reservation makes Turkey different from many other countries in the sense of the legal procedure that is applied to the asylum seekers.

General Picture of Turkey

The current system in Turkey is mostly about the functioning of the UNHCR Branch Office of Ankara mostly. The applications of the asylum seekers, coming from elsewhere other than Europe, are examined both by the Ministry of Interior and the UNHCR. When an application is made, the asylum seeker is called for registration. After registration, the interview stage comes, yet asylum seekers sometimes have to wait for years for those interviews. The interviews are done by specially educated people, preferably by the nationals of the asylum seekers.

Those interviews are very significant in the process of recognition as a refugee. The asylum seeker tells his/her story, i.e. what made him/her flee, and those claims are analyzed

by the legal department. The Ministry of Interior also approves the decision of giving refugee status; usually it agrees with the UNHCR's decisions. If the applicant is found credible and has a well-founded fear of prosecution in accordance with the definition of refugee in the Convention, he/she is recognized as a refugee.

After recognition, another period begins for the refugee. Non Europeans, who are recognized as refugees under UNHCR's mandate, are provided temporary protection by Turkey, but pending resettlement by UNHCR. Resettlement is therefore the only durable solution available and the only protection tool for the non-European refugees in Turkey. Meanwhile, between the time of recognition and the time of resettlement months or years can pass, unfortunately. While waiting for the acceptance by a resettlement country, the refugees stay in the *satellite cities* of which there are 26 nearby Ankara. Usually UNHCR and some other local or national NGOs help those refugees in the satellite cities.

The acceptance by the resettlement countries is not fixed. The countries, their quotas, or the origin of the refugees going there can and does change permanently. Those issues are determined by negotiations between countries. In general, Turkey sends the refugees to the USA, Canada, Finland, and Australia. Each country has its own domestic policies to deal with these refugees. USA for example, provides pre-departure cultural orientation, after departure language, vocational trainings, and free health care. Canada, as well, provides temporary accommodation and language, employment, orientation programs. Similarly, Australia supplies short-term accommodation, education, health services, orientation to the society, and employment opportunities. Lastly, Finland provides hired apartments that are directly assigned to the refugees in addition to language, education, and employment programs. (UNHCR Handbook)

These are the general policies of those countries that are applied in a short-term after the arrival. These programs can only be starting points for refugees; the rest is up to them.

Whether finding a job, integrating into the society or become isolated is somehow related to the refugee him/herself. Of course, in addition to the state's and the refugee's role, there is the effect of the society playing a role as inclusive or exclusive.

While this is the current procedure in Turkey, it is necessary to have a look at the European Union's legislation about asylum since asylum is an issue of debate between Turkey and European Union. First of all, there is the Dublin Convention which was signed in 1990 yet came into force in 1997. Dublin Convention is an EU law in the aim of streamlining the application process for asylum seekers under the Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol. Article 2 of this convention states that: "the Member States reaffirm their obligations under Geneva Convention, as amended by New York Protocol, with no geographic restriction of the scope of these instruments, and their commitment to co-operating with the services of UNHCR in applying these instruments (EU, Dublin Convention).

Later in Tampere European Council 1999 there was a call for the development of a common EU policy on the issues of asylum and migration. It is stated that "The European Council reaffirms the importance the Union and Member States attach to absolute respect of the right to seek asylum. It has agreed to work towards establishing a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), based on the full and inclusive application of the Geneva Convention..." and additionally that EU must ensure fair treatment of third country nationals who reside legally on the territory of its Member states (UNHCR, Asylum and Migration Legislation).

When it comes to CEAS, it is still in the process of establishment, yet there are important steps in the foundation of such a system. What is obvious is that EU does not want to create a new norm on the issue of asylum other than UN system. CEAS is introduced as a system which will adopt the Geneva Convention and 1967 Convention. Accordingly, it is clear that in spite of some regulations within members, the main point is the UN system. In

other words, EU is in the effort of creating a harmony of the policies on asylum among its members and this effort has nothing to do with a new system other than the UN's.

When it comes to Turkey, the geographic reservation of Turkey would break this harmony since none of the EU members has such a reservation. Thus there is an effort to make some major changes in Turkey's system. Related to the developments through the accession to European Union and for the fulfillment of the legislative obligation to the European Union and the Member States, Turkish Government undersigned the Accession Partnership Document of 2001 (UNHCR, Asylum and Migration Legislation). In the light of this, Turkish Government follows a National Program for the adaptation of the EU legislation.

There are a number of regulations about the legal/illegal migration, asylum seekers, and refugees. Creating institutions with educated personnels specified on the issues of migration and/or asylum and improved border checks to be able to check legal/illegal migration are just some of them. Yet the most important of those is the one which requires Turkey to remove its geographic reservation. Removing the reservation means that resettlement of the non-European refugees to third countries would not be the obligatory durable solution.

When the reservation is removed, Turkey becomes under the responsibility of settling refugees in its own territories. Consequently there has to be new mechanisms or developments to provide those refugees some vital and necessary tools; such as health care, adaptation programs, and accommodation. Thus, the functioning or realization of the National Program means a lot for Turkey in economic, political, and social terms.

The requirements of the program are being fulfilled step by step. It has begun with the education of officers in the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs by professors –usually from the UNHCR- on conducting interviews, for example. When all the requirements are done, the role of UNHCR as a unit for recognition and resettlement of the

refugees would fall off. Anyway, for now, it is the UNHCR who is the most effective organ in the recognition and resettlement of the non-European refugees.

Since Turkey is at a strategic point in the sense of the ways to Middle East and Africa, it plays an important role for the refugees coming from those places. Looking at the 2006 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook, it can be seen that between the years 1997 and 2006 Asia and Africa were the major nationalities of refugees resettled by UNHCR (UNHCR, 2006 Statistical Yearbook). It is also true for Turkey, almost all of the asylum seekers/refugees come from those regions every year.

In 2006, UNHCR submitted 54,200 refugees for resettlement consideration by states. This figure shows an increase of 15% compared with the 2005 total number of resettlement. 84 UNHCR country offices were engaged in the resettlement process and Turkey was one of them. The largest number of refugees resettled with UNHCR assistance departed from Kenya (6,200), Thailand (4,200), Egypt (2000), Turkey (1,600), and the United Republic of Tanzania (1,600). (UNHCR, 2006 Statistical Yearbook)

Comparing 2007 with 2006, we have some changes in the asylum requests. The major asylum-seeker receiving countries of the 2006 show a decrease: Austria from 13,350 to 11,880 (-11%), Germany from 21,030 to 19,160 (-9%), France from 30,750 to 29,160 (-5%), and the United States of America from 51,880 to 49,170 (-5%). Conversely, major increases were recorded: Greece from 12,270 to 25,110 (+105%), Turkey from 4,550 to 7,640 (+68%), Poland from 4,430 to 7,120 (+61%), Sweden from 24,320 to 36,210 (+49%), Spain from 5,300 to 7,460 (+41%), Italy from 10,350 to 14,050 (+35%), and Canada from 22,910 to 29,160 (+24%). (UNHCR, Asylum Levels and Trends 2007)

Those differences show themselves in the ranking of countries according to asylum applications. United States was in the first place with a number of 49,170 followed by Sweden (36,210), France (29,160), Canada (28,340), United Kingdom (27,900), Greece (25,110),

Germany (19,160), Italy (14,050), Austria (11,880), and Belgium (11,120). Turkey is not included in top ten; with a number of 7,640 it takes the 12th place. If we look at the origin of asylum seekers compared to 2006; Iraq takes the first place with a number of 45,247 (+98%) followed by China from 18,400 to 17,141 (-9%), Russian Federation from 15,734 to 18,781 (+19%), Serbia from 15,744 (referring to Serbia and Montenegro) to 15,366 (referring to Serbia only), Pakistan from 7,620 to 14,262 (+87%), Somalia from 8,007 to 11,487 (+43%), Islamic Republic of Iran from 10,649 to 8,627 (-17%), Afghanistan from 8,657 to 9,309 (+8%), Mexico from 6,760 to 9,545 (+41%), and Turkey from 8,702 to 6,814 (-22%). (UNHCR, Asylum Levels and Trends 2007)

Yet when Turkey is considered, at the beginning of 2007 there were 2,633 refugees, 6,219 asylum seekers, and 306 others of concern of UNHCR (such as stateless or internally displaced people) in Turkey. At the end of the year, the number of refugees increased to 6,956, the number of asylum seekers decreased to 5,189, and the number of the others remained the same. Talking about the numbers at the end of the year; 3,662 of the total number were Iraqi, 2,148 were Iranian, and 668 were Somali (UNHCR, 2007 Statistics for Turkey).

As it is clear from those statistics, these three countries –Iraq, Iran, and Somalia- are the major hosts of refugees, asylum seekers, and others of concern for Turkey. That is why I chose the three for my research. As I have mentioned above, I examined five files from each country. My files were enough to represent the general position that among those 15 files nearly all of the reasons or motives for escaping could be seen. Of course there occur specific and unique cases; yet if we are taking in general, five files from each country, 15 in total, will be enough for the research.

Examination of the Narratives

It should be mentioned once more here that due to the notion of confidentiality, I am not permitted to give any names or any personal information such as age, family... Moreover, any detail about the cases such as dates or names of the places is not allowed to be used in this research. Since the security of the refugees is of utmost importance, there is no possibility to give any identifying information about the person or his/her claim.

Beginning with the files from Iraq, Iq-1, who was a Christian, was called by the Security and investigated about if (s)he had any affiliations with any political party. Then the Security wanted the Iq-1 to accompany them by gathering information about other people. (S)he refused to do this and to avoid any possible harm to could come to Iq-1 and the family, Iq-1 fled to Turkey. (S)he describes the reason of escaping as “I was not free, I was a persecuted person. I was not feeling myself as if I was in my own country.” Consequently, in accordance with the statement of legal analysis; “There is a reasonable likelihood that the Applicant’s life may be harmed. While the failure of state protection is a general problem in Iraq, the members of the Applicant’s community are particularly vulnerable to killings and kidnappings based on discriminatory reasons.”, Iq-1 was recognized as a refugee on the ground of religion.

Iq-2 has a similar case with the Iq-1 in the sense that (s)he is a Christian which makes him/her a member of the minority. There were attempts to make the Iq-2 convert to Islam and one day (s)he was punished because of expression of the ideas about religion. The authorities wanted to make use of the Iq-2 as a spy against a political party then the family decided to make the Iq-2 flee Iraq. The applicant tells the situation as “I was feeling as if I was a burden on the society.” Again, this was a case recognized on account of religion and additionally imputed political opinion since there is a possibility that on the basis of religious status, (s)he could be deprived of civil as well as social rights recognized under ICCPR (International

Convention on Civil and Political Rights) as well as ICESCR (International Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights).

Iq-3 was questioned a few times because of the spouse's relations with a political party. After the spouse's death, the applicant decided to leave Iraq and arrived in Turkey. Yet, the applicant began to take threats from the family members due to his/her relations in Turkey; "My mother called me and told me that my brothers are preparing passports to come and kill me." As it is stated in the legal analysis, honor killings are very widespread in Iraq and additionally the applicant cannot have protection under law since there is no protection about women's rights. Consequently, Iq-3 was recognized as a refugee on the ground of membership of a particular social group.

Iq-4, who is a Christian, got in trouble with the sheikh due to some issues about his/her job. The sheikh wasn't pleased about the applicant's acts. The tribesmen bothered not only the applicant but also the family. (S)he describes the situation as "He is the head of a branch of the tribe. They can do anything to you, I did not want to face more problems...I even was ready to leave everything." As a result of this fear, the applicant escaped to Turkey and (s)he was recognized as a refugee on account of membership of a particular social group since Christian minority is subjected to tribal reprisal in Iraq where the tribes have gained increased power and relevance in the daily lives of ordinary Iraqis because of the new Iraqi authorities' failure to establish the rule of law.

Lastly, Iq-5 is an Assyrian who had a relationship with a friend from work. Once the relationship was to be known, the friend's brothers threatened the applicant to marry. Yet the first must was to convert him to Islam. In the applicant's words: "He said 'Either you become a Muslim and marry her or we will kill you'." As a result of those threats and the indefensible situation of the minorities in Iraq, the applicant decided to leave Iraq. Iq-5 was recognized as a refugee due to his membership of a particular social group.

The second group of refugees of concern here are the ones who had come from Iran. Ir-1 is a Baha'i who had married to a Muslim person. Since Baha'i community in Iran is discriminated against very much by the religious circles almost in all aspects of the social life, this marriage attracted much attention from the Muslim spouse's family who were religious people as well. The family continued to put pressure on their child to divorce the applicant unless the applicant converts to Islam. In such a situation the family may act as an agent of persecution and they threatened the Ir-1 in way that "I told them I liked my religion and my spouse. I was beaten up. I fainted. They said the next time they will kill me if I do not decide." Consequently (s)he left Iran and was recognized as a refugee on the ground on religion.

Ir-2 is a Sunni Kurd who one day helped a young man who protesting the elections in the country in a group. After this incidence, the officers began to question about the event; who was the helping person. Considering the poor human rights situation in Iran and the circumstances of the incident of the protest, the applicant's act of helping a person who was fleeing from the Authorities will very likely be perceived by the government as an act of opposition and thus (s)he decided to leave Iran. Ir-2 was recognized as a refugee on the ground of imputed political opinion.

Ir-3 is a Baha'i who had faced many atrocities from the non-Baha'is. (S)he was not allowed to continue university education and moreover (s)he had many difficulties in finding a job and even if (s)he managed to find a job (s)he could not get the salary. The applicant's family was mistreated as well. The spouse could not get the salary and their child was harassed at school both by the teachers and the students. According to Article 13 of the Iranian Constitution, Iranian Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians are the only recognized religious minorities, who within the limits of law are free to carry out their religious rites and practice their religion in personal status and religious education (Iranian Constitution, 1979).

Under such conditions, the life became very hard for the applicant and (s)he decided to leave Iran. Ir-3 was recognized as a refugee on account of religion.

Ir-4 is of Assyrian ethnicity and is a Christian. Due to their faith, the applicant and the family faced problems. One member of the family was forced to convert to Islam and when refused, (s)he was dismissed from job. The authorities were bothering them and the applicant could not bear this situation any more. (S)he describes the things they experience as “There is no rule in the country. They have no mercy. Minorities are not considered as human.” Having been seriously scared of lack of life security, Ir-4 decided to leave Iran and was recognized as a refugee on the grounds of religion and nationality.

The last case from Iran is about a homosexual. Ir-5 was arrested and detained by the Authorities because of his attending to activities to which only males were invited. Once the applicant’s relationship with the partner was to be known, the applicant heard that the partner was detained and the Authorities were looking for the applicant. The applicant was afraid of being mistreated since the Iranian law provides for punishment in such a case with the imposition of a lashing sentence or even death penalty. The applicant describes fear as “I am afraid because when I was in Iran some people were lashed and two were hanged.” Thus Ir-5 decided to flee Iran and was recognized as a refugee on account of his membership of a particular social group.

The third group of refugees is the Somalis. S-1 belongs to a small clan the members of which are not observed as Somalis since they are assumed to be dark-skinned. The applicant together with the family had been facing many difficulties due to their clan. The life was becoming more and more difficult by time, for example; people from the majority clan wanted the applicant’s family to pay “protection money” in order to be able to continue staying in their home. Since they could not pay this money, the applicant’s three family members were killed. S-1 was kidnapped, beaten, and used as a sex-slave. The applicant

managed to escape from the men and was smuggled to Turkey since there is no state protection for such a person who is from a small clan and has no other person to look after him/her. S-1 was recognized as a refugee on the grounds of membership of a particular social group –ethnic origin and race –minority group.

S-2 belongs to a small tribe, yet (s)he has some relatives who belong to a majority tribe. The family of the S-2 and the relatives disputed about the inheritance and the applicant's family refused to give them the inheritance. The relatives together with other men from their majority tribe murdered all the family in their home when the applicant was out home. Since (s)he assumes that they would want to get rid of the whole family; "As there is one left they cannot take the money.", (s)he is in danger. There is a reasonable likelihood that the applicant will be targeted by the relatives and moreover (s)he cannot get protection from the authorities in Somalia due to the lack of a central authority. Consequently, S-2 was smuggled to Turkey and was recognized as a refugee on account of race.

S-3 is a member of a small tribe and an urchin. (S)he claims that "I really do not know who I am. You are the first person to think I am Somali." The applicant was kidnapped by the majority tribesmen due to having a lighter skin. During each of those kidnappings, the applicant was mistreated. Moreover, (s)he was humiliated by the other children because of skin color and being an orphan. He describes his situation as; "This is not my wrong. I was born like this. It is not my choice. Somalis mistreat me and exclude me because of my color. They do not see me as Somali." Thus (s)he decided to leave Somalia and was smuggled to Turkey. S-3 was recognized as a refugee on the ground of being a member of a particular social group.

S-4 is a member of a small clan. During a dispute between the applicant's family and the family of the business partner, a member from the business partner's family was killed accidentally. Subsequently, members of the applicant's family were killed by the other family.

As it is stated in the legal analysis; “The lack of a central government in the case of Somalia is at the root of the problem for the applicant.” Under such circumstances the applicant would be seriously harmed or killed by the members of the majority clans. Thus (s)he decided to leave Somalia and was smuggled to Turkey where (s)he was recognized as a refugee on the grounds of nationality –belonging to minority ethnic group.

The latest case is about an applicant who belongs to a minority clan and was living in a majority clan controlled area. Since S-5 did not fulfill what a man from the majority clan wanted from him/her, their house was invaded by the man together with some other majority clan men. A member of the applicant’ family was killed. S-5 was afraid of being kidnapped, raped, or killed since there is a real likelihood of those things due to the lack of effective state from where the applicant could expect protection. Moreover, kidnapping, raping, or killing is the violation of the applicant’s non-derogable human rights. Thus S-5 had a well-founded fear of persecution and was recognized as a refugee on accounts of race and membership of a particular social group.

As it is seen from the files, the countries in themselves have similar cases. The Iraqis usually left their country due to political or religious reasons. Either having a relation with a political party which is assumed to be acting against the state or belonging to a religious minority group made those people flee. Acting against the state is a major crime for the state and moreover there is no tolerance for the non-Muslims in the country, thus for those people there is a certain persecution.

The Iranians on the other hand, make up a different aspect. Religion, especially the Baha’i cases constitute most of the claims. Since Baha’is are not recognized under law, they are subject to every kind of persecution in the society by non-Baha’is. For example, they are not allowed to continue their university education or they cannot get their salaries and additionally they face people’s harassments and mistreatments. Another set of claims comes

form the homosexual cases. Since in Iran homosexual relationships are considered as sin and cannot be accepted by the society, those people suffer much. Then, the Iranian files mostly compose of refugees on the grounds of religion and membership of a particular social group.

The most homogenous group is the Somalis, it is clear. Almost all the cases are about inter-clan disputes and the persecutions that are faced by the minority clan members. Additionally, the lack of a central state authority worsens the situation for those persecuted people. Whether the event is a killing or kidnapping, the main actors are the same: on one side the men from majority clan and on the other side the men from the minority clan with almost no claim or right against the other powerful people. Consequently, Somalis become refugees on the grounds of membership of a particular social group and race (nationality).

When the refugees are considered regardless of their country-of-origins, drawing common motives for their escapes becomes more difficult. However, it is possible to come with a common point behind their escapes. Those cases represent identity based discrimination in its extreme situations. Some are discriminated against due to their religion, some are due to their social status and some are due to their ethnic origin. Regardless of the deep cause of this discrimination, it is seen that the main source of the persecution is people's identities. However, the agents of the persecution vary from country to country; in Iraq the main agent is the state whereas in Iran state mostly makes persecution against those people and in Somalia the leaders or members of the majority clans occur as the main agents of persecution.

Moreover, the issue of refugees has a theoretical importance as well. The refugees show us how the meanings of identities can be exaggerated and the extreme example of what happens when we do not tolerate identity differences and diversities. Thus the issue of refugees forces us to think about how different identities can live together and how to handle

differences in a democratic regime since such persecutions exist in the so-called democratic countries. Additionally, what kind of a mindset it means to impatience of differences.

There are two main sets of differences of identity: first, differences of identity which are embedded in power relations and second, differences of identity which do not directly correspond with power. In the first category, it is quite understandable why people cannot tolerate differences. Since the differences between them also create their power relations, the “superior” people do not want to respond to the “inferior”s demand for equality. Since there is a direct relation between identity and power, it is more difficult to tolerate differences. Caste system, slavery in the US, and the situation of Muslims and non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire can be counted as examples of such identity differences and the difficulty to tolerate them.

The second category can be separated into two sub-groups within itself. In the first group, we see people with identities which are unquestioned and indoctrinated into minds. Difference in this case is seen as diversion from a subconscious or unconscious norm. Thus difference forces you to question about your identity. Yet, people tend to escape from questioning –meeting differences- therefore do not want to see the differences or tolerate them. There is a fear of losing their identity. The women’s fear of gays can be an example of this case. Gays threaten the norms about the profile of men and women in women’s minds and urge them to think.

In the other group, we have the vulnerable identities. In this case, different identities – majority identity versus minority identity- are at the same level (no power relations or superiority among them), but the minority identity threatens the basic principles of majority identity. Since it is a vulnerable identity and not a conscious identity, constituent principles of your identity are challenged. Therefore there is the fear that any questioning of it is going to break it up. Again we see a fear of losing the identity. The cases of Baha’is in Iran against the

Muslims are good examples for this group. Additionally, the manhood's fear from the homosexuality is another example. Since the homosexuals can challenge the basic principle of the manhood in their minds, they escape from questioning about the differences. Then the question is "How to handle those differences?".

Conclusion

Refugees by themselves make up an important issue for Turkey. It is important since the legislation about the refugees play an important role in the process of membership to EU. Moreover, the motives of the people for coming to Turkey should be taken into consideration while new institutions or adaptation programs are being set. After removing the geographical reservation, such institutions and programs will be very significant. Thus we should know what kind of people with what kind of life stories and motives come to Turkey in order to seek asylum. Only then, i.e. making an effort to meet the needs of refugees, to make a better life for them, the purpose and the meaning of settlement of the refugees could be fulfilled.

Coming back to the question I have asked above, an egalitarian regime where the identity based differences are no longer power based differences and there is politically, economically, socially, and culturally equality can be solution to this situation. Moreover, there should be the possibility to negotiate and discuss the identity differences transparently. If we do not leave identities unquestioned, they would not become vulnerable identities rather they would become conscious.

With the freedom of speech about those identities, we can have a rational debate of identities. There is the truth that the more they are questioned the stronger they become because seeing the differences and questioning about our own identity would strengthen our minds and identities. Then open society and open public debate make up a way to handle the differences and to learn how to live together with them.

All in all, in this paper, I have tried to draw a general picture about Turkey's current situation on the issue of refugees and about the motives of refugees who had come to Turkey, namely coming from Iraq, Iran, and Somalia. Additionally the theoretical importance of the topic that is thinking about the reasons of impatience towards identity differences and how to handle those differences has been mentioned. Yet, the focus was on the refugees' motives as the extreme cases of identity based discrimination and on the legal procedure in which they are involved in Turkey. In other words, this research in terms of the case analysis is limited to Turkey and to the first episode –recognition and resettlement- of the evolution of refugees.

The second episode should be about the situation of refugees in the post-resettlement period. What do those people do in their resettlement countries? How do they manage to keep the pot boiling? Are they happy in their new countries? How does society act against them? Those are questions to be answered in a further research which would look at the lives of the refugees after resettlement. This is another topic which is quite important and such a research would make us able to understand the whole evolution of the refugees.

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