

CITIZENSHIP AND IDENTITY IN TURKEY:
THE CASE OF THE POST-1980 TURKISH-MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS FROM MACEDONIA

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ABSTRACT

This study traces the relationship between citizenship and identity in Turkey through analyzing the narratives and experiences of the post-1980 Turkish-Muslim immigrants from Macedonia. It inquires the ways in which the immigrants define their identity, rationalize their migration to Turkey, make their claims to citizenship, and narrate their interactions with the locals.

The research reveals that the Turkish-Muslim immigrants from Macedonia have migrated to Turkey and have made a claim to citizenship on the grounds that they are Turks and Muslims, and that Turkey is their original ‘homeland’. Yet, even though being Turkish and Muslim end up constituting the basic parameters of citizenship in Turkey above and beyond the claims of ‘civic citizenship’, paradoxically these two parameters define the very grounds on which these immigrants are marginalized in Turkey. They are treated as ‘foreigners’ because for the local population, they are ‘converts to Islam’, even ‘infidels’ (‘gavurs’) and are not Turks but ‘Albanians’.

In response to this, it is argued that the immigrants ironically respond within the same essentialist paradigm by ‘re-articulating’ their ethnic and religious identity along ‘genuineness’ as ‘pure’ and ‘unmixed’ and positing it in contrast to an ‘impure’ and ‘mixed’ identity that the locals hold both in ethnic and religious terms. Moreover, the immigrants emphasize their ‘European’ experience and identity in order to differentiate themselves from the locals. Therefore it is argued that in the self-narratives of the

immigrants, there is a double and paradoxical process of articulation and construction of identity through sameness with and difference from the locals simultaneously.

Revealing the contestations over the definitions of ‘genuine’ Turkishness and Muslimness between the immigrants and the locals; this thesis argues that Turkishness and Muslimness that are constructed and articulated on ‘genuineness’ are the main points of reference in the definition and the imaginary of the ‘proper citizen’ within the narratives of the immigrants as well as in the reactions of the locals in Turkey.

Key words: citizenship, identity, immigration, Turkishness, Muslimness, narrative

TÜRKİYE’DE VATANDAŞLIK VE KİMLİK:
1980 SONRASI MAKEDONYA’DAN GELEN TÜRK-MÜSLÜMAN GÖÇMENLER ÖRNEĞİ

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KISA ÖZET

Bu çalışma 1980 sonrası Makedonya’dan gelen Türk-Müslüman göçmenlerin anlatılarının ve deneyimlerinin analizi üzerinden Türkiye’deki vatandaşlık ve kimlik ilişkisinin izini sürmektedir. Bu tez göçmenlerin kimliklerini tanımlama, Türkiye’ye göçlerini açıklama, vatandaşlığa hak iddia etme ve yerellerle olan etkileşimlerini anlatma şekillerini araştırmaktadır.

Araştırma ortaya çıkarmaktadır ki Makedonya’dan gelen Türk-Müslüman göçmenler Türkiye’ye göç etmelerinin ve vatandaşlığa hak iddia etmelerinin esası olarak Türk ve Müslüman olmalarını ve Türkiye’nin orijinal ‘anavatan’ları olmasını göstermektedirler. Fakat, tüm sivik vatandaşlık iddialarının üzerinde ve ötesinde, Türk ve Müslüman olmak Türkiye’deki vatandaşlığın temel parametrelerini oluşturuyor olmasına rağmen, paradoksal bir biçimde bu iki parametre bu göçmenlerin Türkiye’de marjinalleşmesinin zeminini belirlemektedir. Göçmenlere ‘yabancı’ olarak muamele edilmektedir çünkü yereller için onlar ‘dönme’dirler ve hatta ‘gavur’durlar ve Türk değil ‘Arnavut’turlar.

Göçmenlerin, buna yanıt olarak ironik bir biçimde kendi etnik ve dini kimliklerini, ‘hakikilik’ üzerinden, ‘saf’ ve ‘karışmamış’ olarak yeniden ifade ettikleri ve bu kimliği yerellerin sahip olduğu ‘saf olmayan’ ve ‘karışmış’ bir etnik ve dini kimliğe karşı konumlandıkları ve böylelikle göçmenlerin yerellere aynı özsel paradigma içerisinden karşılık verdikleri öne sürülmüştür. Bundan başka, göçmenler kendilerini

yerellerden ayırt etmek için ‘Avrupa’ deneyimlerini ve ‘Avrupalı’ kimliklerini vurgulamaktadırlar. Bu nedenle, göçmenlerin öz-anlatılarında yerellerle aynılık ve yerellerden farklılık olarak tanımlayabileceğimiz ikili ve paradoksal bir kimlik ifade ve inşa sürecinin eşzamanlı olarak işlediği öne sürülmektedir.

‘Hakiki’ Türklük ve Müslümanlık tanımlamaları üzerine göçmenler ve yereller arasındaki çekişmeleri ortaya çıkararak bu tez ‘hakikilik’ üzerine inşa ve ifade edilen Türklük ve Müslümanlığın göçmenlerin anlatılarında ve yerellerin tepkilerinde yeralan ‘makbul vatandaş’ın tanımında ve tahayyülündeki ana referans noktaları olduğu ileri sürülmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: vatandaşlık, kimlik, göç, Türklük, Müslümanlık, anlatı

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For two immigrant women: my dearest mother and grandmother

THE CASE OF THE POST-1980 TURKISH-MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS FROM MACEDONIA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about tracing the relationship between citizenship and identity in Turkey through analyzing the narratives (and the experiences) of the post-1980 Turkish-Muslim immigrants from Macedonia. My aim is to look at the ways in which the immigrants make their claims to citizenship and, in close relation to this, the ways in which they define ‘Turkishness’ and ‘Muslimness’.

By studying the narratives of the immigrants on themselves (their identities), their migration, their experiences prior to and after the migration and their interactions with the local population, I will try to follow the ways in which the immigrants as well as the locals make sense of citizenship and the ways in which the definitions over Turkishness and Muslimness are being constructed and contested in Turkey.

The case of Macedonian immigrants is novel because of the paradoxical nature of their experiences in Turkey. These immigrants have migrated to Turkey and have made a claim to citizenship on the grounds that they are Turks and Muslims. They see Turkey as their original ‘homeland’ dating back to Ottoman times. Yet, these claims became the very foundation on which they are discriminated as the local Turkish population came to view the immigrants’ claimed identities as Turks and Muslims with suspicion. They

are treated as ‘foreigners’ because in the eyes of the local Turks they are ‘converts to Islam’, even ‘gavurs’ (infidels), and are not Turks but ‘Albanians’.

Ironically, I will argue that the immigrants respond to these claims within the same essentialist paradigm by ‘re-articulating’ their ethnic and religious identity as ‘pure’ and ‘unmixed’ and positing it in contrast to an ‘impure’ and ‘mixed’ identity that the locals hold both in ethnic and religious terms. Hence, I will argue that in the self-narratives of the immigrants, there is a double and paradoxical process of articulation and construction of identity through sameness and difference at the same time.

Moving from the contestations over the definitions of Turkishness and Muslimness between the immigrants and the locals; and the immigrants’ effort of re-locating their identity vis-à-vis the locals through difference; I will try to demonstrate how these contestations over Turkishness and Muslimness are linked to the imaginary of the ‘proper’ citizen. It will provide us an insight into the extent to which Turkishness and Muslimness defines and determines who the ‘proper’ citizen is in Turkey. I will argue that Turkishness and Muslimness that are constructed and articulated on ‘genuineness’ are the main points of reference in the definition of the ‘proper citizen’ within the narratives of immigrants.

The Relationship between Citizenship and Identity

Contrary to the widespread theoretical dichotomy that classifies the citizenship as a ‘universal’ and identity as a ‘particular’ category (İşin and Wood, 1999, p.14); in this thesis I will try to show the inapplicability of this theorization by arguing that the immigrants’ claims to citizenship and the ways in which they are marginalized by the

locals are intimately linked to essentialist definitions and constructions of Turkish-Muslim identity.

The theory of citizenship -constructed as a universal category- is primarily developed by T. H. Marshall who basically defines the institution of citizenship as a contractual relationship between the state and the citizen (Turner, 1993, p.7). Marshall's classical catalog which is composed of civil, political, and social rights reflects the cumulative logic of struggles for the expansion of democracy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. "Civil rights" arise with the birth of the absolutist state and involve basically the rights to the protection of life, liberty, and property; the right to freedom of conscience; and certain associational rights. "Political rights" in the narrow sense refer to the rights of self-determination, to hold and to run for office, to enjoy freedom of speech and opinion, and to establish political and nonpolitical associations, including a free press and free institutions of science and culture. "Social rights" are last in Marshall's catalog because they have been achieved historically through the struggles of the workers', women's, and other social movements of the last two centuries. Social rights include the right to form trade unions as well as other professional and trade associations; health-care rights, unemployment compensation, old-age pensions, child care, housing and educational subsidies, and so on. (Benhabib, 2002, p.97).

This theorization of citizenship as a mere and contractual relationship working on the level of mutual rights and obligations between the state and the citizens gives the concept a homogeneous, undifferentiated and universal character. For this reason, critiques mainly focus on the variables such as class, race, ethnicity and gender that are downplayed in his work (Altorki, 2000, p.217). These critiques contributed to the development of the concept beyond this mere legal definition.

Işın and Wood state that “citizenship, despite modern, universalist rhetoric, has always been a ‘group’ concept – but it has never been expanded to all members of the polity”. If the institution of citizenship constitutes a group, one should ask who is included and excluded, and on what grounds the group is defined. In this sense citizenship is closely associated with the concept of ‘identity’ and it cannot be evaluated only by looking at the legal framework. Moreover and more importantly we should look at the ‘practices’ of citizenship. In this regard, Bryan Turner provides us a deeper definition of citizenship: “Citizenship may be defined as that set of practices (juridical, political, economic and cultural) which define a person as a competent member of society, and which as a consequence shape the flow of resources to persons and social groups”. He emphasizes the idea of ‘practices’ “in order to avoid a state and juridical definition of citizenship as merely a collection of rights and obligations” for it helps one to understand “the dynamic social construction of citizenship which changes historically as a consequence of political struggles” (Turner, 1993, p.2). Therefore ‘the set of social practices that define a person as a ‘competent’ member of society’ is at the same time a process of defining who the ‘proper citizen’ is. In other words, who is ‘qualified’ for or who ‘deserves’ to be a citizen is in fact a product of social and political practices in a given context. In this sense, the intimate link between citizenship and identity comes to the forefront.

In the Turkish context too, mainly after the 1980s, we see the emergence of a debate on the character of citizenship in Turkey and its implications for the process of democratization. It has been widely discussed that - contrary to the official discourse that claims to exercise a civic notion of citizenship - the citizenship in Turkey is ethnically oriented in its practices. To be specific, it has been argued that the citizenship

in Turkey is practiced in such a way that upholds Turkish ethnicity and Sunni Islam. Because of this tendency, the Turkish citizens who do not belong to Turkish ethnicity or Sunni Islam are claimed to be discriminated or marginalized. It is within the idea of 'multicultural citizenship' that these debates were conducted in the academia as well as in the political arena.

Multicultural citizenship basically strives for an organization and application of citizenship in relation to the public recognition of identity-related differences. These are demands 'to participate in the public institutions and practices of contemporary societies in ways that recognize and affirm, rather than misrecognize and exclude, the diverse identities of citizens'. Linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and religious minorities wish to participate in the same institutions as the dominant groups, but in ways that protect and respect their identity-related differences: for instance, having education in mother-tongue, and access to media, to be able to use their languages and cultural ways in legal and political institutions. The ideal is making possible that all citizens and minorities can participate equally but not identically, with others (Tully, 2002, p.163).

Charles Taylor is one of the prominent thinkers on multiculturalism and the debates around multicultural citizenship. In this regard, he has developed his widely-known political theory of 'recognition'. The foundation of the theory of recognition is the skepticism towards the classical liberal notion that the state can or should be neutral towards the culture, language and values of its citizens. In the same line of thought, Taylor suggests that 'the liberal ideal of public neutrality is inapplicable in culturally diverse societies and should be displaced by the principle of equal worth of cultures' (Kenny, 2004, p.148).

Taylor's theory of recognition is based on the claim that our sense of our own well-being and moral goals depend critically on how we see ourselves reflected in the eyes of the others (Kenny, 2004, p.151). Therefore the selfhood (identity) is an outcome of a dialogical and intersubjective process (Taylor, 1994, p.32). Taylor articulates this in the following way: "...my discovering of my own identity does not mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others. That is why the development of an ideal of inwardly generated identity gives a new importance to recognition (Taylor, 1994, p.34).

Besides Taylor's conceptualization of identity as an outcome of an intersubjective process, identity in Taylor's writings is presented as an inwardly generated concept. In his theorizations on the sources of modern self-hood, he argues that the sources of people's beliefs and passions do not lie anymore in some externalized cosmological or theological notion of the good. Rather, the notion of the good (and the identity that is constructed along with it) is something that is more and more inwardly generated. Because it is an inwardly generated phenomenon, Taylor names this as 'authenticity' that is one of the most important feature of the modern identities (Kenny, 2004, pp.151-152).

Intersubjectivity and authenticity make up the basis of Taylor's discussion on recognition. The argument is basically as follows: to achieve a stable identity I require recognition from my peers for my particularity, being granted recognition in respect of my own qualities and attributes (Kenny, 2004, p.152). Recognition is therefore required for the maintenance and stability of one's identity. That is why "misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being" (Taylor, 1994, p.25). In sum, identity as a concept and the

emphasis on authenticity of identities and the importance on recognition is central to Charles Taylor's thought and more importantly he theorizes justice, equality and citizenship through these concepts of identity, authenticity and recognition. Yet, the major problem here is this emphasis on authenticity of identities and the concept of recognition. The more the emphasis on authenticity becomes central to our thinking and in our definitions of ourselves, the more it will be harder to define that authenticity. In other words, it will be more and more difficult to agree upon a common definition of – for instance- an 'authentic Muslim' or an 'authentic Turk.' And because there will be many different thoughts and disputes over how an authentic Muslim is defined; there will be many conflicts as well with respect to the recognition of these different 'authentic Muslims'.

One of the aims of this thesis is to show the dangerousness of the concept of authenticity and a concept of recognition that is constructed upon this authenticity. In this thesis I will try to show how the emphases upon the concepts such as authenticity and genuineness work for not furthering recognition of different and authentic identities but for excluding those who do not fit well within the definitions of 'authentic Turks and Muslims'. We will see how both the locals and the immigrants define their identities along authenticity and genuineness; and how –because of these very definitions- they came to exclude one another. Particularly by analyzing the narratives of the immigrants, I will try to show that how these emphases on authenticity can easily be stretched to essentialism and therefore are very dangerous primarily because the emphasis on authenticity rivet the forms of discrimination and marginalization. In the narratives of the immigrants and the foundations of their marginalization by the locals;

we will see the slippery characteristics of differently defined ‘genuine’ Turkishness and Muslimness.

About the Research Method and the Fieldwork

This thesis is a case study on the post-1980 Turkish-Muslim immigrants from Macedonia. The research is carried out as a qualitative study focusing on the relationship between citizenship and identity in Turkey. The research method that is applied in this thesis is in-depth interview method. I think in-depth interview method is the most convenient method for this study and the questions it proposes primarily because it enables one to follow the ways in which the immigrants make sense of themselves and narrate their experiences in Turkey, and the ways in which they make their claims to Turkish citizenship and how they define Turkishness and Muslimness. It is only possible through the in-depth interviews that one could trace the subtle critical points, the unexpected shifts and the interesting instances of ‘slip of tongue’ in the immigrants’ narratives of themselves and their experiences.

I have made ten in-depth interviews with four immigrant women and six immigrant men. I have applied snowball sampling method for the selection of the interviewees. Each interview lasted at least two hours. Six of my informants came to Turkey as legally independent immigrants. The other four of my informants came to Turkey as ‘legally foreigners’, meaning that they are not issued as immigrants and they reside in Turkey with a residence permit that should be renewed every six/nine months. All of the interviewees came to Turkey during the post 1980 period from Yugoslavia (till 1991) and then from Macedonia. They are ethnically Turks and religiously Sunni Muslims. All the interviewee names that appear in this text are pseudonyms.

After the completion of the fieldwork, I have engaged in a thematic analysis of the interviews. I have mainly focused on themes such as migration, homeland, citizenship, identity, belonging, Turkishness and Muslimness. The ways and the contexts (moments) in which these themes are highlighted by the immigrants during the interviews are paid special attention and are included in the analyses.

The focus on ‘narrative’ is critical to this study and to the concept of ‘identity’ as it is used in this study. Narrative, in its crudest definition, is a form of story-telling. In this thesis, I have concentrated on not only the immigrants’ narratives of their experiences back in Macedonia and here in Turkey, but also and more importantly on their narratives of themselves, their identities. As it is argued by Lewis and Sandra Hinchman, “personal identity, the answer to the riddle of “who” people are, takes shape in the stories we tell about ourselves” (Hinchman and Hinchman, 2001, p.xvii). Indeed narratives are the reflections of the active, self-shaping quality of human thought that simultaneously communicates and transforms the lived experiences as the stories which in turn create and refashion our identities (Hinchman and Hinchman, 2001, p.xiv). In the same line, Neyzi upholds the narrativist perspective: “a narrativist perspective can avoid a categorical approach to identity by including in the conception of identity/self the dimensions of time, space and relationality such that identity is viewed as process, as *becoming* through performing and narrating multiple selves” (Neyzi, 2004, p.61).

Sequence of the Thesis

In Chapter II ‘Historical Background’, in order to better comprehend the context within which the immigrants are shaped, I will give a historical sketch of the Turkish community existed in Macedonia by focusing on the periods of Ottoman Empire, Yugoslavia and Republic of Macedonia respectively. Besides I will dwell on the history

of migration from the region coupled with the Turkish state's attitude toward the immigration from the Balkans and the extent to which immigration practices reflect the politics of citizenship in Turkey. Chapter II is also helpful for the subsequent chapter (Chapter III) because it will provide us a ground for understanding with reference to which history that the immigrants articulate and construct their Turkish and Muslim identities; rationalize their migration and legitimize their claim to citizenship.

In Chapter III 'Interpreting the Interviews' after presenting the general hypothesis of the thesis and giving a detailed account of the research and the profile of the interviewees, I will engage in a thematic interpretation of the immigrants' narratives. I will try to present the multiple ways in they represent and rationalize their migration to Turkey; how they define themselves, how they narrate who they are and in close relation to this how they make their claim to Turkish citizenship through their identities. In this chapter, I will emphasize the existence of a double and paradoxical process of the immigrants' articulation of their identity through sameness with and difference from the locals. I will also point out the ways in which the immigrants are marginalized by the locals, how the immigrants make sense of their interactions with the locals and the ways in which the immigrants respond to their marginalization. These interactions of the immigrants with the locals and the ways in which these interactions are narrated by the immigrants will provide me to proceed with a discussion on the contesting definitions of Turkishness and Muslimness in Turkey.

In Chapter IV 'Conclusion' I will assemble and summarize the arguments that are made throughout the thesis and point out the relevance and the significance of this study with respect to Turkey's social and political context along with its possible contributions to the studies concerning citizenship, identity and migration.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans; the Policy of Settlement; and the Emergence of the Turkish-Muslim Communities in the Region

Geographically, the Balkan Peninsula is defined as the mountainous region which is marked by the Danube River in the north, the Adriatic, Aegean, and Mediterranean Seas in the south. Yet, throughout history, particularly during the reigns of the Roman, Byzantium and Ottoman Empires, we see that the Balkans extended beyond the Tuna River to the north and down to the Aegean islands as a result of the social, economic, cultural and political effects (Koloğlu, 1993, p.41).

The existence of Turkish / Muslim community in the Balkans dates back to the second half of the fourteenth century, to the reign of Orhan Bey, the head of the Ottoman State then. The Byzantine Emperors, ailing with the ever-continuing struggles of the competing dynasties over the Byzantine throne, used to ask the military assistance of Ottoman Beys in order to suppress their opponents. In turn, the Ottomans gained the advantage of armed passage to the Thrace. Orhan Bey and his son Süleyman Paşa made numerous military expeditions into Bulgaria and Macedonia and succeeded in extending the Ottoman sovereignty in the second half of the fourteenth century. (İnalçık, 1993, p.11 and Sevim, 2002, p.42) The gradual Ottoman conquest of the

Balkans culminated in the defeat of the Serbs at Kosovo Polje in 1389 and opened the way for a complete Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, and the fall of Constantinople in 1453 saw the end of the Byzantine Empire. (Poulton, 1993, p.2)

Ottoman state, through the application of a systematic colonization, was able to transform the conquests in the Balkans into permanent territories under the Ottoman rule. (Oğuzoğlu, 2002, p.3) Ottoman policy of settlement was central to the colonization of the Rumelia. The policy of settlement basically involved the transformation of the occupied lands into a homeland for the state; balancing the Christian community in the Balkans with the Muslim/Turkish community and thereby ensuring public order and security; '*şenlendirme*' of uncultivated lands, hence making the lands more convenient for people to live; and increasing the quantity of production as well as the arable lands; and lastly for Islamization and Turkification (Sevim, 2002, p.49). Exchanging Christians in the Balkans with the nomadic Turcoman Yuruk people of Anatolia was practiced from the first conquests onwards dating back to Orhan Bey and Süleyman Paşa (Sevim, 2002, pp.43, 46).

Along with the colonization of the Balkans, this practice also served the stability in the Anatolian territories because those Yuruks, who were sent to the outposts of the Rumelia, used to be seen by the state as the primary source of disorder and insecurity in Anatolia (İnalcık, 1993, p.19). The Ottoman state encouraged these groups to emigrate towards the frontiers by offering them favors such as land, estates, timars and other privileges. It is for sure that the Ottoman policy of settlement and Turkification of Rumelia was a consciously designed and implemented policy of the Ottoman State in order to maintain political and military security across its territories (Oğuzoğlu, 2002, p.3 and İnalcık, 1993, pp.19-20).

Ottoman policy of settlement and Turkification of Rumelia continued till the end of the sixteenth century. Turks of Rumelia made up 15% of the population in the Balkans at the time. These groups mostly settled in the plains and cities (Koloğlu, 1993, p.61).

Islamization followed Turkification. First instances of Islamization are observed among the Christian timar holders who served the Ottoman army, and among the groups who lived with the Muslims and were thereby in close communication with them. It has been argued that before the seventeenth century, Islamization was mostly a social process that occurred as a result of social factors. (İnalçık, 1993, pp.20-21) Islamization of the masses emerged by the seventeenth century and in the west of the Balkan Peninsula, particularly in Albanian, Kosovan and Bosnian regions. The Pomaks (who are ethnically Slavic people) of the Rodop Mountain are also among this group. The Muslims in the east of the Balkans speak Turkish and they are Anatolian Turks. As a result of Turkification and Islamization, in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 40% of the population in the Balkans was Muslim (İnalçık, 1993, p.22 and Koloğlu, 1993, p.61).

John Lampe argues that the Ottomans successfully imposed a centrally controlled regime of land tenure, tax collection, and native religious rights that in practice approached the responsible local government that the medieval South Slav states had failed to establish. Thanks to the “millet” structure, ethno-religious identity could survive at the local level as long as the overriding Ottoman authority was not challenged (Lampe, 1996, pp.20-21).

Migration from the Balkans during the Ottoman Empire

The huge demographic movement from Anatolia to the Balkans which began in the fourteenth century repeated itself once again, but this time in the opposite direction from the seventeenth century onwards after the unsuccessful Vienna Besiege in 1683. The Muslim population within the borders of Austria fled to the inner territories of the Ottoman Empire as a result of the Ottoman-Austria War of 1683-1699 (Ağanoğlu, 2001, p.31; Ülker, 2003, p.39). The Ottoman Empire was in a state of decay with its economy stagnant, the once efficient bureaucracy corrupt, and the army demoralized. Concurrently, it is no surprise that there appeared the awakening of the Balkan peoples aided by the intervention of the Great Powers, especially Russia and Austria-Hungary (Poulton, 1993, p.2). Known as '93 Harbi', the Ottoman-Russo War of 1877-78 was another such event that triggered and furthered the huge demographic movement from the Balkan territories to the inner lands of the Ottoman Empire. As an autonomous Bulgaria was proclaimed; and Romania, Montenegro and Serbia were recognized as independent, huge numbers of Muslims were expelled from the region. According to Justin McCarty, 1,253,000 Muslims were uprooted and became refugees. Although the majority of them were Turkish-speaking Muslims, there were also Pomaks (Bulgarian Muslims) and Circassians among these refugees (McCarthy, 1995, p.106 and Eren, 1993, pp.292-293). As a result, the Muslim population as well as the number of settlements increased significantly in Anatolia (Ağanoğlu, 2001, p.39).

The infamous Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 resulted in another dramatic change in the region both politically and demographically. As to the estimates, 200,000 Turks died during the wars; another 200,000 and 240,000 migrated from Thrace and

Macedonia, respectively in the aftermath of the wars till the Republic was founded (Eren, 1993, pp.292-293).

A Brief History of Yugoslavia

The political transformation and turmoil that began with the Balkan Wars continued throughout the First World War. Yugoslavia came into existence in December 1918 as “the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes”. The newly founded Kingdom united the former Austro-Hungarian territories of Slovenia, Croatia-Slovenia, the Vojvodina, Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the kingdoms of Montenegro and Serbia (including territories corresponding approximately to the present-day Macedonia and Kosovo) (Poulton, 1993, p.5).

In the history of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, there is a period of parliamentary democracy which promised representative government between 1919 and 1929; yet, this decade ended with the King Alexander’s seizure of power and absolute authority in January 1929. In the same year, King Alexander declared the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes as “the Kingdom of Yugoslavia”. He also abolished the constitution and disbanded the parliament (Lampe, 1996, p.160; Akşin and Fırat, 1993, pp.103-104). The authoritarian kingdom continued throughout 1941 (Lampe, 1996, p.126).

In 1941, during the Second World War, Yugoslavia was invaded by the axis powers. The following years saw fierce resistance to the occupying forces accompanied by a bitter civil war. At the end of the civil war, the military and political ascendancy was gained by the communist-led resistance movement, namely Partisans under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito. The king was deposed and the Federal People’s Republic

of Yugoslavia was proclaimed in 1946 (Poulton, 1993, pp.5-6; Lampe, 1996, p.197).

Despite a political monopoly, Tito and his inner circle devoted considerable attention to a striking workable ethnic balance (Lampe, 1996, p.222).

The initial intent was simply to follow the Soviet model where a hierarchical party apparatus controlled a fictional federation and pursued a rapid development of heavy industry (Lampe, 1996, p.229). However, the famous Tito-Stalin split came as early as 1948, making Tito's Yugoslavia unique in Eastern Europe with its decentralized socialism and eventually led to close relations with the Western bloc (Lampe, 1996, pp.229, 237).

Under the constitution of 1974, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as the country was renamed in 1963, was a federal state comprising six constituent republics: Bosnia-Herzegovina (the capital of which is Sarajevo); Croatia (Zagreb); Macedonia (Skopje); Montenegro (Titograd); Slovenia (Ljubljana) and Serbia (Belgrade) – which incorporated the two 'autonomous provinces' of the Vojvodina and Kosovo. The federal capital was Belgrade (Poulton, 1993, p.6).

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) was the least homogeneous among all the countries of Europe. It was a multinational federation with a three-tier system of national rights as follows:

1. the '*Nations of Yugoslavia*'--each with a national home based in one of the republics – this was an important maneuver in denying the Albanians republican status in Kosovo as their national home is outside of Yugoslavia. There were six officially recognized 'Nations of Yugoslavia': Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Muslims (an ethnic category recognized as a nation since 1971 census), Serbs and Slovenes;

2. the '*Nationalities of Yugoslavia*' which were legally allowed a variety of language and cultural rights. There were ten ethnic groups officially recognized as the 'Nationalities', the largest being the Albanians and the Hungarians concentrated in Kosovo and the Vojvodina, respectively, with the others as Bulgarians, Czechs, Gypsies, Italians, Romanians, Ruthenians, Slovaks and Turks;
3. '*Other Nationalities and Ethnic Groups*' which were the remaining ethnic groups – Austrians, Greeks, Jews, Germans, Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, Vlahs and others including those who classify themselves as 'Yugoslavs' (Poulton, 1993, p.5).

The working of this complicated picture was made possible by the constitutional guarantee of equal rights and duties for all the ethnicities and religious identities across the country. The 1946 constitution, which codified the guarantee of equal rights and duties for every member of the country irrespective of ethnicity and religion, enshrined the principle of '*bratstvo i jedinstvo*' (brotherhood and unity) (Lampe, 1996, p.232). The text emphasized the voluntary character of federal co-operation, and in a preamble granted the Republics the right of secession. People of all nations and nationalities had the right to speak their own language in educational, judicial and cultural affairs (Jansen, 1999, p.275). In addition to this constitutional guarantee, in all the main legislative bodies, the principle of equal representation of all republics and proportional representation of provinces prevailed. Thus, the Yugoslav federation was based on the principle of national equality, not ethnic proportionality and each republic internally practiced a policy of national quotas. Each republic and autonomous province, in

addition to its own assembly, had its own governmental apparatus and judiciary (Poulton, 1993, p.10).

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia under the leadership of Tito ascended from mid-1950s throughout the 1960s. Lampe presents three distinguishing features for this period: The first feature is the opening to the Western European markets. The second is the economic reform of 1965, the most ambitious set of market-oriented changes undertaken anywhere in the Communist world prior to 1989. Finally, he argues, the regime granted some real breathing space to intellectual freedom by the 1960s. Educational standards increased, a more open if still monitored media began to have an impact, and the free expression of opinion and the practice of religion benefited from significant concessions (1996, p.261). All of these, as I will discuss more in Chapter III, are the main reasons for the decline of the migration from Yugoslavia to Turkey, which did not promise such high standards of living, education and social security.

Yet this relatively peaceful and stable picture was disturbed as the country entered 1980s. First came the death of Tito in 1980, then the federal system started to disintegrate by the rising ethnic rivalries and politics. The coincident collapse of the Soviet bloc regimes in 1989 also played a part in the turbulence that followed. The constitutional system was completely dismantled first by the Serbian republic. In March 1989, Serbia pushed through constitutional changes which limited the Autonomous Provinces' (the Vojvodina and Kosovo) autonomies and present their statuses as de facto republics within the republic of Serbia. In response to the possible threat of Serbian hegemony, and the continuing economic and political crisis which gripped the country, separatist tendencies began to emerge in Slovenia and revive in Croatia. In

September 1989, the Slovene Assembly endorsed amendments to the Republic's Constitution which explicitly allowed the republic to secede (Poulton, 1993, p.6). One year later, Slovene held a plebiscite and they overwhelmingly voted for independence which is one of the harbingers of the withering away of Yugoslavia and the infamous ethnic wars to worsen. On 25 June 1991, both the Slovenian and Croatian parliaments declared their independence (Miller and Ivanovic, 1999, p.315). This was followed by the Republic of Macedonia declaring independence the same year. Macedonia is crucial in the sense that most of the Turks in Yugoslavia lived in the Republic of Macedonia (Kirişçi, 1995, p.70). The Turks numbered 101,291 in the 1981 census of which the majority, 86,691 lived in Macedonia where they constituted 4% of the population (Poulton, 1993, pp.91-92).

Macedonia

Macedonia, the highly disputed and contested region, can roughly be defined as the geographical area bounded to the north by the Shar Planina mountains; to the east by the Rila and Rhodope mountains; to the south by the Aegean coast around Salonica, Mount Olympus and the Pindus mountains; and to the west by the lakes of Ohrid and Prespa; and comprising approximately 67,000 square kilometers (Poulton, 1993, p.46). Since 1913, Macedonia has been constantly divided in different ways by three neighboring countries, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece. Today's Macedonia was divided between Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece during the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913. Serbia's part of Macedonia was incorporated into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1918. Modern Macedonia came into existence in 1945 as one of the constitutive republics of SFRY (CRPM, 2005, p.3). In geographical terms, the region is now divided as the Vardar

Macedonia (today's Republic of Macedonia or Yugoslavian Macedonia); the Aegean Macedonia (the Greek Macedonia); and the Pirin Macedonia (the Bulgarian Macedonia) (Gürkan, 1993, p.168). The Republic of Macedonia is bordered by Bulgaria, Greece, Albania and Serbia and Montenegro including Kosovo (CRPM, 2005, p.3). The longest river, the Vardar, bisects the country and flows to the Aegean Sea through Greece. The country's population is around two million. Of these, 563,000 people live in the capital and the largest city, Skopje, but most of the population lives in small communities (Miller and Ivanovic, 1999, 313).

With the referendum held in August 1991, the 95 % of the people of Macedonia (Macedonians, Albanians and Turks) voted for independence and a new independent political organization has emerged in the disputed region. As soon as Macedonia came into being as an independent political organization, Greece declared that it would never recognize a country under the name of 'Macedonia' and started to apply economic embargo to the country. Unlike Greece, in January of 1992, Bulgaria, Turkey and Russia recognized the new state (Soysal, 1993, p.185).

Following the declaration of independence, the Macedonian government adopted many of the features of its Western European democratic counterparts. The Constitution was drafted and adopted by the Parliament in 1991. The Parliament comprises a unicameral National Assembly (*Sobranje*) of 120 members who serve for four years and are elected by popular vote (CRPM, 2005, p.6). The President, who also serves for four years, is elected by popular vote. A Prime Minister is appointed by the President but has to be approved by the National Assembly (Miller and Ivanovic, 1999, p.321).

Macedonia, very much like the ethnic map of the whole Balkan Peninsula, is ethnically very heterogeneous. It is acknowledged that there are nearly twenty-seven

minorities in Macedonia (Karpát, [2006](#)). Apart from Macedonians who constitute the majority, Albanians and Turks are the most significant minorities. According to the 2002 census, Macedonia has 2,063,122 inhabitants of whom Macedonians constitute 64,18%; Albanians 25,17%; Turks 3,85%; Romans 2,66%; Serbians 1,78%; Bosnians 0,84%; Vlachs 0,48%; and others 1,04%. The vast majority of ethnic Macedonians are Slavic-speaking and Orthodox, as are the Macedonian Vlachs and Serbs. On the other side, most of the Albanians, Romans and Turks are Sunni Muslims (CRPM, 2005, p.5) making up approximately 30% of the population.

Having such a complex and heterogeneous ethnic profile, the 1991 Constitution of Republic of Macedonia is worded as to guarantee its citizens full equality in the enjoyment of rights and freedoms regardless of sex, race, color of skin, national and social origin, political and religious beliefs, property and social status. The free expression of ethnic identity is said to be the fundamental value of the constitutional order of the Republic of Macedonia (Article 8/2). The possibility of expressing one's ethnic identity in the census taking – a tradition inherited from Tito's Yugoslavia- is realized by printing the census forms bilingually (both in Macedonian language and the languages of the national minorities) since the 1994 census. The constitution also guarantees persons belonging to national minorities the right to freely express and foster their ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural identity. In order to realize this, ethnic minorities have the right to establish institutions of art and culture, scientific and other associations as well as the right to instruction in their language in primary and secondary education (Article 48) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997, p.7).

Yet these constitutional guarantees do not prevent tension arising out of ethnic identities. Albanian nationalism, as Albanians are the biggest minority in the country, is

challenging the Macedonian majority and the state. The Albanians of Macedonia mainly inhabit the western part of the country. The largest Albanian communities live in Kumanovo, Skopje, Tetovo, Gostivar, Debar, Kicevo and Struga (Karpát, 2006).

The Turks of Macedonia, the second largest minority, live scattered throughout 40 towns, including Skopje, Tetovo, Gostivar, Debar, Resen, Ohrid, Bitola, Negotino, Radovis, and Valadovo (Karpát, 2006). Similar to the Albanians, Turks have been allowed educational and cultural rights from the outset – in the first academic year of the new socialist republic, 1944/5, there were 60 primary schools using Turkish as the language of instruction. By 1958/9, due to the emigration to Turkey, the numbers had dropped to 27 schools with just over 6000 pupils (Poulton, 1993, p.93). Again, like the Albanians, there are television and radio programs as well as various cultural organizations. The newspaper, *Birlik*, which was first published in 1943 bid its farewell in 2003 because of financial problems. Yet, there are many other newspapers and magazines in Turkish. The main party of the Turks is Turkish Democratic Party (TDP) which was founded in 1992.

The common religion of Islam and common settlements of Albanians and Turks in Macedonia only reinforce the years-long complexity and confusion between these ethnic identities. Assessing the number of ethnicities, especially of the minorities is somewhat problematic from the founding of Yugoslavia onwards. The freedom of expressing one's ethnic identity in the censuses resulted in fluctuations and inconsistencies in the number of minorities (Albanians, Turks, Pomaks, Romans) primarily because of the context and political balances in the respective eras (Poulton, 1993, pp.55, 92-93 and Kirişçi, 1995, p.70). The immigration from the region is another factor affecting the ethnic map of the region.

The Albanian and Turkish communities –because of their commonalities with respect to religion, settlement and traditions- are those groups that show the greatest inconsistencies. The members of these communities switch to one or the other according to the political conjuncture of the times. For instance, immediately after the Second World War, the Turks had been seen as suspect because of the friendship between Turkey and the West, and in January 1948, seventeen Macedonian Turks were tried as members of ‘*Yücel*’ (Judzel) organization and four members of the organization were executed. The trial was given great publicity within Macedonia so as to intimidate the Turkish minority, and as a result many Turks declared themselves to be Albanians in the 1948 census. However, by 1953, following the break by Yugoslavia with the Cominform, the Albanians were then seen as being suspect and now so many declared themselves to be Turks. Hence, the 1948 census gave 95,940 Turks while that of 1953 recorded 203,938, yet by the next census seven years later the number was only 131,481 (Poulton, 1993, pp.91-92).

As we come to the 1980s, since the number of the Turks in the region has declined mostly as a result of the immigration from the region, they were not perceived as dangerous anymore. Albanians as the biggest minority of the country now constitute a challenge to the Macedonian state. The situation regarding the position of the Albanians vis-à-vis the Macedonians is reminiscent of that of the ethnic Turks vis-à-vis the Bulgarians in Bulgaria – a sizeable minority with a far higher growth rate, speaking a different language, living in concentrated areas especially in the countryside, Islamic as opposed to the Orthodox majority whose geographical position gives rise to a possible irredenta (Poulton, 1993, p.77).

The Macedonian authorities, worried at the rise of Albanian nationalism, assert that many Turks have been albanianized under pressure. According to the director of the Macedonian Republic Bureau of Statistics in Skopje, this was especially pronounced in the Tetovo, Gostivar, Struga and Kicevo regions, and the Macedonian LC Central Committee Presidium in September 1987 gave the expression of Albanian nationalism as one of the main reasons for the emigration of Turkish families from Gostivar municipality. The Albanians apparently claim, in a manner strikingly similar to the Bulgarians vis-à-vis ethnic Turks in Bulgaria, that ‘these are not Turks’ but actually ‘Illyrians (believed to be the forerunners of the Albanians) turned into Turks’ who are now ‘returning to their flock’ (Poulton, 1993, pp.92-93).

These claims and tensions between Albanian and Turkish communities are significant for the scope of this study because in the following chapter we will see that the label of Albanian on the immigrant Turks causes great discontent among them. Being subject to the same misrecognition and treatment as ‘Albanian’, ironically both back in Macedonia and here in Turkey – their original homeland – resulted in great frustration on the part of the immigrants.

Immigration from Yugoslavia

As the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist and the modern Turkish State was founded on its remaining territories; the immigration of people from the Balkans continued. Although no exact figures are available, it is acknowledged in one study that the migration between 1870s and early 1920s is high as 1,445,000 (Eren, 1993, p.228 and Kirişçi, 1995, p.61). The Turkish state allowed Turkish and Muslim people of the Balkan Peninsula to migrate and settle in Turkey. As Kirişçi states, between 1923 and

1945 almost 840,000 people migrated to Turkey from the Balkans. The most significant demographic movement in this era was the population exchange between Greece and Turkey. During the same period, 200,000 Turkish speaking Muslims and Pomaks from Bulgaria; another 121,296 Turks, Tatars and Circassians from Romania; lastly another 115,427 Turks, Bosnians and Albanians from Yugoslavia migrated to Turkey (Kirişçi, 1995, p.63 and Eren, 1993, p.296).

Among the immigration waves from the Balkans to Turkey after the Second World War, immigration from Yugoslavia is the second biggest immigration wave that comes after the one from Bulgaria. Before moving into the details of the immigration from Yugoslavia, I will now give a general sketch of immigration from the other countries.

Both independent and settled immigration took place from Bulgaria to Turkey from the 1945 on. It was especially the mass exodus of 1950-51 and 1989 that brought about the largest numbers, a total of almost half a million Bulgarian Turks. In addition to the forced migration, about 116,253 came as independent immigrants between 1946 and 1990. As to the first forced migration that took place in 1950-51, it was as a result of the establishment of the Communist regime in 1944 which would implement policies of unification of the education system, restriction of the religious practices and centralization of agricultural practices. These policies mostly and bitterly affected the Turkish community which then made up almost 10% of the population in Bulgaria and had enjoyed considerable freedom both in practicing their religion, language and traditions, and in running their own schools. As the situation escalated in Bulgaria, 154,393 Bulgarian Turks were forced to migrate to Turkey between January 1950 and November 1951. The Turkish state treated them as settled immigrants and supported them financially. The second mass exodus took place in 1989. An assimilation

campaign started to be implemented by 1984. Wearing traditional Turkish dress and speaking Turkish in public places were banned in the first place. Then a name-changing campaign was implemented throughout the whole country. This assimilation campaign against the Turks and their persecution by the Bulgarian state brought about the mass influx of almost 350,000 Bulgarian Turks between June 1989 and August 1989 (Kirişçi, 1995, pp.63-66).

After Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, the immigration from Greece is the third largest demographic movement. As Kirişçi acknowledges, during the Second World War and the Greek civil war, large numbers of Turks from Greece took refuge in Turkey and were granted asylum. The policy of admitting Turks from Greece was terminated in 1951 as the internal situation in Greece had returned to normal. About 26,000 Turks immigrated to Turkey during 1950s and 1960s (Kirişçi, 1995, pp.72-73).

Lastly, independent immigration from Romania during the post Second World War is the lowest movement in quantity. Around 1,200 people migrated to Turkey. Kirişçi argues that the relatively liberal cultural and minority rights that the Turkish community enjoyed in Romania after the Second World War kept the level of immigration from the region so low (Kirişçi, 1995, p.74).

In the case of Yugoslavia, the second largest population movement after Bulgaria, we see a total of 186,925 people immigrating to Turkey between 1945 and 1990 (Kirişçi, 1995, p.70). Between 1939 and 1950, the Yugoslavian state did not permit migration for the Turkish and Muslim community. After the political rapprochement occurred between Yugoslavia and Turkey and the signing of the Balkan Pact, the borders were opened for those Turks and Muslims who wanted to migrate to Turkey (Altuğ, 1991, p.115 and Eren, 1993, p.296). This is when most of the migration from

Yugoslavia took place. During the early 1950s (especially in 1954-55) and throughout the 1960s around 150,000 independent immigrants arrived in Turkey. Among these immigrants there were not only Turks but also a considerable number of Albanians in addition to some Pomaks and Bosnians. Non-Turkish speaking Albanian immigrants, fearing for their position in post-war communist Yugoslavia, claimed to be Turks so as to take advantage of the permitted immigration (Kirişçi, 1995, p.71 and Poulton 1993, p.92).¹

As the regime consolidated in Yugoslavia and the situation began to improve for the minority populations –which will be discussed in detail along with references to the interviewees- the migration to Turkey declined to a considerable degree. Up to the 1980, during the 1970s only 1,797 people chose to come to Turkey. These were mostly the people joining their close relatives in Turkey (Kirişçi, 1995, p.71).

We see a decline and early signs of dissolution in Yugoslavia after the death of Tito in 1980. The political as well as economic decay coupled with the rising ethnic politics changes the situation for the population of the whole country particularly for the minorities. Hence the idea of migration to Turkey, the original homeland, came up again and we see an increase in the number of people migrating to Turkey. Between 1980 and 1990, around 2,620 Turks immigrated to Turkey (Kirişçi, 1995, p.70). This study analyzes the experiences of these post-1980 Turkish immigrants who came to Turkey as independent immigrants and those Turks who came under the foreigner status and applied for citizenship later on. It should be noted that those who came as foreigners are not included in the above figure.

¹ Also see H. Ağanoglu (2001) “*Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Balkanlar’ın Makus Talihi Göç*” for a detailed discussion of the immigration from Yugoslavia and the immigrant family figures.

Turkey also accepted the Bosnian Muslims as refugees after the outbreak of hostilities and persecutions in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992. According to the figures in Kirişçi's study, a total of 2,819 Bosnian refugees were housed in refugee camps located in different cities of Turkey (Kirişçi, 1995, pp.71-72).

There is a political explanation to these immigration figures. They represent more than numbers of people, but the state's politics of immigration and thereby citizenship which I will dwell on under the following subheading.

Politics of Immigration and Citizenship in Turkey

Immigration is intimately related with citizenship primarily because once admitted, an immigrant can become a citizen (Kirişçi, 2000, p.3). Therefore, the profiles of the ones who are accepted as immigrants by the Turkish state demonstrate a lot about the official preferences with respect to the favored 'citizen'. In this regard, analyzing the immigration practices is also a test case for the formal definition of citizenship in a country. Kemal Kirişçi (2000), in his article "*Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration Practices*" scrutinizes the relationship between the immigration policies of the state and the institution of citizenship in Turkey. He basically argues that in Turkey although a civic notion of citizenship is claimed to be embraced, in the actual practices, this civic notion is far from being realized. He asserts that the immigration practices and policies in Turkey have been biased in favor of people of 'Turkish descent and culture' and always coupled with the primacy of Sunni/Hanefi affiliation (Kirişçi, 2000, p.3). This substantive exercise of immigration policies favoring those who are ethnically and culturally Turkish and Sunni/Hanefi in religious terms disproves the claims of civic notion of citizenship in Turkey.

The laws governing the immigration practices and decisions highlight the particular features (ethnic, religious, linguistic) that are sought by the Turkish state from the immigrant population who will become its future citizens. The Law on Settlement (Law 2510 adopted on June 14, 1934)² is a major legislation that governs not only the immigration practices but also the settlement policies aiming at homogenization of the population across the country particularly with respect to national identity (Kirişçi, 2000, p.4). The Law was, in a sense, a by-product of the modernization project of the new Republic trying to produce the ‘ideal Turk’.

The Law on Settlement with respect to who can be admitted as an immigrant provides a rather general definition, thus enabling the application scope of the Law pretty flexible.³ The definition of who will be accepted as an immigrant is as follows: “...the individuals of Turkish race or the individuals bound to Turkish culture who speak Turkish and who do not know any other language...”⁴

In the light of this Law, as I have mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, Turkey has received immigrants who are not necessarily of Turkish race or descent or who do not speak any Turkish. These are mostly Albanians, Bosnians, Pomaks, and Tatars. Admittance of these groups of people is rationalized on the basis of the principle of ‘being bound to Turkish culture’. On the other hand, we see the rejection of Gagauz Turks and Azeris, who are of Turkish descent (Kirişçi, 2000, p.5). In that case, it is not a question of being of Turkish descent but a question of religious identity of these groups – former being Christian Orthodox and the latter being Shi’a

² For a detailed discussion of the Law 2510, please see Kemal Kirişçi’s article “Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration Practices” (2000) and Erol Ülker’s M.A. Thesis “Homogenizing a nation: Turkish national identity and migration-settlement policies of the Turkish Republic (1923-1939)” (2003).

³ As Kirişçi (2000) states in his article “Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration Practices” although many articles of the Law 2510 have been amended or annulled, the articles about immigrants still remain in effect.

⁴ The translation of this article of the Law 2510 is from Erol Ülker’s (2003) M.A. thesis. Türkçesi: “...Türk ırkından olanlara veya Türk kültürüne bağlı olupta türkçe konuşup başka dil bilmeyenlere...”

Muslims- that the modern ‘secular’ Republic considers as crucial. The Sunni/Hanefi sect of Islam is favored and particularly sought in the immigrant population that will be admitted. Kirişçi gives a quotation from Celal Nuri Bey, the deputy of Gallipoli then, who emphasizes that the ‘real’ citizens of Turkey were Hanefi Muslims who spoke Turkish (Kirişçi, 2000, p.16). These ideological orientations with respect to the immigration practices in Turkey end up favoring the immigrant populations from the Balkan Peninsula. The fact that many (Albanians, Bosnians, Pomaks) could not speak Turkish was even overlooked by the Republican elite and welcomed as the future citizens of Turkey.

There are a couple of explanations for why the Balkans and its various groups of people were given such a primacy with respect to immigration. Kirişçi argues that ‘for the (Republican) elite, immigration and refugee policies came to be seen as a convenient tool for nation-building to consolidate the security of the state’ and they ‘recognized the potential of assimilating or moulding the diverse Muslim ethnic groups from the Balkans into the actual or preferred Turkish national identity they had set out to construct’ (Kirişçi, 2000, p.16). Aġanoġlu, in the same line with Kirişçi, emphasizes the need for enhancing and increasing the population of the new Republic that declined dramatically after the First World War and the War of Independence. He argues that the Balkan communities, because they were bound and loyal to the Ottoman Empire and culture, could be easily assimilated and turned into loyal citizens of the new Republic; and this was what the Republican elite had in mind (Aġanoġlu, 2001, pp.275-280).

The absence of any nationalist movements among those groups of immigrants from the Balkans (excluding Albanians) has also contributed to their ‘innocuous’ and loyal profiles. With respect to the Albanians, we see the admittance of Albanians only

under the category of family unification, meaning that only those Albanians whose families migrated before the legislation on immigration will be admitted as immigrants (Ülker, 2003, p.67). The major reason for this is the existence of a nation-state and a nationalist movement that Albanians would affiliate with.

On the other hand, in the ‘Circular concerning the Completion of Settlement and Demographic Works Quickly’ (adopted on August 7, 1934), we see the specification of those who will not be admitted as immigrants: *‘Foreign Kurds, Arabs, Albanians; other Muslims who speak languages other than Turkish and all foreign Christians and Jews cannot be given nationality declaration. And they cannot be given immigrant paper. They will all be treated as foreigners.’*⁵ The rejection of Kurds and Arabs as immigrants by the Law on Settlement and the related Circular elucidates the Turkish state’s fear of the emergence of any potential nationalist movements within the country’s territory. Moreover, these were not the groups that remained loyal, neither to the Ottoman rule nor to the Republican rule, thus did not deserve being among the citizens of Turkey.

Kirişçi presents another explanation for the bias in favor of the Balkans which is ‘the fact that an important proportion of the bureaucratic, military and legislative elite in the newly established Turkish republic came from the Balkans, particularly Macedonia’. The founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal, himself was born in Macedonia region, in the city of Salonica (Kirişçi, 2000, pp.13-14). The ideological center of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) – which was the precedent of the Republican elite- was situated in the Balkans. Hence, the elite attached to ‘Rumelia’ both historically and

⁵ The translation of this part of the Circular is from Erol Ülker’s (2003) M.A. thesis, p.71. Türkçesi: “Yabancı Kürtlere, Araplara, Arnavutlara, türkçeden başka dil konuşan Müslümanlara ve alelittlak ecnebi hristiyanlara ve Yahudilere tabiiyet beyannamesi imza ettirilemez. Ve bunlara muhacir kağıdı verilemez. Bunlara tamamen ecnebi muamelesi yapılacaktır.”

ideologically at the same time enhanced their affiliation and identification with the Balkan people. Indeed, according to Yaşar Nabi Nayır, immigration from the Balkans was like a vaccine of fresh blood primarily because Rumelia's villagers with respect to their degree of modernization were seen as superior to the middle and eastern Anatolian villagers. Therefore, the settlement of these 'modern' villagers in the Anatolian villages would enliven and contribute to the development of the prevalent village standards (Ağanoğlu, 2001, p.276).

In contrast with Kirişçi and Ağanoğlu who argue that the immigration practices of the modern Turkish State and the favoring of the Balkan people as immigrants and later as future citizens was related to a political project that uses immigration primarily as a tool for 'nation' building and also as a tool for population building; Kemal Karpat claims that it was not the need for any extra population. It was a historical and cultural necessity that the Republic had to live up to. Against all the rejection of the Ottoman identity and past; the Republic had to act as the heir of the Ottoman Empire and look after what had remained from it. The Republican elite saw the old Ottoman-Muslim communities and those who come from their descent in the Balkans as equals to the local Turkish citizens deserving to enjoy the same rights with them (Karpat, 2004, pp.285-286).

Yes, the Balkans were favored and this was also apparent with the immigration figures: 'according to the official data, more than 1.6 million immigrants have come from the Balkans compared to less than 30,000 from other countries during the course of the Republic's history' (Kirişçi, 2000, p.12). Yet, what does the actual picture, the picture beyond the statistical figures tell us about this huge demographic movement? What is it like to be a Balkan immigrant in Turkey? What do they experience in

Turkey? How do they locate themselves vis-à-vis the local people of Turkey? These are the questions that were not asked until now. Yet, I think they are crucial questions to ask in order to fill the lack in qualitative studies about the immigration from the Balkans.

The early immigrants of the 1950s and 1960s are up to now assimilated as the citizens of Turkey, if not acculturated; they left behind many memories about the ‘*memleket*’, their hometown, the place where they were born, and so their belonging to Balkans is not more than nostalgia. But what about those immigrants whose memories are fresh, who are in between here and there, on the margins, and in the process of transition, located in and out at the same time? In this study, I tried to find the answers to these questions in the post-1980s immigrants from Macedonia. I am basically arguing that the Turkish immigrants from Macedonia have come to Turkey and made a claim to citizenship primarily because of their identity as Turks and Muslims and because they see Turkey as their original homeland, ‘*anavatan*,’ dating back to the Ottoman times. Yet, paradoxically, they were marginalized on the basis of this very identity they have. They were treated and marginalized because they were not Turks but Albanians and they were not true Muslims but they were converts and even for some ‘*gavurs*’. What is also ironic is that they were discriminated and marginalized back in Macedonia because of this very identity as Turks and Muslims.

Of course, this tension between the immigrants and the local population is not something new. Karpat states that the Balkan immigrants were discriminated –from time to time- both by the fascists who seek and suspect racial purity– whatever it means- in the Balkan immigrants and by the conservatives who view the immigrants being far from bigotry and evaluate the independence that Balkan women possess as deviation from religion. Yet Karpat sees this more as an exception than a rule (Karpat,

2004, p.286). Indeed it will not be wrong to say that there is a considerable interest and positive attitude towards the Balkans in Turkey. The sympathy towards the Rumelia and the surviving Turkish community there can be observed from the newspaper articles, documentaries, and TV programs –especially those during the month of Ramadan, at the time of ‘iftar’ (evening meal for breaking one’s fast) - that are broadcast on TV channels with religious orientations.

However, Maria Todorova warns that the existing nostalgia in some circles about ‘*bizim Rumeli*’ (our Rumelia) should not mislead one in overestimating the place of the Balkans in Turkish political and cultural priorities. The Balkans both historically and culturally, she continues, has never been seriously considered as a central category of identity (Todorova, 1997, p.51).

The presentation of the 1989 mass exodus from Bulgaria to Turkey by the state and media is another example of romanticizing the Balkans and the Turkish communities living there. Turkey was like an elder brother or mother showing compassion to, taking care of and protecting its little sibling or little child by opening its borders to those who are subject to persecution in their hometowns. Yet, there is an inconsistency between the discourse around the admittance of Turkey’s ‘racial kins’ from Bulgaria and the actual experiences of those Turkish immigrants. Ayşe Parla, with her ethnographic studies on these immigrants, reveals the paradox that they have experienced. She argues that these immigrants, after having been persecuted by the government in Bulgaria because they were ‘Turkish,’ were marginalized in Turkey because they were ‘Bulgarian’ (Parla, 2003, p.563).

This study has a similar concern with Parla’s work in the sense that it emphasizes the importance of the previously untold stories of the Macedonian Turkish immigrants,

their narratives of themselves and their experiences in Turkey (with the state as well as the local population) which will in turn –as Parla notes- ‘complement but also complicate the facts that are conveyed’ (Parla, 2003, p.563) by the crude historical accounts that are full of statistical figures about the immigration phenomena. Hence, with this study, I tried to give a voice to the ‘quiet immigration’⁶ from Yugoslavia/Macedonia and to make visible –as much as I can do- the identities of these ‘invisible immigrants’⁷ in Turkey.

Having covered the historical background of the Turkish community in Macedonia, the immigration from the region, the politics and practices of immigration and citizenship in Turkey and proposing a different and more qualitative approach to the immigration studies in Turkey, I will now move on to the analysis of my research.

⁶ Şerafettin Yücelden has published an article called ‘Yugoslavya’dan Sessiz Türk Göçü’ in *Türk Dünyası Dergisi* (issue 11, Istanbul 1968, pp. 12-16).

⁷ Anne-Marie Fortier, in her book *‘Migrant Belongings’* (2000), uses this phrase to illustrate the indeterminacy and ambiguity of the Italian collectivity in Britain. In the case of Turkish immigrants from Yugoslavia/Macedonia too, because of their ‘relatively successful’ integration –which is a problematic expression in itself- to Turkey, their identities as well as their existence are almost invisible in the public sphere, restricted only to their own social and cultural organizations.

CHAPTER III

INTERPRETING THE INTERVIEWS

Introducing the General Hypotheses

This thesis tries to inquire into the relationship between citizenship and identity in Turkey through the experiences of Turkish immigrants⁸ from Macedonia region of the former Yugoslavian territory who have migrated to Turkey in the post-1980 period. By analyzing the experiences and narratives of these immigrants, it also aims to explore the ways in which the definitions of a ‘genuine’ Turkishness and Muslimness are being constructed and contested by the immigrants as well as the locals.

Among these immigrants there are those who have come to Turkey as “independent immigrants” (“serbest göçmen”) and those who have come under the “foreigner” status with a residence permit. Both types of immigrants have made a claim to Turkish citizenship on the grounds that they are Turks and Muslims. They see Turkey as their original homeland dating back to Ottoman times. Yet, these claims became the very foundation on which they are discriminated as the local Turkish population came to view the immigrants’ claimed identities as Turks and Muslims with suspicion. They are treated as ‘foreigners’ because in the eyes of the local population, in religious terms,

⁸ In this study, I use the term “immigrant” beyond its legal usage. Immigrant here refers to those people who came from Macedonia to Turkey in order to settle in Turkey and (in the short/mid/long term) become a Turkish citizen. Hence, although the way in which they come to Turkey matters (as legally ‘independent migrant’ or as ‘foreigner’ with a residence permit), the legal frameworks and statuses are not the central focus of this study. The term “immigrant”, then, should connote the social and political aspects of being a Balkan immigrant in Turkey.

they are converts to Islam and even ‘gavurs’ (infidel); and, in ethnic terms, are not Turks but Albanians.

Therefore, even though being Turkish and Muslim end up constituting the basic parameters of citizenship in Turkey above and beyond the claims of ‘civic citizenship’, paradoxically these two parameters define the very grounds on which Macedonian Turkish immigrants are marginalized in Turkey. This finding is significant in the sense that it compels us to rethink the foundational relation between the citizenship and Turkish-Muslim identity in Turkey. Looking from the margin, where the immigrants stand, we see how the character and the interpretations of this relation are exclusionary and rigid.

The fact that the immigrants are marginalized on the basis of the very identity they claim to have shows us the extent to which essentialist approaches to ethnicity, religion and citizenship are prevalent in Turkey. Indeed, the labels of Albanian and convert/gavur on immigrants implicitly serve to define who is not a ‘genuine’ Turk and Muslim. Because the immigrants are from a multi-ethnic and multi-religious geography; for the local population, it is of high possibility that they were not ‘genuine’ Turks and Muslims. Meaning they most probably were ‘mixed’ with the other ethnicities and they were converts and even gavurs.

The interesting thing the immigrants maintain their identity and legitimize their claim to citizenship vis-à-vis the essentialist claims that the locals make by responding within the same essentialist paradigm. In order to maintain their Turkish-Muslim identity and legitimize their claim to citizenship vis-à-vis these marginalizing claims, the immigrants emphasize the ‘purity’ and ‘certainty’ of their ethnic and religious identities. Moreover, again in reaction to local claims that they are not Turks, they claim

that they are more ‘Turk’ than the locals are since the locals were ‘mixed’ with other ethnicities (implicitly referring to Kurds).

In relation to these counter-essentialist claims of the immigrants, we see an effort of ‘differentiating’ themselves from the local population on the part of the immigrants. As ironic as it is, this effort for ‘differentiation’ is in contradiction with the former effort which emphasizes ‘sameness’ with the locals. The European experience and identity are the main reference points in this regard. In their narratives, we will see how they build dichotomies between West and East, Europe and Anatolia, modern and traditional, developed and backward, etc.

The immigrants mostly prefer to live on certain neighborhoods where the other immigrants from Macedonia reside. They keep on living in the same manner and in the same circle as they used to live back in Macedonia. They build their own associations and societies. They prefer to get married with other immigrants and do not prefer their children to get married with the locals. This does not mean that they do not mix up with the local Turks, they do. Yet their initial, primary milieu is composed of immigrants and relatives. They spend most of their time with these people and this strengthens their belonging to Turkey. They make their lives easier by not opening themselves much to the local population in Turkey. This also helps them to overcome the above mentioned contradiction (being same and different with the locals at the same time) and their misrecognition by the local population. They are together with those people who know ‘who they are’.

The immigrants, by promoting their ‘pure’ identities and backgrounds, evaluate their citizenship and their participation to the society as a positive contribution (added value), as a ‘katma değer’. This positive contribution has many aspects: ‘devlete yük

olmamak' (not being a burden on the state), 'meslekleriyle devlete ve topluma hizmet ediyor olmak' (serving the state and society with their professions), 'hem Makedonya'da hem Türkiye'de temiz bir sicili olmak' (having a clean record both in Macedonia and Turkey), (implicitly) their European experience; and last but not least being 'genuine' and 'pure' Turks and Muslims. I will argue that all these qualifications also define their imagination and definition of the 'makbul vatandaş'⁹ (proper citizen).

Therefore we will see that the everyday, mundane experiences of these immigrants with the local population (including state officials too) and the contesting definitions over Turkishness and Muslimness show us once again the intimate relation prevalent between the citizenship and Turkish-Muslim identity. Indeed, the contesting definitions of the 'genuine' Turkish and Muslim identity by the immigrants as well as the locals determine at the same who 'the proper citizen' is according to that particular group.

I believe this case will give us insights into the implicit assumptions behind an official discourse of equal criteria for citizenship, on the one hand, and the perceived qualifications for citizenship based on particularistic definitions of Turkishness and Muslimness, on the other.

On the interviewees

I have made ten in-depth interviews with four immigrant women and six immigrant men. Each interview lasted at least two hours. Six of my informants came to Turkey as 'legally immigrants', meaning that the Turkish State accepts them as immigrants and they became in a short period of time Turkish citizens. They renounced their prior citizenship when they crossed the border. The other four of my informants

⁹ The term 'makbul vatandaş' is from Füsun Üstel's book *"Makbul vatandaş"ın peşinde : II. Meşrutiyet'ten bugüne Türkiye'de vatandaş eğitimi*, 2005, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları. I was inspired by the term and especially the connotations that the word 'makbul' makes and decided to import the term to this study.

came to Turkey as 'legally foreigners', meaning that they are not issued an immigrant paper and they reside in Turkey with a residence permit that should be renewed every six/nine months. They can apply for citizenship but the result may equally be admission or rejection. These people apply for Turkish citizenship without renouncing their Macedonian citizenship. They, in other words, want to hold double citizenship.

All of these people came to Turkey during the post 1980 period from Yugoslavia (till 1991) and then from Macedonia. They are ethnically Turks and religiously Sunni Muslims. The Turks in Macedonia constitute the second largest minority after Albanians live scattered throughout 40 towns, including Skopje, Tetovo, Gostivar, Debar, Resen, Ohrid, Bitola, Negotino, Radovis, Valadovo (Karpas, [2006](#)). In the 1981 census, the Turks in Macedonia constituted 4% of the population, largest in the Yugoslavian territory (Poulton, 1993, p.91). Their mother tongue is Turkish, their dialect resembles the Thrace dialect but sharper than that. From 1944/45 onwards, the Turks in Yugoslavia and then Macedonia have the right to have education in Turkish. There are primary schools that give eight years of compulsory education and high schools (four years of education) where the language of instruction is Turkish. Yet, there are no universities or other higher education institutions that give education in Turkish.

The ethnic and religious composition of Macedonia mainly includes Macedonians who are Slavic-speaking Orthodox Christians; Albanians who are Albanian-speaking Muslims and Turks who are Turkish-speaking Sunni Muslims. Although the ethnic and religious composition is highly varied across this geography; in the districts the Turks chose to live in close communities. Gostivar where most of my interviewees came from, for instance, is a case in point. Marriages between Christians and Muslims are rarely

seen and it is an extremely sensitive issue. Most of the families are not comfortable when their children (especially the daughters) attend university because they fear that their children may fall in love with a Serb, or a Croat, or a Macedonian, in short, with a Christian.

All of the interviewees are from Gostivar, except one who is from the city of Istip. Half of them have migrated to Turkey as independent immigrants, the other half as foreigners. In all cases, the immigrants bought an apartment (in the name of one relative, since at the time there was no property right for foreigners) in the neighborhood where their relatives and other immigrants also reside. They all have migrated as a family and the decision to migrate is extremely patriarchal because it is always taken by the father of the house. The ones who have come to Turkey as independent immigrants after a specific period of time (from six months to one year) were admitted to Turkish citizenship. The others, who have come to Turkey as “foreigners” with a residence permit, could apply for citizenship after five years of residence. The bureaucracy in the application and admission process is rather clumsy and redundant. The decision may well be admission and rejection. Indeed, two of my interviewees are still non-citizens; they both were rejected twice and applied for the third time.

On the interview questions

Interviewees are asked about their own personal histories; their migration to Turkey; their expectations and knowledge about Turkey beforehand; the process of application and admission to the citizenship; their interactions and experiences with the state bureaucracy and local people; their impressions and observations in Turkey. In

addition, there were questions about identity, belonging, their understanding of citizenship and how Turkish state defines the citizenship, and what they think about the debates around multicultural citizenship in Turkey having in mind that they have enjoyed cultural and religious rights back in Macedonia from the mid-1940s onwards.¹⁰

Why these immigrants as a case study?

There are two reasons for choosing immigrants of post-1980 period as a case study: firstly the post-1980 period is the time when the dynamics in the Eastern Europe started to change; after 1980, with the death of Tito, the first signs of dissolution from Yugoslavia were observed. In relation to the rise of Serbian, Slovene and Croatian nationalisms, the Turkish minority there, after a pause during the 1970s, began to migrate.

Secondly, Turkish State's attitude towards immigration from the Balkans had changed from the 1980s on. Only variation from the new norm was the 1989 immigration of Turks from Bulgaria. In the other situations, Turkish state changed its policy of accepting immigration, no longer wishing the Turks living abroad to migrate to Turkey. Formerly in the name of building a 'nation-state', the Turks living abroad – whoever they are, whoever claims to be 'Turk' – were welcomed especially from 1930s through 1960s (Kirişçi, 2000). However, by the mid-1970s the Turkish state became reluctant to international immigration. State wanted to keep the number of the Turks abroad intact and to use it as a card in the international diplomacy.

There are also three reasons (one being private) for choosing specifically the Turkish Macedonian immigrants. First of all, although Yugoslavia was disintegrating,

¹⁰ Please see the Appendix for the interview questions.

the Turks in the Macedonia region were not under the threat of ethnic cleansing or serious assimilation. In the newly founded state of Macedonia (FYR of Macedonia) too, Turks constitute a minority yet they still had their cultural and political rights (religious freedom, education in the mother tongue, parliamentary representation). Under these circumstances, they as a case do not resemble the case of Bulgarian Turks who have escaped from serious assimilation in 1989 and found shelter in Turkey. It was a forced migration, expulsion that the Turks of Bulgaria had gone through. Yet, these Turks in Macedonia were not forced and they came by their will. In this regard, I aimed to find out what it is that made them migrate to Turkey, what attracted them in Turkey. I think these questions worth exploring because they will tell us something about the state, citizenship and Turkey.

Secondly, it came interesting to me to look at what happens to an immigrant group carrying an 'acceptable' identity profile in the country receiving them. They are Turks, Sunni and even Hanefi Muslims. I am interested in the ways in which Turkishness and Muslimness are being defined and contested in the everyday life. By exploring the narratives and the lived experiences of the immigrants as citizens, I aim to find out the meanings that are attributed to Turkishness and Muslimness, and the ways in which Turkishness and Muslimness are 'imagined' in Turkey.

As to the last reason, the private one, is that my mother and all her family are Turkish immigrants from Macedonia who have come to Turkey in 1955. My mother was a 3-year-old girl when she crossed the border by train. I have grown up with the stories of 'memleket' that my grandmother told me; I have always seen the look of yearning on her face for what she had left behind. It was confusing to an extent because theirs was a self-willed migration with the other loved ones and relatives. I wanted to

explore what was it about Yugoslavia / Macedonia and what was lacking in Turkey that made her long so wistfully the life she has left behind.

In the subsequent sections, I will move on to the analysis of the interviews. In the first place, I will concentrate on the phenomenon of migration per se, generally the ways in which it is rationalized and realized in the narratives of the immigrants. Then, I will present the ways in which the immigrants articulate the immigrant identity and how they make the citizenship claim in reference to this identity. Lastly, I will present how the immigrants are marginalized and their identities are misrecognized by the locals and the ways in which the immigrants respond to their marginalization and misrecognition. These mutual reactions will provide us an insight into the contesting definitions over Turkishness and Muslimness and the different ways in which the relationship between citizenship and identity is constructed in Turkey.

Migration

It is important for this study to explore how the idea and the act of migration from Macedonia to Turkey are represented, rationalized and experienced by the leading actors, the immigrants; primarily because the ways in which the changes, novelties, experiences and interactions resulting from this migration are understood, interpreted and reflected by the immigrants will shed light to the discussion over the relationship between citizenship and identity in Turkey and will provide us a basis for understanding the contestations over the meanings attributed to ‘Turkishness’ and ‘Muslimness’. In what follows, I will try to present the ways in which the phenomenon of migration to Turkey is *represented, rationalized, realized and experienced* by the immigrants.

Migration as an ‘ever-existing idea’ in the mind of every ‘Balkan Turk’

After the Ottoman rule has definitely ended in the Balkans after the Balkan Wars, the Turks living there became the subjects of a ‘foreign’ rule. Although the migration waves started long before the Balkan wars, as the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire began to shrink; the 1912-13 Balkan Wars were the certain markers of the end of the Ottoman rule in the region. This has drastically reinforced the idea and the reality of migration from Rumelia to Anatolia.

When I asked my interviewees about how and why they decided to migrate, without exception, all of them responded that the idea of migrating to Turkey is in the mind of every Turk living ‘there’, outside the ‘barbed wire’ – meaning beyond the Turkish border. In their narrative, migration is an ever-existing, ever-present idea that they were brought up with. The idea of ‘returning to the homeland’ was in the lullabies that their mothers sang and in the family talks during which their fathers always mention.

The following are some of the immediate responses of my informants on migrating to Turkey:

“Ben hep bildim bileli babam, ‘Allah canımı almasın’, diyordu ‘Yugoslavya’da’. ‘Üç gün olsun orda yaşayayım, orda öleyim’ derdi.”¹¹

According to Şükran’s father, it does not matter even if he lives in Turkey for a very short period of time. The phrase ‘I wish I die there (in Turkey)’ is also something to be emphasized. One is usually buried where one dies, and the grave is thought of an ‘eternal residence’. That is most probably why Şükran’s father, who has resided in Yugoslavia throughout his life, wished to die and be buried in Turkey. Even if he lives for a very short period of time, he wished his eternal residence to be in Turkey.

¹¹ Şükran, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2004. “Ever since I know myself, I recall my father saying ‘May God not take my life in Yugoslavia’ and ‘May I live even for three days there and die there.’”

“Yani her sene geliyorduk ama bizim ailede ve oradaki her Türk’ün bir gün anavatanına göç etme gibi bir fikri var; her ailede bu konuşulur. Her seferinde Türkler ‘bir keçi yolu açılsın da biz hemen Türkiye’ye gideceğiz’ diye bu laflar dolanırdı; yani dar, zor bir yol olsun ama olsun; biz çıkalım gidelim anavatanımıza.”¹²

Mesut’s answer shows the determination of the Turkish community on the idea of migration. A goat’s path is – as Mesut himself explain- narrow, difficult and more importantly uphill. Therefore no matter how tough it is, the community there is determined to migrate to Turkey when opportunity arises.

“Göç etme kararına gelince, hastalık gibi bir şeydi, ezelden beri, dedelerimizden... Bu ninnilerle büyüdük biz. Genellikle bütün benim dönemimden daha yaşlılar, babam büyümüş bu ninnilerle... Dedesi burda doğma, Çaykaralı, kendi babamın dedesi.”¹³

“Göç hep konuşuluyo, hep konuşulmuş hani ben doğmadan önce de öyleymiş, hala da öyle. ... Aslında her bir Türk’ün aklında göç var Makedonya’da.”¹⁴

In Burhan’s representation the idea of migration is something like an obsession that has ever-existed. It is transmitted to the next generations as early as possible through the lullabies. Kerim’s remark also points out the cross-generational aspect of the idea of migration and how widespread it is.

Therefore, it is clear that Turkey / Anatolia is taught to be *remembered* and *represented* as the homeland, the original as well as symbolic homeland of the Turkish community in the Balkans from generations to generations most probably after the end of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans.

¹² Mesut, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 25 April 2004. “We were coming every year but in our family and every Turk there has an idea to migrate the homeland and this is spoken in every family. Every time Turks say ‘even if a goat path opens, we will go directly to Turkey’ that is ‘although it is a narrow and hard road, it does not matter; we shall get out and go to our homeland’.”

¹³ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “When it comes to the decision of migration, it was like an illness that has ever-existed from our grandfathers onwards. We have grown up with these lullabies. In general, all our former generations had grown up with these lullabies. My father’s grandfather was born here in Çaykara.”

¹⁴ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “Migration was and is always talked, long before I was born and still... Actually there is the idea of migration in each and every mind of the Turks in Macedonia.

Causes of Migration: Pragmatic Concerns or Nationalist Sentiments?

The fact that the idea of migrating to Turkey, to the ‘homeland’ is an ever-present idea ‘in the mind of every Turk living there’ was not enough to satisfy my curiosity for why they migrated to Turkey. It is clear that they were brought up with the idea that Turkey, or Anatolia, is the homeland of the Turks. Yet, this alone cannot be the sole reason for such a significant decision. Beyond the ways in which the idea of migration is *represented* in their narratives, it is important to explore the ways in which they *rationalized* the decision of migration. For this reason, I asked them why they migrated at that specific time and not before or after that time – all my interviewees have migrated to Turkey during the period of the post-1980s, more specifically in 1985-1992. The answers to that question revealed the critical reasons that have made them chose to come to Turkey.

In what follows, I will present the more down-to-earth and humane causes of migration and assert that pragmatic concerns together with nationalist sentiments are involved in the decision-making process. It is important to note that pragmatic concerns play a vital part in that they precipitate the decision making process and help the immigrants to rationalize this significant decision.

Yearning for the Close Relatives

It was evident that the years-long demographic move from Balkans to Turkey has separated many families¹⁵. Hence there is a continuous yearning for the loved ones. Turkey, in addition to being the imagined homeland, also meant the place where the loved ones exist. From the narratives of my interviewees, I saw that the existence of

¹⁵ I use the concept of ‘family’ here in its ‘extended’ form, meaning that the brothers and sisters; the uncles and nephews are separated, not the ‘nucleus family’. No one has migrated separately, without her/his immediate family.

close relatives in Turkey was very inspiring for them. It was in this sense a pulling force in migrating to Turkey.

“Eskiden çünkü bizde bir özlem vardı Türkiye için. Hudutlar da kapalı. Benim çocukluğumda çok, gelmek çok zor Türkiye’ye. Anneannemler burada, teyzem burada, dayılar burada, biz yalnız orda. Tabi biz özlemle büyüdük, hem Türkiye için özlemle büyüdük, hem yakınlarımız için. Telefon yok, Internet yok hiçbir şey yok; anca bir mektup; o da kaç ayda bir mektup; öyle kolay posta da işlemezdi herhalde. Sırrı dayı bize takvim gönderirdi, Makedonya’ya. Saatli maarif takvimi vardı. Biz artık canla beklerdik yılbaşı gelsin, dayı takvim gönderecek. Biz de övünürdük arkadaşlara; herkeste o yok, herkesin akrabası burada yok tabi, o yüzden çok özlem çektik. Benim eşim bana her zaman, haftada iki defa, çalıştığı şirketin otobüsleri geliyordu Türkiye’ye haftada iki defa; bütün otobüslerde kalan eski gazeteleri bana getiriyordu ben okuyayım diye. Valla evet, bunları hep yaşadık biz, çok özlem vardı.”¹⁶

‘Saatli maarif takvimi’ (the calendar which includes information for the organization of daily life) and the Turkish newspapers signify how Şükran was preoccupied with the life in Turkey. ‘Saatli maarif takvimi’ is an organizer of time and especially of the daily life by giving a whole bundle of information from the times for the religious duties such as fasting (oruç) and praying (namaz) to national days and even to what to cook, when to plant the flowers, and what significant event happened in (Turkish) history on that day. Therefore ‘saatli maarif takvimi’ vicariously helps Şükran to relate herself to her relatives and their life in Turkey temporally. ‘Saatli maarif’ is in no way relevant to the life in Yugoslavia, it is a calendar of different geography yet it served Şükran in making her feel attached to the loved ones, to her grandmother, aunts and uncles on a ‘daily’ basis. It is a vicarious way of communication between her and

¹⁶ Şükran, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2004. “Because in the past we had a yearning for Turkey. The borders were closed too. In my childhood, coming to Turkey was so difficult. My grandmothers were here, my aunt was here, the uncles were here, only we were there. Of course we have grown up with yearning, both for Turkey and for our close ones. No telephone, no Internet, nothing; at most a letter and that was once in many months; probably the mail was not working easily too. Uncle Sırrı used to send us calendar, to Macedonia. There was saatli maarif calendar. We couldn’t wait for the New Year, the uncle will send us a calendar. We boasted to our friends; because not everybody had that, not everybody had relatives here; therefore we had so much yearning. My husband always, twice in a week brought me the old Turkish newspapers –the company that he was working in had buses that stopped by Turkey twice in a week- that were left in the buses so that I could read them. I swear, yes, we all had lived these, there was so much yearning.”

her relatives in Turkey. The ‘old’ Turkish newspapers for Şükran were another way of relating herself to the life in Turkey. Şükran is reflecting on herself towards the end of her response by saying ‘Valla evet, bunları hep yaşadık biz’. She ‘swears to God’ that ‘yes’ an ordinary calendar and old Turkish newspapers –normally unimportant details of daily life for someone living in Turkey- have meant that much to her back in Yugoslavia. Because they were the only ways in which –beside letters that took months to arrive- to communicate with her loved ones and related herself to the life in Turkey.

Enis and Kerim also points to the influence of having relatives in Turkey in their migration:

“... akrabalar burda olduğu için mecburen buraya geldik. Başka bir yerde olsalardı, oraya da giderdik, küçük bir yere. Ama akrabalar burda olduğu için ilk biz de buraya geldik. Sebep budur İstanbul’a gelişimizin, Manisa’da olsaydı akrabalar Manisa’ya taşınırdık. İstanbul’da bulundukları için biz de buraya geldik.”¹⁷

“Biz de gelmek istiyorduk hani, ben ne bileyim işte, burdaki iki teyzem, dayım, annemin ailesinin hemen hemen tamamı İstanbul’da ve böyle hep hayal ediyoduk, nasıl İstanbul’a gidecez falan, böyle hayallerimizi süslüyordu. Kesinlikle içimizde göç vardı.”¹⁸

Enis uses the phrase ‘out of necessity’ as to why they have chosen to reside in Istanbul. Therefore, the relatives – beyond being an inspiration for those who stayed back in Macedonia (one can sense the inspiration in Kerim’s response) - are also one of the determinants in the migration process as to where to migrate. It is without question that Enis and Kerim will choose to reside where their relatives reside. Sırrı, like Enis and Kerim, chose to reside in the neighborhood where his relatives also reside:

¹⁷ Enis, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “...we have come here out of necessity because the relatives were here. If they were in some other place, we would have gone there too, a little settlement. Yet, because the relative were here, we too have come here. The reason for our coming to Istanbul is that; if the relatives were in Manisa, we would have moved in Manisa. Because they were in Istanbul, we too came here.”

¹⁸ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “We too were willing to come, I mean, I have two aunts here and my uncle; almost all of my mother’s family is in Istanbul and we were always dreaming of it, how we will go to Istanbul, it was always in our dreams. Very definitely, the migration was into us.”

“Acıbadem malum İstanbul’da bi semt. Ben taşındığım zaman bi komşum, bi tanıdığım hiç yok. Benim biraz yukarda eniştem oturuyo. Biraz daha aşağıda diğer eniştem oturuyo. Öyle bi üçgendeyiz. Kapalıçarşı’da biraderle çalışmağa başladığımızda ilk yaptığımız iş, bizim memlekette akrabalarımız var, telefon oldu. O zaman da telefonlar daha öyle ucuz değil, düştü artık biraz. 1500 mark hatırlarım iki telefon aldık biz, biraderle bağladık. Tamam bağladık telefonu da e arayan soran yok. Beklersin, kimse aramaz. Ha ben aramasam o arar yani iki-üç kişiyle konuşabilirsin. Üç kişiye selam veriyosun. Camiye gidiyosun tanıımıyosun kimseyi.”¹⁹

Sırrı’s response reveals the feeling of loneliness in spite of having relatives around. He and his brother put a great deal of money in order to communicate primarily with the relatives back in Macedonia, yet the limited number of calls they have made with that telephone revealed their loneliness *beyond* the family in the ‘homeland’.

Relatives are important also for learning how to survive in Turkey. Nearly all of my informants always asked for help from their relatives and they were the only ones that gave a hand to them.

“Meslekle ilgili de pek bi destek bulamadık kimseden. Ama işte bir ev almak için, evini düzenlemek için hani ortama adapte olmak için bize yardımcı olan çok oldu. Gene hısım-akrabadan oldular.”²⁰

Kerim is a doctor of internal medicine. As to his occupation it makes sense that he did not received any help from his relatives, if there is no doctor among them. Still for adaptation and survival, only the relatives were the ones who help them. Yet for his wife, things were even more difficult because contrary to Kerim, she has left all her loved ones behind.

¹⁹ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “Acıbadem, as you know, is a neighborhood in Istanbul. When I have moved there, I do not have any neighbor, any acquaintance. Two of my aunts’ husbands were living a little before and after where I lived. We were in a triangle like that. The first that we (me and my brother) did when we have started to work in the Grand Bazaar was to have a telephone because we had relatives in hometown. At those times unlike now, telephone was a pretty expensive thing. I remember we had bought two telephones for 1500 Mark. We had connected the telephones ok but there is not anyone who called us. You wait but nobody calls. At most you would speak to two to three people. You say hello to three people. You go to the mosque, you don’t know anyone.”

²⁰ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “Nobody has supported us when it comes to our profession. Yet, to buy a house, to furnish your house, or to be adapted to the environment; there were many to help us. Again they were from relatives.”

“Eşim de biraz daha sıkıntılı, çünkü annesi, babası, ablaları orda kaldı. O zaman da pek görüşemiyorduk. Uzmanlık yaparken biz beş yıl maaş almadan çalıştık. Çünkü yabancı uyruklu statüsündeydik. Dolayısıyla çok sık gidemiyorduk Makedonya’ya, onun sıkıntısı vardı. İşte annesi geliyordu, kayınpederim geliyordu. O biraz hafifletti sıkıntılarını. Ama tabii ki eşim üzülmüyordu. Gelmişiz yabancı bir yere, hala arkadaş edinememiştir, komşu falan yok, bütün can ciğerlerin orda. Daha sıkıntılı geçti eşim için.”²¹

This quotation is significant because it reveals the patriarchal aspect of the migration. The decision to migrate and when to migrate are always taken by the husband. Kerim migrated to Turkey with his older brother and he had uncles and aunts in Istanbul. Yet, Kerim’s wife did not have any relatives residing in Turkey. If she was the one who would give the last decision, it is of high possibility that she would not choose to migrate. I will dwell more on this patriarchal aspect when discussing migration as a familial phenomenon. Kerim’s words also emphasize how it is hard to be away from the ‘can ciğerler’ (loved ones) in a ‘yabancı yer’, ‘foreign place’ located in the ‘homeland’.

If not always relatives, the existence of other immigrants from Macedonia matter to a great extent primarily because it makes the adaptation process relatively smooth at least in the immediate environment. Burhan’s case is important in this sense. He told me first that when he has migrated to Turkey, he lived in Kadıköy-Moda, at Şifa neighborhood and that he and his family did not experience any difficulty in adaptation to the neighborhood.

“Ben geldiğimde Kadıköy-Moda’nın Şifa semtinde oturmuştum. Etrafla çevreyle adaptasyonda bir sorunumuz hiç olmadı. Her girdiğimiz ortamda hoş karşılandık. Adapte olduk. Onlar bize gelirlerdi, biz onlara giderdik. Hatta apartmanın

²¹ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “It was more depressing for my wife because her mother, father and sisters all stayed there. Plus, we were not able to see them that frequently. We have worked for five years without a salary when we were doing our expertise because we were under the foreigner status. Therefore we were not able to go to Macedonia that often, we had that trouble. Her mother used to come, my father-in-law used to come. That lessened her distress. But of course my wife was feeling very sad. We have come to an alien place, still could not make any friends, no neighbors, and all of your loved ones are there. It was more depressing for my wife.”

anahtarları bile bizde dururdu. Yaşlılar olmasına rağmen, lazım olur diye, bizden gelip alırlardı anahtarları.”²²

They were welcomed by the other residents in the neighborhood and more importantly ‘trusted’ by them. Trust is harder to be built and among the neighborhood and in the ordinary Turkish ‘apartment house’ culture, giving the keys to one’s neighbor is ‘the’ sign of trust. Then I immediately asked whether there were any other immigrants from Macedonia, he responded me as follows:

“Eski çok eski gelenler ama, tabii ki ne kadar olsa Rumeli insanı olduğumuz için çok da birbirimize yakınlaştık. Yani ordan o tür hissiyatlar var. Apartmanda olsun, çok eski gelenler... O muhitte daha ağırlıklı Üsküp yöresinin yerleşimi. Daha önceden çok öncelerden... Mesela bizim geldiğimiz dönemden belki 50-60 sene önce gelenler. Onlarla camide karşılaşıyoruz, şivemizden farkediliyor ya göçmen olduğumuz, onlar da... Bizim dedem, babam o taraflıdır diye sohbetler...”²³

He presented me as if he had no difficulty in adaptation to Turkey; yet he would not explain the primary facilitative reason for that, if I did not ask him about the existence of any other immigrants in their neighborhood. The existence of other immigrants -no matter when they have migrated to Turkey- mediated their adaptation to the life in Turkey primarily because they had commonalities in their destinies, experiences and more importantly identities. Burhan’s words carry a sense of comfort that arose from living with the ‘hemşeriler’. His emphasis on the common immigrant dialect is the most obvious sign of the comfort he enjoys in his immediate milieu.

²² Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “When I first came, I lived in the Şifa neighborhood of Kadıköy-Moda. We did not have any trouble in adaptation to the environment. We were all welcomed in all the milieux we have been in. We adapted. They used to visit us, we were visiting them. Moreover, we were keeping the keys of the building. Although they were old people, when it is needed, they were used to take the keys from us.”

²³ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “They were from those who have come long long ago yet, of course because we all are the people from Rumelia we became very close. We had common feelings coming from there. In the apartment house, there were earlier immigrants... In that neighborhood, most of the residents are from Skopje. They were those who had come very long ago... For instance, they migrated perhaps some 50-60 years ago than us. We meet them in the mosque; it is noticed from our dialect that we are immigrants and from their dialect too... then the chats begin like ‘my grandfather and father is from there...’

It is important to note here that all of my immigrants, except İsmet who lives in Levent, live in Kadıköy, Hasanpaşa and Acıbadem neighborhoods of Istanbul where a considerable amount of immigrant community from Macedonia exist.

This proximity to the relatives as well as to the other immigrants from Macedonia is very significant for the Macedonian Turkish immigrants' forms of existence in Turkey. To be more specific, this proximity with the 'similar' ones help them to accommodate the life in Turkey. More importantly, it helped them to overcome their estrangement and marginalization by the local population as well which I will discuss more in subsequent sections.

The Simple Arithmetics of Migration

The decision of migration is taken after serious considerations and calculations of the possible and relative gains and losses in here and there. In the narratives of the immigrants, one can see the two important political and economic changes occurred in the post-1980 period here (Turkey) and there (Yugoslavia) that transformed the whole status-quo of the immigrants' lives. I will discuss these changes separately in the next two subheadings.

The disintegration of Yugoslavia

The first drastic change was the death of Tito in 1981. The balance of federal country was immediately damaged after his death. What began formerly as rivalry among the republics' Communist parties turned into full blown ethnic politics by the late 1980s. The emerging turbulence was exacerbated by the coincident collapse of the Soviet bloc regimes in 1989. At the federal level, the new leaders of the republic parties found the possibility of asserting themselves and their ethnic politics in the post-Tito power vacuum. Those were the infamous Milan Kucan of Slovenia and Slobodan

Milosevic of Serbia that seized this opportunity in 1986 (Lampe, 1996, p.325). The gradual disintegration of Yugoslavia and the rise of ethnic politics and rivalries ended the relatively peaceful period of the ‘genuine’ socialism of Tito’s Yugoslavia.

The end of Tito’s Yugoslavia is one of the main reasons and thereby the main ‘push factor’ of the immigration from Yugoslavia to Turkey. Most of my interviewees celebrate Tito’s Yugoslavia, if not without reservations which I will point out later on, and stress the perfect working of the system and the human side of it. Şükran articulates it in a very sincere and simple way:

“Bizim çocukluğumuz çok güzel geçti. Tabii rejimin de çok avantajları vardı. Zengin-fakir herkes aynıydı zaten. Kimsenin kimseye gözü kaçmazdı. Bak bu Sude çok güzel giyiniyor, diğeri giyinmiyor diye birşey yoktu. Genelde herkes normal. Hepsi zaten devlet memuru, belli bir maaş. Sosyal hakları herkesin eşitti. Sosyal haklar çok vardı zaten. Sağlık, doktor, ilaç... İlaç parası, hiçbir türlü para vermezdin. Hangi ilaca hangi hastalıktan olursa olsun hiç ilaç parası yoktur bizde. Hastane parası yoktu. Bunları bütün hep devlet karşıladı.”²⁴

The way she was telling all this to me both revealed a latent mourning for what has ended there and at the same time a hidden criticism to the lack of the social state in Turkey. It should also be stressed that the fact she was using the expression ‘*bizde*’. She is making a hidden separation between us and them; us being the Yugoslav state and citizens, and them being the Turkish state and citizens. This is important for the problematic of this thesis because it shows us the extent to which the Yugoslavian experience has shaped their understanding of state and citizenship.

²⁴ Şükran, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2004. “We had a lovely childhood. Surely, the regime had its own advantages. Everybody, rich-poor, all were the same. Nobody looked at anybody. ‘Look, this Sude is dressed pretty, the other not’ there wasn’t that kind of comparison. In general everybody was normal. All were state officials with a certain salary. Everybody has equal social rights. There were many social rights. Healthcare, doctor, medicine... You never paid for medicine. We never pay for medicine no matter which medicine it is and for which illness. There was no payment for the hospital. All of these were paid by the state.”

When I asked İsmet about the city that she used to live back in Macedonia, she began telling her childhood, romanticizing it then switched to telling the state that Şükran was cherishing:

“...çocukluğumuz çok güzel geçti. Hiç bi eksiğimiz yoktu. Ben memnunum orda çocukluğum geçti diye. Sokaklarında oynardım, bisiklet altımda... Hadi burda çık bakayım sokağa, sapık var çıkamazsın. Orda öyle şeyler yoktu, rahattık, burda olan sapıklıklar... Biz burda öğrendik. Orda gecenin 12’sine kadar sokaktaydık, ooh oynardık, bisiklete binerdim, çünkü araba tehlikesi yoktu. Yollar rahat araba çok yok. Tertemiz hava, yani güzellikleri çok vardı, rahat bir çocukluk geçirdik. Sporumuzla, bilmem şeyimizle herşeyimizi yaptık, hiç bi eksiğimiz yok. Belki burda olsaydık, bunları yapamazdık. Çünkü orda devlet herşeyi ödediği için ve sağladığı için, burdaki gibi değil. Şu kadar milyon ver de git spor yap, orda öyle bi şey yok. Her taraf açık gidiyosun, kaydını yaptırıyosun, sporunu yapıyorsun. Yani o kısmı da güzeldi. Okullar bedava, özel okul diye bişiy yok. Herkez aynı yerde, herkes aynı okul, herkez aynı hastanede. Yani eşitlik budur. İnsan ayırımı yoktu. Onun için hep eşitlikte büyüdük, burdaki gibi insanlar fakir, ezik, kompleksleri falan orda hiç kimsede oluşmadı ki! Yok öyle bir, öyle bir sınıflama yok. Herkes eşit çünkü. Az çok, herkes devlete çalışıyor, herkesin bi maaşı var, devlet herkese ev veriyö, 20 sene krediyle. Bizimkiler yeni çıkartıyo. 20 sene krediyle biz evimizi almıştık. Maaştan bi para kesiliyodu. Gayet, geride kalan hayatını sürdürebilecek şekilde. Herkez de şıktı, herkezin saçı başı sarılı, boyalıydı. Yani hiç bir eksikliğimiz yoktu.”²⁵

It is evident how İsmet too is both romanticizing the state and the regime in Yugoslavia, and contrasting it with the state, the regime and the order in Turkey. While talking about her childhood years, she was at the same time emphasizing the importance of safety and order that Turkey lacked. Being able to do anything she wanted

²⁵ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “We had a lovely childhood. We had nothing missing. I am very pleased that I have lived my childhood there. I have played in its streets, on my bicycle... here you cannot go out, there are perverts. There wasn’t such kind of thing, we were comfortable... we became aware of such things here. We were out in the streets till midnight, played, rode our bicycles because there were no cars, no dangers. The roads were free. A very clean weather, I mean there were many beauties of it, we had a comfortable childhood. We had sports and everything, nothing was missing. Perhaps if we were here, we would not have done all those because the state pays for everthing and provides everything there, unlike here. Pay that much money and do your sport, there wasn’t that kind of thing. Every place was open and free; you register and do your sports. That was perfect too. The schools were free, there was no such thing like private school. Everybody is in the same place, in the same school, in the same hospital. That is equality. There was no discrimination. We have always grown up in equality, and therefore the people who were brought up there did not become poor and insecure like the ones here! There was no such classification because everybody is equal. Little or much, everyone has a salary, works for the state; the state provides housing for everyone for 20 years credit. Here we are presenting it nowadays. We have bought our house with 20 years credit. They were financing it bit by bit from our salaries. The money left was very enough for sustenance. Everybody was stylish, everyone has hair dyed blonde and made. That is to say, we had nothing missing.”

(everything including sports) back in Yugoslavia makes her to switch to a discussion of the state and a comparison with Turkey. She is emphasizing the fact that everyone was going to the same school, the same hospital; everyone was working for the state and owned a house in Yugoslavia and contrasting it with the Turkish case. She is celebrating equality and classlessness which Turkey lacked. The Yugoslavian experience as former Yugoslav citizens has a considerable effect on their evaluation of the state, society and citizenship in Turkey.

The constant use of '*bizde*', '*bizim*' (except a critical '*bizimkiler*' in İsmet in referring to Turkey) in both Şükran and İsmet should alert one to think about their belonging to Yugoslavia / Macedonia. It is interesting to follow how usages of us and them shift throughout their narratives of here and there. There is a very interesting anecdote that Sırrı told me which demonstrates the complicated nature of shifting belongings:

“Ben buraya göç ettiğim zaman, 86. 86'nın sonunda bizim milli takımımız çok bayağı bi ilerleme kaydediyo Fatih Terim'le ve bayağı biz şeydeyiz biz hani futbolun. Şak şak şak, en büyük Türk! Aynen laflar öyle. Ordan göç ettik, çok büyük Türk, hasta Türk. E burda göç ettiğim zaman işte seyrediyoruz maçları, aynı zamanda Avrupa Şampiyonası var şeyde, baskette. Ben basketi severim. Ama baskette hiç bi tarafı tutmam, Türkiye de yok baskette. E Yugoslavyayı seyrediyorum o zaman, Yugoslavya taraftarıyız yani, fanatik taraftarı değilim yani ama. Milli marşını, Yugoslavya'nın çıktı, ben böyle diken diken oluyorum. Evimde! Burda! Anlatıyorum, göç ettikten sonra olan olay bu, aman Allah'ım. Türk Milli Marşı... hiiiç hiiiç! Ben o zaman dedim ki, yani, bize gerçekten görünmeyen bi asimilasyon yapmışlar.”²⁶

²⁶ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “When I have migrated to here, it was the year 86. Towards the end of 86, our national football team was having many successes with Fatih Terim and we were very good at football. Clap clap, the Turk is the biggest! We have just migrated from there, very big Turk, ill Turk. When we have just migrated, we were watching the matches; at the same time there was European Basketball Championship. Yet, I do not support anybody in basketball; Turkey was not competing in it. So I was watching the Yugoslavian team then, that is to say, we were the supporters of Yugoslavia, but not a fanatic. They played the national anthem of Yugoslavia, and I felt bristling on all over my body. At my home! Here! I am telling you, this is something that happened right after when I have migrated to Turkey, oh my God. Turkish national anthem... nothing noothing! Then I said to myself, I mean, they have made an invisible assimilation on us.”

It is ironic how ‘our national team’ did not produce the ‘horripilation’ effect (*‘diken diken olmak’*) that the Yugoslavian basketball team was able to produce on Sırrı. For a person like Sırrı who declare himself as ‘very nationalist’²⁷ it is extremely strange to feel his hairs bristling as he listens the Yugoslavian national anthem, while sitting at his house, ‘under his flag’²⁸, in Turkey. For explaining this weird experience both to himself and to me, he started to reflect on himself. He finds the explanation he needs by saying that “‘they’ (is not clear who ‘they’ are) made an invisible assimilation on us”. Yet, I think this anecdote tells something beyond an ‘invisible assimilation’. Yugoslavia was their country, their place of birth and they were Yugoslav citizens until they migrated to Turkey. Hence the ‘horripilation’ effect demonstrates us how immigrants experience multiple and shifting belongings in relation to the context they are in.

Burhan was more direct in manifesting his belonging to Yugoslavia when I asked him what he preferred to say about where he is coming from:

“Şimdi enteresan bir şey ben hiç bir şey diyemiyorum. Eski Yugoslavya’danım diyorum. Makedonya’yı kullanmak istemiyorum. Ne bileyim, özel bir antipatim var Makedon millete. Ondan dolayı belki de. Makedonyalıyım desem, bir kere bir türlü şeye uyar, kılıfa. Makedonyalı demek zorundayız ama, ağzıma almak istemiyorum. Eskiden bir, Yugoslavyalı diyebiliyorduk... Ama Makedon asla ve asla hiç onu kabul edemiyorum. Yooo, onu demem.”²⁹

It is evident that the idea of Yugoslavia and being Yugoslavian were above and beyond any ethnic connotation. That is why Burhan prefers to identify himself as ‘from Yugoslavia’ because if he uses ‘Macedonia’, he thinks it would make sense in a number of ways, including ways that most probably he would not like. Being Yugoslavian

²⁷ Sırrı: “...ben hep biraz böyle hasta nasyonalist değil ama çok nasyonalistim.”

²⁸ Sırrı: “Yani o zaman çok nasyonalisttim, hasta değil, ama burda da diyim aynı, ama burda bayrağım altında olduğum için fazla bi milliyetçilik taslamam.”

²⁹ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “Well, it is interesting because I cannot say anything. I say ‘I am from the former Yugoslavia. I don’t want to use Macedonia. I don’t know; I have a special antipathy for Macedonian nation. Maybe it is because of that. For one thing, if I say Macedonia, it could mean a number of things. We have to say we are from Macedonia but I don’t want to pronounce it. In the past, we could say we are Yugoslavian... but, Macedonian never and I never ever accept that. Noo, I do not say that.”

means being a member of the Yugoslav state which takes its legitimacy not from the ethnic majority but from a socialist ideology while Macedonia is a state where the legitimacy is mostly being derived from an ethnic majority. İsmet, right in the beginning of our talk, when I asked where she was born, replied as follows:

“Eski Yugoslavya diyim, bana göre Yugoslavya, eski değil, hala öyle...
Makedonya İştıp şehrinde doğdum.”³⁰

Although, Yugoslavia as a state and reality no longer exists, İsmet prefers to name that geography still as Yugoslavia. It has something to do with their position as Turks and Muslims in the Yugoslavian experience and it explains to a certain extent why they choose to stay there and not to migrate until the 1980s.

In order to concretize these interpretations, it would be appropriate to give a historical sketch of these immigrants’ Yugoslavia: It is evident with the statistics that after the regime consolidated in Yugoslavia during the late 1950s, there is a dramatic decline in the immigration from Yugoslavia.³¹ This was due to the consolidating socialist system and Tito’s regime. In the first place, the 1946 Constitution that marks a departure from the Soviet model by guaranteeing religious freedom for all (Lampe, 1996, p.230), enshrined *bratstvo i jedinstvo* (brotherhood and unity). This ideal contained four equalities. All citizens had equal rights and duties regardless of ethnicity or religion. So did all republics, their minority as well as their majority populations. Third, all South Slav “peoples and other groups” deserved equal standing, and, finally, all were expected to have made an equal contribution to the war effort (Lampe, 1996, p.232).

³⁰ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “Let me say former Yugoslavia, and for me Yugoslavia is not former, it is still Yugoslavia... I was born in the city of Stip, Macedonia.”

³¹ Please see Chapter II for the immigration figures during this period.

This political structure was accompanied by economic development and Tito's Yugoslavia ascended during the period 1954-1967. Yugoslavia recorded rates of economic growth throughout the remainder of the 1950s that matched no country in Eastern Europe. As in other Communist economies, the emphasis on heavy industry left the standard of living to fall behind. But, during the 1960s, standards improved significantly for a majority of the population. Domestic production and Western imports brought in a better supply of food and consumer goods. It is recognized that people could speak, study, or travel more freely than in any other Communist state. Some of them, whether party members or not, began to feel like Yugoslavs with legal rights as individual citizens (Lampe, 1996, p.260). Educational standards rose, a more open if still monitored media began to have an impact, and the free expression of opinion and the practice religion benefited from significant concessions (Lampe, 1996, p.261). Indeed, here are some remarks from my interviewees on education, life standards, and religious freedom before the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Abdullah, when I asked him about his thoughts on migrating to Turkey when he was young, he answered with emphasis that he never thought of migrating to Turkey during 1970s and early 80s and gave his reasons:

“Hiç aklımdan geçirmiyordum! Hiç... İnanın doğruyu söylüyorum. Ben 1977’de evlendim, hiç öyle bir şey aklımdan geçirmiyordum. O zaman rahat yaşıyorduk, bir sorunumuz yoktu. Eğitimimiz, diğer arkadaşlarla eşit haklara sahip eğitim alabilirdik, çalışmalar öyle, istediğimiz yerde çalışabilirdik. Mutluluk vardı, huzur vardı. O yüzden de hiç aklımdan geçirmediim.”³²

The idea of migrating to Turkey, although it is represented as an ‘ever-existing idea in the mind of every Turk living there’ as I have discussed in the preceding

³² Abdullah, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 4 May 2005. “It never crossed my mind! Never... Believe me, I am telling the truth. I have married in 1977, I have never thought a thing like that. ... We were living comfortable; we didn’t have any problem; we would work anywhere we want. There was happiness, there was peace. Therefore it never crossed my mind.”

sections, never crossed Abdullah's mind during Tito's Yugoslavia. The pragmatic concerns got the upper hand during this era. Şükran is making a subtle comparison of Yugoslavia and Turkey as to the life standards:

"İlerdeydi hep Yugoslavya o dönemlerde. Sporda çok ilerdeydi, teknikte, her şeyde. Tabii şimdi değişti ama o zamanlar çok farklıydı. Televizyon, makine, buzdolabı, her şey. Bizde ben bildim bileli hiç elde çamaşır yıkamadım hep otomatik makine... Tabii, 40 sene önce vardı bizde otomatik çamaşır makinesi. ... Bizlerde telefon vardı da bizim buradaki akrabalarda yoktu. Tabii telefonla görüşemiyorduk."³³

From these remarks, we understand that for Şükran '*o dönemlerde*' was the times that Yugoslavia under Tito was promising more than Turkey was.

"Kimi Müslümanlıktan dolayı geldiğimizi zannedebilirler, İslamiyetten dolayı diyebilirler... Hayır biz orda İslamiyeti tam manasıyla yaşadık. Ezanlarla doğduk, büyüdük. Hani hiç bir baskı görmedik. Ama Türklüğümüzü, daha doğrusu ikinci sınıf vatandaş olduğumuz bariz ortada. Bunu üstünüzden atmak, bu yükü üstünüzden atmamız için bizim...atamazdık...ama çocukların bu yükü yaşamasını hiç tahammül edemem."³⁴

This quotation is interesting for two things: First of all, it tells something about Yugoslav state and citizenship. Above and beyond the claims of equality of ethnicities under the constitutional guarantee, in its practice the system was not that perfect. Burhan defines himself as a 'second-class citizen' with respect to his ethnicity not with respect to his religion. Hence ethnicity mattered much more than religion in their decision to migrate. Secondly, the way he explained the religious freedom they enjoyed back in Yugoslavia reveals another concern that I will discuss more later on: he is trying to emphasize the fact that 'thanks to the religious freedom in Yugoslavia, we have

³³ Şükran, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2004. "During those times, Yugoslavia was far ahead. It was far ahead in sports, in technics, everything. Surely, now it changed but, at those times it was very different. The TV, washing machine, refrigerator, everything. I have never known myself washing things in my hands. Of course, we had automatic washing machines 40 years ago. ... We had telephones but our relatives here did not have. Of course we could not talk on the phone."

³⁴ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. "Some may think that we have come here because of Islam... no, we have lived our Islam there completely. We were born and grown up with the calls to prayer. That is, we never had any constraint. But our Turkishness, that is to say the fact that we were second-class citizens was evident. It was hard for us to get rid of that; for us to get rid of that... we could not... but, I cannot stand seeing my children carrying that burden."

learned, practiced and preserved our religion; and transmit Islam to the next generations successfully; hence we were not assimilated religiously and hence we are as Muslims as you are’.

Kerim and İsmet also narrate the religious freedom they had in Yugoslavia:

“Biz Makedonya’dan dinimizi daha iyi yaşamak için gelmedik çünkü orda da böyle bir sıkıntımız yoktu. Belki Bulgarlar için bu geçerli, Bulgar Türkleri için ama bizim öyle bir derdimiz yok. Orda yaptığım kadar burda yapıyorum hani orada dinime ne kadar bağlıysam burda o kadar bağlıyım. Orada daha bağlı olan biri burda da daha bağlı olabilir. Orda dinini hiç tutmayan biri yani camiye gitmeyen oruç tutmayan biri burda da oruç tutmayabilir. Hani Makedonya Türklerinde bu konu çok sorun haline gelmedi, gelmemiştir.”³⁵

Kerim’s use of the word ‘better’ is critical here. It emphasizes that Turkey was not offering more compared to Yugoslavia/Macedonia with respect to practicing religion.

Moving from Burhan’s above quotation where he describes his ethnic identity in Yugoslavia as a ‘burden’, and the other informants’ remarks about their minority position; we can see that they always had their reservations about the state in Yugoslavia. Although the ethnic discrimination was prohibited by the constitution, all my informants stressed the obstacles for Turks, and other minorities. Indeed, the expression of ‘second-class citizenship’ summarizes the whole situation. Indeed in this sense one can argue that they uphold ethnicity over religion when it comes to evaluate their position as citizens in Yugoslavia.

Kerim explains the difficulties and even impossibility of a Turk in achieving upward mobility in Yugoslavia:

³⁵ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “We did not come here from Macedonia in order to live our religion better because we did not have a problem there too. Perhaps that is valid for the Bulgarians, for the Bulgarian Turks but, we do not have such a trouble. I practice here as much as I practice there, that is I am committed to my religion as much as I was committed there. The one who is more committed there would be equally committed here. The one who did not practice his religion there may not practice here too. That is to say this issue has never become a problem in Macedonian Turks.”

“70’li yıllar 80’lere kadar Türklere ciddi bir baskı yoktu. ... Ama neticede gene hissediyorsun onu, yani bir üniversitede yırtınsan da bir öğretim üyesi olamazdın. Yani ne kadar çok başarılı olsan asistan olarak kalamazdın, Türk olduğun için. Ya da belediyede bir belediye başkanı Türk olamazdı. Asla, yasalarla bu yasaktı. Müslümanlık ayrı bir sıkıntı. Eğer kalkıp da sen komünist partisine üye olduktan sonra oruç tutamazdın. Yani iyi bir mevkiye gelmek mümkün değil. Orda da iyi bir mevkiye gelenler, Türk toplumu tarafından itiliyor, yani bu satık, komünist, bizi satan adam falan... Öyle bir baskı vardı. Türk olduğun için yolun ne belediyede ne eğitimde ne de üniversitede açık değildi.”³⁶

In the end, they were one of the many ‘others’ in that geography and there were serious discrimination working against them. They had to carry this burden as a minority. Even more dramatic, but of course not surprising, is the fact that discrimination works on both sides as Kerim expresses it sincerely. When a Turk-Muslim became a member of communist party, s/he will be then discriminated by her/his own community. In any case, one had to choose sides and bear the outcomes.

İsmet narrates what it is like to be a Turk in Yugoslavia and in Turkey in an interesting way:

“E orda yaşarken oraya ait. İnsan yaşadığı yere, nerde eşyası, nerde okulu, nerde arkadaşları... Oralı hissediyö kendini. Ama hiç bi zaman da Türk olduğunu unutmuyosun. Adetler farklı, kültür farklı, anadilin farklı, ismin farklı orda da yaşamak kolay değildi. Ben tanıştığım zaman biriyle, ‘ben İsmet’ dediğim zaman, ‘ay sen nesin?’ diyorlardı. Tabii çok kişi, çünkü orda tarih problemi var. Tarihte bizi çok kötü okuttular, Türkleri. Dolayısıyla, Türk şeyi çok barbar, savaşçı, bizimkileri öldürmüş, toprağımızı almış... Şimdi Türk dediğin zaman sen o kimliğe geliyorsun. Oranın sıkıntıları vardı ki, buranın hasretini çekiyosun. Orda çok rahat olsan, belki de çekmezsın. Yani Türk olmak da yurtdışında kolay bi şey değil. Ama buraya geldiğin zaman, ‘İsmet’ dediğim zaman bi daha bakıyolar, erkek ismi diyolar, o kadar yani fazlası değil. Yani o şeyi hissetmiyorsun. Ama orda farklısın.”³⁷

³⁶ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “Until the 70s and the 80s there was not serious pressure on Turks. ... But, in the end, you feel it, that is, you could never be an academician even if you tried your best. That is, no matter how much successful you are, you could never be a research assistant, because you were a Turk. Or a Turk could never become a mayor. Never, it was forbidden by law. Muslimness was another trouble. If you become a member of the communist party, you could not fast. That is, it was never possible for you to come to a good position. The ones who have attained to come to a good position there were repressed by the Turkish community; they were labeled as ‘communist’, ‘the man who sold us’, etc. there was such pressure. Because you were a Turk, the roads were not open to you either in municipality or in the university.”

³⁷ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “When you were living there, you feel you belong to there. Humans belong to where their belongings, their schools, their friends are... you feel yourself belonging to there. But, you also never forget the fact that you are a Turk. Your traditions are different, your culture

İsmet's phrase 'Türk olduğunu unutmuyorsun' is very telling about what it is like to be a minority in such a context. In every moment of life, every time you meet someone new, you are 'reminded' that you are a Turk and different than others. While her name İsmet used to symbolize being a Turk coupled with a number of pejorative connotations to a person who has just met her in Yugoslavia; it symbolizes only a male name that is given to a female person in Turkey.

Yugoslavia was changing as it entered the 1980s. As a result of the rising ethnic rivalries and economic deterioration, Yugoslavia was not that safe and prosperous place to live anymore. For the Turks living there, the 'sleeping idea of migrating to the homeland' was awakened once again.

"Hep düşünüyorduk. Aslında her bir Türk'ün aklında göç var Makedonya'da. Böyle durumlar kötüye gidince bir miktar dalga halinde geliyorlar, sonra gene orda kalıyorlar durum iyi olunca. 60'lı, 70'li yıllarda pek göç etmeyi düşünmüyorduk. Ya ne kadar da hoş gelse, bir sürü burda (*Türkiye'den bahsediyor*) eksiklikten bahsettim, gene aklımız ordaydı, rahattık, eğitimin var, çok da ciddi bir şekilde dini kısıtlamalar da yoktu, Bulgaristan'da olduğu gibi. Ama bakıyorsun 80'li yılların sonlarına doğru ortam karışıyor, iyicene, Slovenya-Sırbistan savaşı başladı, Bosna savaşı başladı, o zaman gene bizim içimizdeki uyuyan göç devri harekete geçiyor ve geliyorduk. Karışmasaydı çok, belki biz de kalırdık. Çünkü uzmanlığımı alsaydım, orda uzman doktor olarak çalışsaydım, o rahatlığı belki bırakmazdık. Çünkü Emekli Sandığı'ndan çalışıyorsun, stajın gidiyor, maaşın var, sigortan var, herşeyin var, onları bırakıp buraya öyle yabancı uyruklu statüsünde gelmek çok zor bir şeydi."³⁸

is different, your mother tongue is different, your name is different; living there was not easy. When I met someone, and say 'I'm İsmet'; they say 'oh, what are you?' of course too many people, because there is this problem in history. They represented us, the Turks, very badly in history. Therefore, a Turk was represented as a barbarian, warrior, the ones who had slaughtered us and took away our lands... Now when you say Turk, you are associated with that identity. Because you had these troubles there, you had a yearning for here. Otherwise you wouldn't have that yearning. That is to say, to be a Turk abroad is not an easy thing. Yet, when you come here, when I say 'İsmet', they look at me one more time and say that's a man's name and that's all, nothing more. I mean, you do not feel that kind of thing. But, there you are different."

³⁸ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. "We were always thinking about it. Actually there is the idea of migration in each and every mind of the Turks in Macedonia. When things go bad, they came here like a wave but then they stay there when the conditions improve. We were not thinking about migrating during the 60s and 70s. No matter how much it sounds pretty, I have mentioned many shortcomings about here (*referring to Turkey*), our mind was again there; we were comfortable; I have had my education; there was not serious constraints on religion, like it was in Bulgaria. But when you look at the late 80s, the atmosphere began to worsen, thoroughly, the Slovene-Serbian war broke out, Bosnian war began; then the sleeping migration giant woke up and we were coming. If things did not worsen that much, perhaps we too have stayed there. Because if I have had my

This quotation reflects the pragmatic ‘why’ of the migration. Kerim admits that when things were going pretty well, ‘their mind was always there’ and he would have stayed there if there was no turmoil. Yet, because Kerim could not begin his specialization as a doctor in Yugoslavia coupled with the reality of war with all its chaos and ugliness; he decided to come to Turkey under the status of ‘foreigner’, which is another difficulty and source of distress in itself.

İsmet and Sırrı gave more mundane and concrete examples when they experience after the death of Tito that have precipitated their migration to Turkey:

“...esas en büyük nedenim Tito’nun ölümünden sonra oranın kötüleşmesi, fakirliğin başlaması, işte Türk-Gavur farkı, “siz Müslümansınız” gibi şeyler belirginleşmeye başladı. Nitekim birkaç sene sonra savaş da oldu. O hep görülden şeylerdi, yani yavaş yavaş Türkler istenmediğini beyan etmeye başladılar ki biz gayet güzel yaşadık hep beraber, öyle bi problemimiz yoktu. Ama Tito’nun ölümünden sonra, fakirlik başladı, fakirlik başlayınca da herkes herkesin gözünü oyar. Ekmek kuyukları, yağ yok, bi ara Ecevit’in zamanında burda nasıl olduysa o tarz şeyler. E tabi kendileri kendi akrabalarına bulur, sen kalırsın. Böyle bi tatsızlık olmaya başladı ortalıkta bi, artık gitmemiz gerektiğinin şeyi başladı böyle. Yani herşeye rağmen, bütün zorluklara rağmen orda evin var, araban var, bi sistemin var, bi rahatın var, her şeyi bırakıp geliyorsun. Onu yapmak zorunda kaldılar sonuçta, herşeyi bırakıp, sıfırdan başlamak da kolay bi şey değil.”³⁹

The rising ethnic and religious divide coupled with the economic deterioration after Tito convinced İsmet and her family to leave behind their ‘established order’ and migrate to Turkey where they will ‘begin from scratch’. One can sense the

expertise and worked there as a doctor, perhaps, I would not leave that comfort. Because you are working within Emekli Sandığı, you are doing your internship, you have salary, insurance, everything; it was very difficult to leave all those and come here under the foreigner status.”

³⁹ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “The fundamental and biggest reason of my coming here is the fact that after Tito’s death, things began to worsen there, poverty occurred, the Turk-non-Muslim discrimination started. Likewise the war started after a few years. Those were the things that were always noticed, that is to say they slowly began to express their reluctance towards the Turks although we were living happily altogether. Yet after Tito’s death, poverty occurred, and when poverty emerges everybody become foe to one another. Bread queues, no oil, like those happened during Ecevit’s administration. Of course they will provide for their own relatives, only you will be left out. That kind of unpleasant behaviors emerged around and we then knew that we had to leave. That is to say, in spite of everything, every difficulty you have a home there, your car, you have an order, you have comfort and you leave everything and come here. In the end they had to do that; it is not that easy to leave everything and start from scratch.”

discrimination she felt from her expression when she was mentioning scarcity: ‘sure, they will find for their relatives’ but ‘you are on your own’.

“...göç nasıl başlar? Bir kaç örnek vereyim: İlk örnek verdim, gelir senin kızına, ver ben alıcam oğluma... O büyük bi baskı. Sonra işe girersin ben 12 sene öğretmenlik yaptım orda. Bir komisyondaydım “Solider” diyorlardı. Solider yani yardımsever. Kimlere? Fakire. Kim fakir? Geliyor diyor ki bizim öğretmenimiz var. Evi yok. Hali vakti de yok. Bu yardımı devlet veriyor, çok ucuz bi parayla kirada oturuyor o evde. Lojman diyecem, ev iki oda bi salon yok. Bir buçuk oda bi salon. 60 metrekare ev. 55 metrekare. Beni, benim arkadaşlar o komisyona koymuşlar, o dağıtım komisyonunun başkanımı ben. Komünist Partisi var, Türkler tabu olarak görüyorlar. Olmuyor komünist partisi üyesi, yapmıyorlar. Ben de olmadım, o zamana kadar. Geldik, tesbit ettik, iki arkadaş gerçekten çok şey. Türk okulu bu benim çalıştığım okul. Arnavutlar 2 sınıf var, Makedonlar 2 sınıf var. Yani 2 sınıf birinci, 2 sınıf ikinci, 2 sınıf üçüncü, 2 sınıf dördüncü. Dörtten sonra onlar giderdiler başka okullara. Ama bizde 8 sınıflık kuralı devam ediyolardı. Türk ilkokulu. Şimdi adı değişti, Atatürk İlkokulu oldu. Bu yani başkasına göre hiç bi baskı değil bana göre çok baskı. Çağırdı müdür beni. Müdür de benim hocam. Lisede ders veren bi adam, çok samimiydin. Onu çok ben seviyodum. Dedi Sırrı sen dedi, görüyorum hep organize oluyosun, bunu dedi Emine Hanımla Hakim Beye vereceksiniz daireleri dedi, ama dedi bu sefer dedi biz atlatalım onu dedi. Niye? Dedi şey bi Tomi var, Hristiyan, ona ev verelim. Niye verelim, onun evi var? Bu sefer dedi Komünist Partisi kanalıyla, o hiç duymasın o. E bu bi baskı. Bu bi dayatma. Bu dayatmayı ben çok içime aldım ve okul yaşamımdan istifa ettim. Gerçekten verdiler şeye Tomi’ye verdiler. Ondan sonra onlar ikiyse, bizimkiler bir tane aldı. Ondan sonra 2 sene sonra bizimkiler aldı. Yani 5 sene sarktı. İkinci bir küçük şey, baskı, fabrikada olsun ya da bi inşaat şirketinde olsun, çok arkadaşlar vardı, akrabalarımız vardı. Mimarsınız, sen okuyosun, o okuyo, mimarlık okuyosunuz ikiniz. Allah korusun, siz gayrimüslim, o Müslüman. O Türk, sen Makedon. Bitiriyosunuz, mezun oluyosunuz, işe başvurursunuz, ikiniz de aynı şirkete giriyosunuz. O, Türk olduğu için usta başı, 10 tane ustanın başına koyarlar, seni müdür yaparlar. Olur mu böyle bi şey. Bu da görevde baskıdır. İşte bu baskılar, 80’lerin baskılarıdır.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “...how does migration begin? Let me give you a couple of examples: The first one; he comes and says that I want your daughter for my son... that’s a big pressure. Then you are hired; I have served as a teacher for 12 years there. I was in a commission; they called it “Solider”. That means philanthropy. For whom? The poor. Who is poor? A teacher who does not own a house and does not have enough financial ability. This help is provided by the state and this teacher in need resides in that house for a very little money. A house of almost two rooms and one living room. 60 or 55 square meters. I was appointed to the presidency of that commission. There is the communist party and Turks see that as a tabuu; they do not become members of the communist party. I did not become a member too, until that time. We analyzed and determined two friends who were really in need. The school that I was working was a Turkish school. There were two classes for Albanians, two for Macedonians. Now its name has changed and become Atatürk Primary School. That might not be a pressure for one but for me that’s a pressure. The principal called me; he was my teacher too. We were very close. I loved him very much. He said ‘look Sırrı I am seeing you are organizing the commission and you will give those two apartments to Emine hanım and Hakim bey. Yet, for this time let skip them.’ I said ‘why?’ He said ‘there is this Tomi, a Christian, let’s give the house to him.’ I said ‘but why, he already owns a house.’ He said ‘for this time, it is through the Communist Party.’ That’s a pressure then. That’s an insistence. I couldn’t stand that and I left my school career. Indeed, they gave it to Tomi. From then onwards, if they get two, ours get one. A second

The first example for the pressure they felt in Yugoslavia reveals the intimate link between gender and ethnicity/religion. As I will mention later on this chapter, it was primarily through the women that Turkishness and Muslimness were thought to be preserved in such a multi-ethnic and multi-religious context. That is why Sırrı sees it as an ‘extreme pressure’. The second and third examples reveal how the non-Muslims, say Macedonian, are favored vis-à-vis Turks and Muslims.

The fear that the situation will worsen everywhere pressured my interviewees to make a hard and saddening decision:

“Yugoslavya’daki siyasi çalkantılardan sonra yani durumun daha da kötüleşeceğini hissettiğimiz için ben şahsen adıma çok acı bir karar verdim, ve 83’de karar verdim, 85’te de Türkiye’ye göç ettim.”⁴¹

They were migrating to their original ‘homeland’ where things began to change too and for them ‘positive’ things were happening which eased their decision-making.

When I asked Abdullah how they take the decision of migration, he responded:

“Konuşulacak bişey yoktu pek, değerlendirme yapılıyordu, burdaki şartlar, ordaki şartları değerlendirilmesini... Artık birtakım şeyler orda da görmeye başladık, düşünüldüğü zaman gerçekten gidişat iyiye gitmiyordu. Savaş huzursuzluk yapıyordu. Burda da baktığımız zaman ziyaretlerimizde, Türkiye’deki bazı ilerlemeler bu tarafa daha ağırlık veriyordu.”⁴²

The Turkish side of the equation was changing and, ‘bazı ilerlemeler’ was the advent of neoliberal economy in Turkey.

minor example of pressure is this. Be it in a factory or in a civil engineering company, there were many friends and relatives. Let’s say you both are architects; god saves you are a Christian, he is a Muslim. He is a Turk, you are a Macedonian. You both graduate and you are both hired by the same company. He, because he is a Turk, is appointed as a principal master above 10 masters. They appoint you as the principal. Now is that fair? Now that’s a pressure that one is faced in her/his duty. And these are the pressures of the 1980s.”

⁴¹ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “After the political turmoil in Yugoslavia and when we felt that the circumstances would worsen; I, myself, have made a very painful decision, and I have decided in the year 83, in the year 85 I have migrated to Turkey.”

⁴² Abdullah, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 4 May 2005. “There was nothing to talk about, evaluations were being made; the evaluation of the circumstances here and circumstances there... Finally we started to see some things there too, and it was evident that things were not going ok. The war was discomforting. When we look at here, in our visits, the existence of some progress in Turkey was giving more weight to this side.”

The new neoliberal Turkey keeping up with the West

Up to the 1980s, Turkey lacked many of what Yugoslavia had: higher opportunities for education, higher life standards, the existence of social rights and social security, health care and a working system. After the 1980s and still Turkey did not enjoy what Yugoslavia had, such as a working social state and social security for its citizens. Yet, the idea of living in Turkey became more appealing to the immigrants after the advent of neoliberal economic policies, the free market economy because Turkey was in ‘progress’.

Şükran as a housewife tells the progress in Turkey with reference to her immediate needs in her private realm:

“Özal’dan sonra biz buraya gelmeyi düşündük. Önce burada biz gidip geliyorduk görüyorduk beyaz eşyada birçok şey yoktu. Kırk sene önce vardı bizde otomatik çamaşır makinesi. ... Uydu antenler Özal’dan sonra oldu, önce yoktu. ... Seksenlerden sonra buraya birçok şey geldi, önce yoktu.”⁴³

Abdullah narrates the change in Turkey in a more general context:

“84’e kadar Türkiye’ye gelmek kısmet olmadı. 84’te geldiğimde Türkiye’yi kötü bir durumda da görmedim, gerçekten iyiydi. Beklediğimden hoştu. 1983’te sivil hükümetin kurulması, yeni anayasa... Ondan sonra her geldiğim senede çok farklı gördük, 85’te yine tatile geldik, 86’da yine yaz tatiline geldik... Günden güne farklılık yani her alanda gelişme vardı, her alanda patlama gibi bir şey vardı. Yani işte tatile gittiğimizde daha düzgün bir şekilde hizmet, misafirperverlik, oteller öyle, hepsi bir ilerlemeydi.”⁴⁴

Burhan, formerly a chemical engineer in glass industry in Yugoslavia, describes the transformation by referring to the industrial advance:

⁴³ Şükran, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2004. “We have thought of coming to here after Özal. In the past we were visiting here and seeing that the furnitures that we have had there was not present here. We had automatic washing machine forty years ago. ... The satellite dishes emerged after Özal, before there was not any. ... Many things have arrived here after the eighties.”

⁴⁴ Abdullah, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 4 May 2005. “Up to the year 84, we couldn’t come to Turkey. When I have come in 84, I didn’t see Turkey in a bad condition, it was really good. It was prettier than I have expected. The foundation of the civilian rule in 1983, the new constitution... in every time I have come after then we have seen it different; in 85 we have come for a vacation again; in 86 again for a summer vacation... there was progress, like an explosion in every spheres day after day. That is to say, when we have vacations here, we receive more proper services, hospitality; the hotels too were like that; all was a progress.”

“Mesela iş icabı bir yere gidersiniz, bir cam fabrikası, bir makina fabrikası var, motor fabrikası var. Santralleri görürsünüz. Yani bir ülkenin sanayisini görürsünüz. Onunla birlikte yine üretilen yedek parçaları görürsünüz. Türkiye’ye geldiğimde ise ben şunu farkettim: 1985 yılında, benim geldiğim sene, ilk rulman fabrikası açıldı. Yani makineyi döndürecek mekanizma. Rahat verecek, sürtünmeyi önleyecek mekanizma. Onu ben çocukluğumda gördüm orda! Bu beni üzmüştü. “İlk rulman fabrikası”, vay derdim ne biçim sanayi ki rulmanı ithal ediyor Türkiye. Ama gel gör ki, şimdi ihraç ediyor rulmanı. Yani 80lerden, Özal’dan sonra büyük gelişme olmuştur Türkiye’de.”⁴⁵

Kerim, who have migrated in 1991, gives similar examples related to what Turkey lacked in comparison with Yugoslavia especially during 1970s and early 80s and admit how these affected his decision about migrating to Turkey:

“Bazı olumsuzluklar görüyodum Türkiye’de aslında ve bazen de korkuyodum yani gelmek istiyodum ama gelmesem de olur ki o 70li ve 80li yılları hatırlamıyorum, o zaman ziyarete gelmedim pek, burda durumlar iyi değildi, o sıkıyönetim dönemi falan. 80 sonrasında da bir sürü garip şeyler görüyoduk, ne bileyim işte dayımın ııı bizde işte televizyon vardı hatta renkli televizyon vardı, burda geliyoduk akşam saat 6 ile 10 arası TRT1 yayını (*gölüyor*) ve bitiyodu. Orda yaşadığımız bazı şeyleri burda bulamıyoduk, onun sıkıntısı vardı. Ne bileyim işte bi otomatik çamaşır makinesi vardı, buzdolabı vardı ama dayımda ııı dayımın belki durumu çok iyi olmadığı için tabii yoktu ama hep diyoduk açık, merdaneli bi çamaşır makinesi nasıl olur, bizde otomatik, hani bazı şeyler yoktu Türkiye’de. Sonra üniversitedeyken gördüklerimle kıyas yapıyordum. Mesela hala demir uçlu enjektörlerle iğne yapılyordu. Bizde plastik enjektörler vardı. Tek kullanılır. Ya da aşılar, antibiyotik...hani burda pek bulamıyorduk. Ya da geliyorduk memleketle konuşamıyorduk. PTT’yi arıyorduk, ismimizi yazdırıyorduk, onlar bağlantı kuruyorlardı bizim için... Orası öyle değildi. Buranın olumsuz tarafları da vardı.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “For instance, you go to a place for business, to a glass factory say, or a machine factory, or a motor factory. You see the power plants. That is to say you see the industry of a country. Together with it, you also see the standby products. But when I have to Turkey, I have realized this: in 1985, the year that I came, the first roller bearing factory was opened. That is the mechanism that will turn the machine. A mechanism that comforts and prevents the friction. I have seen that in my childhood there! I was sorry for that. “The first roller bearing factory” I said, “what kind of industry is this that Turkey even imports the roller bearing”. But now, you see, it is expoting the roller bearing. That is to say, from the 1980s onwards, after Özal there happened a huge development in Turkey.”

⁴⁶ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “Actually, I was seeing some negativities in Turkey and sometimes I was afraid, that is, I wanted to come but I thought I might not come too; I do not remember exactly the 70s and 80s; I didn’t come to visit that frequently; the circumstances were not good either; the martial law was in effect. After 1980, we saw a number of weird things too, how do I say, we had color TV long before but we see here that the TRT1 broadcast was between 6 pm and 10 pm (*laughing*) and then it ended. The things that we used to have back in there were not available here, that was a problem. For instance we had automatic washing machine, refrigerator but my uncle, maybe because my uncle’s financial situation was not that good, did not have one. But we were always surprised with the idea of an open, rolled washing machine, ours was always automatic, that is Turkey lacked certain things. Then I was comparing the university here with the university there. For instance, here they were still using iron-tipped injectors. We had the plastic ones. For one use. Or we couldn’t find certain vaccines, antibiotics. Or we couldn’t telephone our homecountry. First we had to call the PTT and

‘Iron-tipped injectors’, ‘rollered washing machine’, limited broadcasting and communication means all were the signs of economic underdevelopment in Turkey that came extremely ‘weird’ to them. Yet, Turkey was opening itself to the West economically when it enters Özal era and in a very soon period Turkey became as offering as Yugoslavia.

Having presented the context within which these immigrants decided to migrate, I argue that pragmatic concerns play a critical role in the decision-making process as well as the nationalist sentiments. In a sense pragmatic concerns mediate the nationalist priorities in deciding to migrate to Turkey.

Migrating to Istanbul or Turkey: the city as a cause in itself

It was not before my interview with İsmet, I became aware of one significant and subtle reason of the immigration to Turkey: the city of Istanbul. With her story and the way she makes sense of herself and the world, she is the one who make me realize that before Turkey, it was the city of Istanbul that these people have migrated to. Istanbul was more than a city; it symbolized a whole set of other things: a metropolitan, the old capital of the Ottoman Empire, the western and modern Turkey, and the city where the loved ones were also living.

“İstanbul zaten dünyanın en güzel yeri yani... Daha çok Kumburgaz’a giderdik, deniz kenarı ama ne biliyim yani insanın hayalidir burası, burda yaşamak, burda okumak, buralı olmak, ordayken...”⁴⁷

Their visits to Istanbul played a great part in İsmet’s aspirations. ‘Burası’ was primarily Istanbul, not Turkey, and it was Istanbul that İsmet dreamed to be a part of.

register our names; they made the connection for us... There was not like here, it was different. Here had its own negative sides.”

⁴⁷ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “İstanbul is already the most beautiful place on earth... We used to go Kumburgaz more often, sea side but, here is a dream for one; to live here; to go to school here; to belong to here, when one is there...”

When I asked Kerim about what they were expecting to find in Turkey as they pay visits, he responded:

“Belki çocuktuk o zaman çok farklı şeyleri beklemiyorduk ama ne bileyim işte bir Sultanahmeti bile gezmek, Ayasofyaya gitmek falan, işte boğaz köprüsünün çok güzel kartpostalları vardı, vapur falan onlardan çok hoşlanıyoduk.”⁴⁸

Not surprisingly –because they were just like any tourist- he was referring to the Istanbulite symbols. Yet, it was through that Istanbul that they were imagining Turkey. It was with the below quotation from İsmet that I realized the significance of Istanbul vis-à-vis Turkey as a whole in relation to their migration. It came as a response to my question ‘what did you feel when you have become a Turkish citizen’:

“...sadece kolaylıktı. Vatandaş olmuşun, olmamışın... Sadece bu kimliğe kavuşuyosun. Bi kere nüfus cüzdanın oluyo, evrakların oluyo, bankaya gidiyosun, maaşını alabiliyosun. O zaman böyle bankamatikler yoktu ki. Yani bankaya gidiyosun kimlik istemiyo, maaşını alıyosun, gidiyosun, geliyosun. Polis durduruyo, kimlik soruyo, kimliğin var. Yani bi yere aitsin. Zaten hep istediğim bi şeydir. Tek İstanbul, ben Türkiye diyemiyorum artık, İstanbul görüyorum çünkü sadece. Orası bizi aşıyo, o öbür taraflar. Bize uymaz. Yani İstanbul İstanbul gibi olmasaydı zor yaşıyordı.”⁴⁹

She begins by explaining as if being a Turkish citizen meant only a facility of having an ID card. As she expands on having an ID card, the issue of belonging enters into the picture. The ID card was signifying ‘belonging to a place’ and that place for İsmet was Istanbul, not Turkey. She emphasizes ‘only Istanbul’ and continues ‘I cannot say Turkey’. She is associating herself with Istanbul not with Turkey. Because Turkey also includes ‘orası’ / ‘o öbür taraflar’ which does not suit to ‘us’. One should ask the

⁴⁸ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “Maybe we were children then and did not expect very different things but, you know, to wander around Sultanahmet, to go to Ayasofya; there were pretty postcards of the Bogazici Bridge; and we very much liked the steamships.”

⁴⁹ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “...only a facility. Becoming a citizen or not... You only reach that identity. For one thing, you have an ID card, you have papers, and you go to a bank and take your salary. There were not any ATMs at those times. That is to say, you go to a bank and the official does not ask your ID, you are able to take your salary and you can come and go. The police stop you and ask your ID, you have an ID. That is you belong to a place. I have always wanted it. Only Istanbul, I cannot say Turkey, because I only see Istanbul. There, the other places exceed us. They do not fit us. That is if Istanbul was not like Istanbul; it would have been very hard for us to survive here.”

questions of ‘what is ‘o öbür taraflar’’, ‘who is this ‘us’ and ‘what will not fit ‘us’.

Anatolia was ‘o öbür taraflar’ and ‘biz’ were the immigrants. It was a whole set of connotations that Anatolia has that exceeds ‘us’. I furthered with a question ‘would you choose to come to Turkey, if there is no Istanbul?’ and in her response she also explained why ‘o öbür taraflar’ exceeds them:

“Hayır, ben Konya’da yaşayamazdım. İran gibi bana Konya. O insanları, o düşünceleri, o konuşmaları mümkün değil öyle olamazdım. Değişemezsin öyle. Çok geri gitmektir bizim için. A biz İstanbul’u Avrupa gibi... o kültüre... burda çokkültürlük var, çok insan var. Bi yerde izole oluyo, girebiliyosun bu çarkın içine. Ama orda çokkültürlük yok, yani orda tekdüze var, tek tip var, tek aile yapısı var, çok şeyler yani onların, hala bu yaşta benim 20 sene sonra (*20 senedir Türkiye’de*) kafam almıyo nasıl bir kafa yapıları var. Töre cinayeti, ne bu ya? Nasıl bi kafa yapısı bu, nasıl bi insan gider çocuğunu öldürür? Ne yapmış? Adamı öpmüş, radyoda şarkı istemiş diye çocuğunu öldürüyo, nasıl bi kafa bu? Ama orda başkasının çocuğuyla evlilik yapar ki o da birinin çocuğu. Ona her halt yaparken iyi de kendi çocuğu niye şarkı istiyemez, niye aşk yaşayamaz, bu nasıl bi kafa? Ben bunların içinde yaşamam, Allah korusun! (*Tahtaya vuruyor.*) Başedemem. Daha iyi orda kalalım. Ama İstanbul öyle değil. İstanbul kozmopolit yani, herkese göre her şey var. İstanbul, inan Avrupa’da yok böyle bi yer. Öyle bi yer yok. Böyle bi rahatlık, huzur, herşeye rağmen İstanbul çok rahat, çok huzurlu, herkes çok free burda, yani. Çok hürriyetin sana ait, istediğini yaparsın, gidersin, gelirsın, hiç kimse hiç bişiy demez. Burda tek sorun para. Paran oldu mu İstanbul’da her şey var. Bi tek bi sorun o.”⁵⁰

Here we see the articulation of a dichotomy between Istanbul and Anatolia (represented by Konya). While Istanbul is being associated with Europe, Konya is being associated with Iran. While she associates Istanbul with cosmopolitan, multicultural,

⁵⁰ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “No, I could not live in Konya. Konya is Iran to me. Those people, those thoughts, those talks; it is not possible that I would be like them. You cannot change that much. That means to go extremely backwards for us. We see Istanbul like Europe... its culture... there is multiculturalism, many people in Istanbul. At one place you can be isolated and enter the turning wheel. But there is not multiculturalism, that is, there is a monotonous life, one sort of family structure. They are very different. For 20 years after, I still cannot understand their mindset. Honor crime, what is it? What kind of a mindset is this and howcome one kills his own children? What did she do? Kissed the man, made a song wish in the radio. What kind of a mindset is this? But then he made a marriage with someone else’s child. It is good when he does anything he wishes to her but it is not when his daughter falls in love with another man. Why? I cannot live among those, God saves! (*Knocking on wood*) I cannot manage. It is better that I stay there, back in Macedonia. But, Istanbul is not like that. Istanbul is cosmopolit. There is everything for everyone. Believe me, there is no such place like Istanbul in Europe. No such place there. There is peace and tranquility in spite of everthing Istanbul is very comfortable, very peaceful, everybody is very free here. Your freedom belongs to you, you can do anything you want, you come, you go; nobody says anything to you. The only problem here is the money. If you have the money, there is everything in Istanbul. The only problem is that.”

pluralist, modern, free and liberal; in opposition to Konya with parochial, monocultural, monolithic, backward, illiberal, patriarchal and bigoted. She picks the example of honor crimes in order to reinforce her point that ‘they’, ‘their culture’ and ‘their mindset’ is absolutely and inarguably irreconcilable and incongruent. While she thinks that she can find a way to enter and survive in Istanbul, in her terms ‘izole olabiliyorsun, girebiliyorsun bu çarkın içine’; in Konya she cannot imagine to be able to do the same since her lifestyle, mindset and culture are too different (than theirs) to be able to ‘isolated’. ‘God saves!’ Knocking on wood, she prefers to stay back in Macedonia than to live in Konya.

İsmet’s differentiation between us and them (us being the immigrants and them being Anatolian people) will sound more interesting and much complicating, as I will discuss more later on, when we see İsmet and all my other informants refer to an Anatolian origin and more surprisingly in İsmet to a Konya descent as they narrate and ‘prove’ their Turkish and Muslim identity. It is, I will argue, a double and complicated process of articulating and maintaining their Turkish-Muslim identity through sameness and difference simultaneously. The difference is like a subset of East-West divide. Here is how İsmet upholds Istanbul because of the city’s similarity and even sameness with Europe:

“İstanbul ile Avrupa arasında hiç bi fark görmüyorum. Demokrasiyse demokrasi, zenginlikse zenginlik, her okul var. İstanbul’da doğan insanın çok şanslı. İstanbul çok rahat memleket. Yani hakikaten değerini bilmek lazım. Çünkü hakikaten -inan- İstanbul Avrupa aynı şeydir.”⁵¹

⁵¹ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “I do not see any difference between Istanbul and Europe. If it’s democracy, here is democracy, if it’s affluence, here is affluence; there is every type of schools. The one who is born in Istanbul is very lucky, believe me. Istanbul is a comfortable place. Really one should know the worth of it. Because really –believe me- Istanbul and Europe is the same thing.”

Here the West, the Europe and thereby Istanbul is again being associated with democracy, welfare, comfort, place of opportunities that one should acknowledge the worth of it.

It is important to underline from time to time the fact that I do not want to claim that all the immigrants from Macedonia, including the group that I have made my research with, is homogeneous, having exactly the same aspirations, belongings, etc. Throughout this study, I have tried to explore, point out, and explain commonalities. In this issue too, Kerim, another interviewee, highlights different features of Istanbul. When I asked what he was doing when he came to Istanbul prior to their migration, he responded:

“...camilere gidiyorduk, Sultanahmet’e gittik, Eyüp Sultan’a gittik filan... O açıdan belki daha daha güzel oluyordu Türkiye, belki Makedonya’da bulamadığımızı buluyorduk burda. (S: *Yugoslavya döneminde camileriniz yok muydu ki?*) Vardı. Yani çok böyle baskı altında değildik ama yıkılmıştı o eserler. Kalkıp bir Eyüp Sultan gibi eserler yoktu. Buraya geldiğimiz zaman tabii ki çok hoşumuza gidiyordu. (...) Eyüpten vapurla Anadolu yakasına geçtik, işte boğazı geçelim dedik, hani boğaz çok önemli çok güzel bişey, hani boğazı vapurla geçmek, sonra köprüyle geri döndük ve böyle bir tur attık İstanbul’da. İstanbul hakkında bir tablo o zaman oluştu kafamda.”⁵²

Kerim’s Istanbul is more Islamic than European because he emphasizes the Ottoman monuments and settlements like Sultanahmet and Eyüp Sultan. Istanbul, in that case, more signifies the old capital of the Ottoman Empire than a European city that İsmet articulates.

⁵² Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “We were going to mosques, to Sultanahmet, Eyüp Sultan, etc... from that perspective, perhaps Turkey seemed much more beautiful, and perhaps we have found what we have lacked in Macedonia. (S: *Don’t you have mosques during Yugoslavian times?*) We have. We were not under a serious pressure but many of those works of art were destroyed. There was not any work of art like Eyüp Sultan. When we were coming here, of course we were enjoying them very much. ... We crossed to the Anatolian side by ship from Eyüp. The Bosphorus is very important and very beautiful. Then we returned by crossing the bridge and we had this tour of Istanbul. Then I had the imaginary of Istanbul.”

Last but not least, it is important to note that all my informants excluding İsmet were from small settlements. Hence we should keep in mind that the comparison they make is between a metropolitan and a small city (Gostivar vs. Istanbul).

The Familial Aspect of Migration

Having presented these reasons for migration, I now want to reserve this section for the psychological justifications of migration. Most of my interviewees ended their stories of migration with the similar sentences. They all presented the issue of migration as a duty towards their family, their children and the future offspring. It was some kind of justification, rationalization, some kind of effort for comforting the self after all those difficulties and pain that they as a family have gone through.

The father, as ‘the head of the household’, is usually the one who made the decision of migration. Hence from this perspective it is an extremely patriarchal decision.

“Benim burda birtakım göçeden akrabalarım vardı, amcam filan vardı. Belki de cesaretlenmemin sebeplerinden biri de oydu. Benim eşimin hiç bir hısımla, akrabasının olmamasına rağmen ilk hesapta yadırgadı gelmemizi. Benim kararlı olmamın sebebi onun hiç bir akrabasının olmamasına rağmen beraber geldik, küçük bir depresyon olmasına rağmen geldik. Asıl kararı veren, aile reisi olarak ben verdim. Belki de birtakım direktiflere dayanarak verdim. Hanımım gelmek istememesine rağmen benim için bir tek yol olduğunu, yani Raptışta’dan İstanbul’a olduğunu, kendisi için -özellikle ailesinin huzurunda söyledim- iki yol tercihi vardı. Birincisi benim yanımda İstanbul’a doğru Türkiye’ye, ikincisi benim evimden annesine doğru gidebilirdi. Ben kararlıydım. Kararlarımı açıklayıp da ne bileyim başkalarına kabul ettirme, önsezilerim benim bu, oranın daha kötüye gideceğinden dolayı benim çocuklarımla orda ne bileyim eğitim görmesini, o devletlere askeri hizmet vermesine tahammül edemem, bir Türk olarak. Nedenleri bu, ondan sonra biz buraya geldik Allah kısmet etti ve geldiğimize de hiç pişman değiliz.”⁵³

⁵³ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “I had some immigrant relatives, my uncle here. Perhaps it is the reason for my courage. My wife has found our migrating to Turkey strange, because she didn’t have any relatives here. I was determined in spite of her and in spite of her having a little depression. The one who made the real decision, as the head of the family was me. Although my wife did not want to migrate, I told her that there was one road for me and that was from Raptishta to Istanbul and two roads for her –and I told her this in front of her family- one with me from Raptishta to Istanbul and secondly one road from our house to her mother’s house. I was determined. I do not need to debate my decisions and take consent from the others. I had this insight

Burhan's 'determination' to migrate was his wife's surrender. What Burhan tries to de-emphasize by calling it 'küçük bir depresyon' was in fact a result of the inflexible situation that his wife was in. She was 'free' to decide: she had the option of staying in Raptişt, with her parents, divorced, probably without her children by her side or she had the option of going to Turkey, with her husband and children, but leaving behind all her loved ones. Burhan even does not care to take the consent of his wife. He was doing it for the sake of his children and this is how he justifies his inegalitarian stance towards her wife. Indeed, one of the primary ways in which migration to Turkey is rationalized and justified is 'for the children, their education, and for saving them'. Burhan is against his children having education there and serving for 'those states' in the army. He does not pronounce any name of states, yet from his expression 'those states' he seems to refer to post-Yugoslavian states such as Macedonia. As I have argued previously, they were identifying themselves with Yugoslavia -again to an extent- as Yugoslavians; yet, they do not identify themselves with Macedonia, as Turks. Because he does not identify himself with the state (the Macedonian state), he does not bear his children to get involved in it.

Şükran is another one who emphasizes the education of her children as their primary reason for migration:

"O (*eşini kastediyor*) ne düşünüyordu, o çocukların eğitimi için burayı seçti. O yüzden. Orda bizim baskımız hiçbir şeyimiz yoktu. Yaşantımız çok güzeldi. Oranın şartları da çok güzeldi. Herşey, havası güzel, küçük bir yerd, herkes tanıyor, herkese karşı saygımız vardı, öyle hiçbir baskı görmedik. Biz ticaret için de buraya gelmedik, zengin olalım diye veya başka bir şey için illa çocukların eğitimi için burada istedik. (...) orda üniversite Türkçe yok, Makedonca, o yüzden

that the situation would worsen. I can not stand –as a Turk- my children to have education there and serve for their military. These were the reasons for our coming here. God let us to come here and we never ever regret for it."

Türkiye’yi seçtik. Çocukların eğitimi, bizim gelmemizin nedeni çocukların eğitimi, onların geleceği o kadar.”⁵⁴

Again we see the patriarchal character of the migration process. Şükran’s husband was the one who ‘chose’ to migrate to Turkey and the decision was again taken in the name of the children. Even though, there are primary and secondary schools where the language of instruction is Turkish; they did not want their children to have the higher education in Macedonian language. I also want to point out Şükran’s picture of where she used to live back in Macedonia from this quotation. Contrary to the others, she underlines the fact that they were not faced with any pressure. I think that one can explain this inconsistency from a gendered point of view. Şükran is a housewife and she used to live in Gostivar, a small settlement where mostly Albanian and Turks live. Her milieu was surely different than Burhan’s or Kerim’s or İsmet’s (again a woman yet a student, and living in the city of Istip where Turks are rare) milieus which do not enable them to draw such a peaceful picture. Kerim’s major concern was also ‘saving’ his children:

“Ben çocuklarımı buraya kurtarmak için neticede geldim, orda Türk olarak yaşamak zordur artık, Balkanlarda çok zor, sayın az olduğu için, siyasi alanda çok forsun olmadığı için, ekonomik bir istikrarsızlık da bunun üzerine gelince naapacaksın, ben çocuklarımı kurtarmak için geldim.”⁵⁵

Thus, migration is in general more a familial phenomenon as opposed to individual concerns in the context of these immigrants. It is planned and legitimized on

⁵⁴ Şükran, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2004. “What was he (referring to her husband) thinking; he chose here for children’s education. That was the reason. We did not feel any pressure there. Our life was very beautiful. Everything, its weather was good; it was a little place, everybody knows you, we had respect for everybody; we did not feel any pressure. We did not come here for trading too, or for becoming rich or anything else. We wanted to come here especially for children’s education. ... There was no education in Turkish in the university level, only in Macedonian, because of that we chose turkey. Children’s education, the reason for our coming here is Children’s education and their future, that’s all.”

⁵⁵ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “I have come here in order to save my children, to live there as a Turk is hard from now on, in the Balkans it is hard, because your number is low and you do not have power in the political realm and when all these were coupled with economic instability; what will you do? I came here to save my children.”

familial grounds – taking care of children’s future, their education; and saving Turkish and Muslim identities of their offspring from ‘assimilation’.

The way the Turkish state registers them (those who came as legally migrants) also reinforces this familial aspect of migration. For the migrant certificate, the ‘muhacir kağıdı’ or ‘vesika’ (which will take place the ID card until they are admitted to the citizenship); a photograph of the ‘whole family’ together, not as individuals, was taken. It was in a sense a collective, familial identity card. Sırrı, with his most sincerity, gave me a photocopy of that 20-years-old document, who knows how many times he photocopied it. Yet, there was another document which Sırrı narrated as more critical, that was the ‘grey’ one way passport that were given to them only to leave Yugoslavia once and for all as the settlers of Yugoslavia and to enter Turkey as immigrants:

“Önce bi gri pasaport veriyolar. O gri pasaport tek taraflıdır. Ecel gelir alır insanın canını, alır götürür, o tek taraflı bilettir, aynı. O götürür öldürür insanı, gelmez geriye, biz de geldik buraya geri dönmeyiz. Öyle bi pasaport veriyolar. Onu zaten burda teslim ediyosun. Girişte alıyolar, sen artık burda muhacir kağıdı ila... Ondan sonra Soğanlık’ta Köyişleri Hizmet, köy hizmetleri işler... ne o bi şey, oraya gidiyosun, kaydediyosun kendini, bi muhacir kağıdı veriyo, bi fotoğraf, ailence bi fotoğrafın, ben, çocuklar, hanım, tek fotoğraf. O nüfus cüzdanı yerine geçer. (...) En az altı ay bekleme lazım (*vatandaş olmaktan bahsediyor*). Ama bazılarına yedi ay, bazılarına 12 ay, bazılarına bilmem kaç ay, 15 ay, o şey bir takip, eskiden kalma, sen komünist ülkeden geliyosun ya, komünist miydin orda, değil miydin, bilmemneydin...”⁵⁶

In fact, as I have written in the preceding chapter, once admitted and immigrant is a potential citizen likewise the immigrant certificate is a potential ID card. Hence they should not have worried that much. Yet, I also think that Sırrı’s remarks are not mere

⁵⁶ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “First they gave you a grey passport. That grey passport is one sided. Death comes and takes your life, and that’s a one way ticket; it is the same. It takes you and kills you and does not take you back. We too came here and do not return. That’s a passport like that. You submit it when you enter with your immigrant paper. Then you go to the ministry in Soğanlık and register yourself; they give you an immigrant paper, a photograph of the whole family; me, the children and my wife in a single photograph. That takes the place of an ID card. ... You have wait at least six months (*referring to the process for attaining the citizenship*), but for some it may take seven, or twelve, or fifteen months; that’s a following process left from the past; because of you are coming from a communist country; they search to find whether you were a communist or not...”

exaggerations. It was the idea of belonging nowhere, no country. It was the idea that arises from leaving behind your homecountry, closing all the possibilities of turning back that made them so frightened. His analogy of the grey passport with death makes sense in that regard. İsmet, like Sırrı, also emphasizes the difficulty of being an immigrant:

“Yok, büyük risk, nasıl alırsın işte, göç işi o yüzden zor iştir. Onun için herkes yapamaz bunu. Onun için ki bazısı sene seneyi kovalar... ha bugün ha yarın... Eeeee, o çok büyük bi risk, vatandaşlıktan çıkıyosun, Türkiye de almayabilirdi. Türkiye de der ki, ben sizi kabul etmiyorum, almıyorum o zaman da burdan başka yere gitmemiz gerekecekti. Onun garantisini sana kim verir, hükümet mi? Hangi hükümet, kimi bekliyo? Zaten göçmenlik istenmiyo... Hiç bi hükümet istemez zannediyorum göçmeni. Kolay şey değildir çünkü, hükümete de zor. Bi sürü insan geliyo, onlara bakacaksın, eğitim, iş vereceksin, ev vereceksin, kendi vatandaşına yokken. Yani onun hiç bi garantisi yok. onların işlemleri var sonra, müracaat ediyosun, bi sürü evrağı var. Bu da ayrı bi fasıl, bi sürü şeyler (...) İşte o işlemler yapılıncı başvuruldu sonra Ankara’ya hemen çünkü o kağıtla bi şey yapamıyosun ki, insanlar tanımiyo. Bankaya gidiyosun, “bu ne?”... Yani hiç bi işlemini yapamıyosun. Eksik, insanlar tanımiyo onu. E tabi vatandaşlığın da yok, en kötüsü o. Tam “immigrant”sın yani. Vatansız geçiyosun. Naaptık sonra, işte Ankara’ya başvuruldu, sonra Ankara’dan Resmi Gaste’de çıktı. Özal zamanıydı. İmzalanmış ve çıktı, vatandaşlığa kabul edildik.”⁵⁷

The grey passport that signifies a ‘one-way ticket’ to Turkey was equally frightening for İsmet for it means ‘statelessness’ and she did not take it for granted that Turkey would admit them to the citizenship. Reflecting on how the state perceives the immigrants, she asserts that the immigrants are the unwanted ones because of the burden they would cause on the state.

⁵⁷ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “No, that’s a big risk, you take it, because it is that risky the migration business is difficult. That’s why not everybody can do that. That’s why for some one year follows another and they still could not do that. That’s a big risk you take because you renounce your citizenship and Turkey might not accept. What would we do then? Go another place? Who can give you the guarantee, the government? Which government, waiting for whom? Immigrancy is already not wanted. Not a single government wants immigrants I suppose. Because it is not an easy thing, it is hard for the government too. Many people coming and you have to take care of them, give them education, job, resident when you cannot provide all these for your own citizens. That is, it does not have a guarantee. There are many procedures of it, many papers, you apply... after those procedures you apply to Ankara with that immigrant paper because you cannot do anything with it; people do not recognize it. You to a bank, they say ‘what is it?’ ... you cannot do anything with it. Incomplete, people do not recognize it. And you also do not have citizenship, that’s the worst of all. You are a complete ‘immigrant’. You are registered as ‘stateless’. What did we do next? We applied to Ankara, then it is announced in Resmi Gazete. It was Özal’s time. It was signed and announced; we were accepted to citizenship.”

Because of these kinds of risks taken and leaving an established life behind, the family as a whole (especially the seniors of the family) saw themselves as making significant sacrifices. The act of migrating and the agents that initiated migration are even romanticized because of the heavy responsibilities and sacrifices they had to undertake. Migration above all other reasons and in the end was a duty to be fulfilled in the name of the family and one should bear the outcomes that come along with it. Because of this very familial aspect of the migration, the sacrifices are exalted. İsmet is one of those who have made significant sacrifices to migrate to Turkey:

“Şimdi bizim geliş tarihimiz 85 yılı. 85 yılında olaylar öyle olmak zorunda oldu. Yani üçüncü kardeşimin de ilkokulu bitirmesini bekledik. Benim, tıp şeyini kazanmıştım ve onu mecburen bıraktık. Yoksa gelemezdik. Çünkü, sonra kızkardeşimin okulu devam edecekti. E ben çok iyi bi öğrenciydim, imtihana girmeden istediğim bütün üniversiteleri kazanıyordum. Öyle bi şey vardı orda, imtihana girmeden hep 5 üzerinden 5 olunca tıp dahil giriyodun. İstedğin yere kaydını yaptırıyorsun. E tabi ben okursam, bi altı yıl daha kalırsam, bu sefer onun ortaokulu giricekti, lise giricekti... Bu sefer o gelmek istemezdi ve gelemezdik. Bi yerde birileri fedakarlık yapmak zorundaydı ki herkes fedakarlık yaptı. Biz böyle yarı eğitimle sonra tekrar burda okuduk ama ordaki şey çok farklıydı. O işte babamın 23 sene çalışması da olduğu gibi kaldı, burda sıfırdan başladı ve herkes fedakarlık yaptı. Yoksa, kimsenin kimseye zamanı ve saati uymuyodu.”⁵⁸

The timing of migration is a sensitive issue in all the interviewees as it is in İsmet’s case and it is the timing that makes İsmet to leave her chance to pursue her education in the medical school. She asserts that ‘things had to be that way’ when she tries to rationalize this huge sacrifice. ‘Out of necessity’ she had to leave her education there and more importantly, from the phrase ‘there, everthing was different,’ it is clear

⁵⁸ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “The date of our coming is the year 85. in the year 85, things had to be that way. We have waited for my third sibling finishing primary school. I was accepted to the medical school and I had to leave that out of necessity. Otherwise we couldn’t come. Because then my sister’s education will continue. I was a very good student, without entering the exams I was receiving acceptance from all the universities because all of my grades were 5 out of 5. With those grades you can register anywhere you want. If I continued my education there and stayed there for six more years, then her high school had to be there and she would not want to come and we couldn’t have come. At some moments, someone has to make sacrifices and everybody sacrificed somethings. I have come here with an incomplete education, and completed here yet, the education there was very different. My father’s working there for 23 years meant nothing; he started here from scratch and everybody made sacrifices. Otherwise nobody’s time did not fit others’.”

that the education that she has had here in Turkey did not wither the sense of incompleteness in her with respect to education. The obligations are narrated as elevated sacrifices that are undertaken in the name of the family; and this shift in their narration as well as in their rationalization of the whole process they have gone through helps them to overcome the psychological burden and responsibility towards themselves resulting from these obligations. İsmet also in a sense comforts herself by emphasizing that ‘everyone’ –not only herself- has sacrificed certain things during this process, for instance her father who has started from scratch in Turkey. Sırrı is another one who emphasizes that he has sacrificed the last twenty years of his life for his children and he is hoping that they –his children- will understand the worth of this sacrifice:

“Onlar (*çocuklarını kastediyor*) henüz görecekler ki bizim ne kadar çok dertlerimiz varmış. Ben gerçekten bu son 20 senemi onlar için adadım. Hani adar, tamam her baba adar, işte orda adarsın, rahat, memlekette olsaydın. Niye rahat? Bahçen orda, evin orda, bodrum katın orda, benim bodrum katında bir sürü şeyim vardı. Yani buraya da taşıdım bazı şeyleri, kendi eskizlerimi şeylerimi, burda attım artık. Ama orda hep duruyordu. Çok zor bişey, muhacirlik buraya gelmek... Vatanına gelsen bile çok zor.”⁵⁹

He is differentiating himself from the usual fathers who do not have to migrate anywhere. As he says ‘every father devotes himself to his children’ yet an immigrant father, in his view, is exclusive because he had to give up himself, and his ordered life back in ‘memleket’ (because he –as a former art teacher and painter- had threw away all his preliminary sketches and pictures here) so much so that even his subjectivity faded away as he himself tells in his own way:

“Bi bisikletçi var, evden işe kadar bi gördüğüm adam tek bisikletçi. Turgut yüzünden, bisikleti vardı, adam başladı bana selam versin. Veriyor ya para

⁵⁹ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “They (*referring to his children*) will soon see how many problems we had. I really devoted my last 20 years to them. Ok every father devotes, that you devote there, comfortably, in your hometown. Why comfortably? Your garden is there, home is there, your basement there; I had many belongings in my basement. I have brought some of them to here but I threw away many of my preliminary sketches here. But there I always kept them. It is a very hard thing, the immigrancy, to come here... Although you come to your homeland, it is very hard.”

yaptırıyor bisikleti, gene bozuluyo gene yaptırıyor, değiştiriyor lastiğini bilmemne yapıyor Turgut... Adamcağız başlıyor, haaa dedim yavaş yavaş başladı bi kişi selam versin. Bir tek! Yani düşünün evimden minibüse kadar, dolmuşa kadar, bir tek adamla selamlaşıyorum. Gidişte-dönüşte. (...) Sarının, hangi sarı? Türker'in babasıymışım ben. Şimdi biz kayıp jenerasyonuz, bu muhacirliği omuzuna alan. Orda iken 35-40 yaşına kadar Hacı Zebil'in oğluydun, babamın oğluydum. Burda geldim, Türker'in, Turgut'un babasıyım. Demek ben Sırrı Baki değilim. Şimdi daha büyük bi hendikap var mı bundan?"⁶⁰

'Even if you come to your homeland, migration is extremely difficult and hard'

they all told me and this quotation from Sırrı is one good reflection of the situation that an immigrant found her/himself in. Sırrı names himself and the like as the 'lost generation.' Their individualities in a sense melted within the more important duty and 'burden' they had undertaken by initiating and realizing the migration phenomenon. Back in Macedonia, within the communal life, Sırrı was the son of his father. Here in Turkey, within the estranging city life of Istanbul, Sırrı is the father of his son; he became associated to his neighbourhood not through himself but through his son. It was only the bicycle repairman that says hello to Sırrı everyday and that connection was built through his son, not through himself. Then he reaches the conclusion that 'then, I am not Sırrı Baki' meaning 'I am not myself, I do not carry my individuality or subjectivity but I find my existence through my family'. He names this situation as a 'handicap' which means basically disadvantage and hindrance. Hence by initiating and realizing the migration, Sırrı with respect to his individuality is disadvantaged and he is hindered for realizing his subjectivity as himself because there is a serious rupture in the lives of those who are the leading actors of migration. The parameters of the life that

⁶⁰ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. "There is this bicycle repairman; the only guy I see from home to work is him. Because of Turgut, he had a bicycle; and the guy started to say hello to me. ... And I say 'well, slowly one person started to say hello to me.' One man only! I salute only one man from my home to work. When I leave and return. ... The blonde one, they say, who is blonde? I am the father of Türker. Well we are the lost generation the ones who carry the burden of immigrancy. When I was there until my 35-40, I was the son of Hacı Zebil, I was the son of my father. I came here and became the father of Türker and Turgut. Therefore I am not Sırrı Baki. Well is there a bigger handicap than this?"

they have constructed for themselves were drastically and dramatically altered when they have migrated even to a place they call ‘homeland’. That is perhaps why Sırrı prefer to describe the migration as a ‘bone ache.’

“...hep bırakıyorsun, geliyorsun buraya. Bu olayı ben hep anlattığım zaman –ben ilk olarak böyle bi kimselere anlatıyorum- şey olarak, kemik ağrısı olarak görüyorum. Kemik ağrısı öyle bi ağrıdır ki, çeken bilir. Yani benim ağrırsa ben bilirim, ben sana anlatamam o ağrıyı nasıldır.”⁶¹

He chose the analogy of ‘bone,’ I think, because bone is ‘embedded’ in the human body, it holds the bodily existence together. Because it is embedded, if it aches, it comes from one’s innermost and fundamental existence and thereby it is not easy to describe the pain it causes. Then it becomes one’s exclusive pain and understandable only to those who has also suffered from it.

Against all the hardships and permanent traces of the migration, the phenomenon finds a spiritual description both because it is a return to the imagined homeland and because it is done in the name of the family, the children and the future offspring. Very much like the fact that the migration is a familial phenomenon; overcoming and being through the immigrancy condition is also achieved through familial events:

“Muhacirin muhacirlikten kalkması için bi şeyler yaşaması lazım. Bunu da çok iyi not et. Bir: Bir ölüm, yaşayacak burda bi ölüm. Çok yakın biri ölecek. Allah kimseye göstermesin, biri ölecek. Bir düğün, bir doğum. Bunlar yaşandıktan sonra muhacirlikten çıkarsın.”⁶²

He very clearly enumerates the conditions through which one can overcome the immigrancy and wants me to take notes clearly: death, wedding and birth. All are extraordinary familial events as a result of which the family is re-constructed and re-defined.

⁶¹ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “...you all leave and come here. When I tell this thing –it is the first time that I am telling this to someone- I see it as a bone ache. Bone ache is such an ache that only the ones who had that understand. That is, if it’s my ache, I only know it and cannot tell you what kind of an ache is that.”

⁶² Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “In order for an immigrant to be over immigrancy, s/he has to live somethings. Write this down carefully. One: a death, one has to live a death here. A very close one will die. May God does not give that to anyone, one will die. One wedding, one birth. After all these are lived, you will be over immigrancy.”

All these events also find occurrence in communal settings and the people in these communal settings share a psychological and emotional togetherness. Hence, according to Sırrı, the immigrant should undergo a death, a wedding and a birth through which the immigrant can find a place in the local communal setting.

In this part, I have tried to reflect on the ways and the context in which the phenomenon of migration to Turkey is represented, rationalized, and realized by the Turkish-Muslim immigrants from Macedonia. Turkey in the narratives of the immigrants was represented continuously as an original homeland, in the name of which they had experienced all the hardships, sufferings, and lackings. The way in which they narrate and elevate this process now provided us a ground that will help us to understand how they construct and communicate their identities here in Turkey.

The Immigrant Identity and the Citizenship Claim

The act of migrating to Turkey was at the same time a claim to Turkish citizenship. From the interviewees' narratives, it seems as if acquiring Turkish citizenship was something like their innate right. There is nothing more usual and normal than that.

Kerim, who has gone through the application and admission process to Turkish citizenship, says the following:

“Bizim açımızdan bakarsak devlet, bir senin burda nasıl ekmeğini kazanacağını görmek istiyor hani artık eskiden olduğu gibi göç edenlerin devlete yük olmamasını istiyor. Bir de Türk asıllı olmasını istiyor. Nihayet uyandılar çünkü göç eden Türk olmayan bir sürü insan var Balkan savaşlarından beri Arnavudu, çingenesi bilmem Rumu Romeni herkes geldi. Gelen hepsi Türk değil hani o bir gün Türkiye’ye yük olabilir ne bileyim işte azınlıklara konuşma hakkı verelim denildi kalktılar Boşnaklara da Boşnakça konuşma hakkı ve televizyonu verdiler.”⁶³

⁶³ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “When we look from our point of view, for one thing the state looks at how you will earn your living here; that is it does not want the immigrants to be a

While reflecting on what the state seeks in those who applied to citizenship, Kerim counts two aspects: one being economic and the other being ethnic. It is very clear how he associates the citizenship in Turkey with a particular ethnic identity. The expression ‘At last, they have wakened up’ reveals how he is against the admission of non-Turkish immigrants who may be potential threats and burdens to Turkey in the future. He accentuates how people from different ethnicities have migrated to Turkey from the Balkan Wars onwards and by saying these he in a sense implies who belongs to Turkey and who does not. For him, it is proper for only ethnic Turks to become citizens of Turkey.

Hence, their imaginary of citizenship is closely related to their understanding of themselves, their identity and belonging. There is a close association of citizenship with a particular identity, specifically a Turkish and Muslim identity. This association demonstrates the inapplicability of the theoretical dichotomy that classifies citizenship as a ‘universal’ category and ‘identity’ as a particular category (Işın and Wood, 1999, p.15). In this section by looking at the immigrants’ everyday lived experiences of citizenship in Turkey, we will see that, far from a universal outlook, the primary scope and meaning of the citizenship in Turkey is defined along a ‘*genuine* Turkish-Muslim’ identity both by the immigrants and the locals. Yet, this agreement on the answer to the question of ‘who deserves Turkish citizenship’ as ‘Turkish Muslim individuals’ does not avoid the marginalization of the immigrants in Turkey.

While my informants started to narrate what they have gone and still going through as an immigrant in Turkey, they were beginning to tell their substantive,

burden for the state. Also it wants the immigrants to be of Turkish origin. At last, they have wakened up because there are many immigrants who are not Turks but Albanians or Gypsies or Romans; all have come from the Balkan Wars onwards. All are not Turks and one day they would be a burden on Turkey; I mean it is said that let’s give mothertongue rights to the minorities; they gave the right to broadcasting in Bosnian to the Bosnians.”

everyday experiences which slowly and profoundly manifest their marginalization in Turkey. What had stroked me in these stories was an irony, a paradox. The immigrants were marginalized, mistreated because of the very identity they claim to have. Their identities as Turks and Muslims are viewed with suspicion, called into question and most of the times misrecognized.

In what follows, I will firstly present how the Macedonian Turkish immigrants define themselves, on what grounds they construct their identities and how, moving from this identity, they legitimize their claim to Turkish citizenship. Then, I will present the ways in which this identity became the very ground of their marginalization in Turkey. Through the experiences of the immigrants, their interactions with the locals and the state institutions, and the ways in which they give meaning, perceive and interpret these experiences; I will try to bring to the forefront the contesting definitions of Turkishness and Muslimness that result from the marginalization of the immigrants and their reactions to this marginalization.

Articulation of Identity through Sameness: Being Turk and Muslim

As I have noted above the immigrants legitimize their migration and claim to Turkish citizenship on their ethnic and religious identities. In this section I will try to answer the following questions: what are the main components of the immigrant identity? On what grounds do they justify their identities? How do they make claims to citizenship? What are the ways in which this identity is misrecognized and hence the immigrants are marginalized? Do they differentiate themselves from the locals? If so, how do they differentiate themselves from the locals?

It was right at the time (and usually at the beginning of the interviews) when I have asked about when and how they decide to migrate to Turkey, that my interviewees

started use the term ‘Turk’ to define themselves. The usual clauses always contained the following: ‘every Turk who lives there’, ‘as a Turk’, ‘I am speaking as a Turk’, ‘we have been always Turk there, always like a Turk’⁶⁴. They all were underlining the fact that they were ethnically ‘Turks’ and nothing else. When I have asked Şükran that where she belongs, she answered ardently:

“Ben en çok Türkiye’ye ait kendimi çünkü ben de bir Türküm tabii en az senin kadar, Türkiye’yi ben de seviyorum.”⁶⁵

She sees herself belonging to Turkey primarily because ‘she is a Turk just as I am a Turk’. So she constructs her identity in parallel relation to me, through sameness. Being Turkish constitutes the common denominator between the immigrant Şükran and the local me. This emphasis on the ethnic origin as Turks, as I have mentioned above, is the primary reference point in the definition of the citizenship. there is one simple and usual but interesting remark from Sırrı. When I have asked him whether or not he holds double nationality, he replied:

“Hayır, hayır ben Türk olduğum için Türk vatandaşım.”⁶⁶

It was to an extent interesting how he puts the sentence as such because I knew that he is a citizen of Turkey yet I only wanted to know whether he holds at the same time Macedonian citizenship. He builds a simple and direct relationship between citizenship and ethnicity as if one equals the other. His wording also implies a criticism to those who retain their former citizenships. It can be inferred as if having Macedonian passport that many other immigrant Turks prefer to preserve is something an inferior thing. Burhan is more moderate than Sırrı with respect to the phenomenon of double

⁶⁴ ‘Oradaki her Türk’ün’; ‘bir Türk olarak’; ‘ben bir Türk olarak konuşuyorum’; ‘biz orada hep Türktük, Türk gibiydik.’

⁶⁵ Şükran, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2004. “I see myself belonging to Turkey most because I am also a Turk; of course just as you are, I also love Turkey.”

⁶⁶ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “No, no, I am a Turk therefore I am a Turkish citizen.”

citizenship yet he came up with a ‘magic’ formula which reinforces the intimate relation that the immigrants tend to build between citizenship and identity:

“Hayır, ben yalnız TC vatandaşım. İşte onlarda (*Türkiye’de yabancı olarak ikamet eden göçmenleri kastediyor*) o süreç başka. Şimdi Türkiye’nin de buna bir çözüm bulması lazım. Zaten ordaki siyasi mecralardan gelen teklif şu, partiden özellikle: Türkiye ordaki 50-100 bin nüfusa pasaport vermesi lazım. Hepsini Türkiye’ye gelmez icabında. Ama bu benim vatandaşımıdır desin, pasaport versin ki, rahat gelip gidebilsin bu adam. İki tarafta da işini yürütsün. Bulgaristan’dan çifte vatandaş olanlardan zarar mı geldi? İlk etapta şer hayra dönüştü. Bu sefer gittiler burdan oraya, mallarına sahip çıktılar. Gidip orda oylarını kullanırlar, mallarına sahip çıkarlar. Bizim Makedonya’da da böyle olmasını ve olacağını da ümit ediyorum. Öyle bir hak tanınması lazım.”⁶⁷

Burhan even does not question the applicability of such a ‘citizenization’ policy and its possible implications. He sees such a policy as a legitimate ‘right’ of the Turks living in Macedonia. Hence in his definition of the citizenship, the Turkish ethnicity translates itself automatically to Turkish citizenship. In other words, being a Turk is enough for becoming a citizen of Turkey. Burhan also thinks that as in the case of immigrants from Bulgaria, that kind of a citizenization policy will bring goodness to Turkey in the end. In the whole, all of my informants think that because they are Turks, they deserve Turkish citizenship and there is nothing normal and natural than that.

Being a Turk at the same time means to be a Muslim. This is the other term that they were always emphasizing throughout the interviews. Even there were times that they used the two interchangeably. One of my female interviewee when talking about why she decided to migrate after Tito’s death used the following dichotomy in her answer:

⁶⁷ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “No, I am only a citizen of the Turkish Republic. In their case (*referring to those who reside in Turkey as foreigners*) that process is different. Now, Turkey has to find a solution to this. The proposition from the political quarters is this: Turkey should give passport to the Turkish population of 50-100 thousand. All does not come to Turkey if needed. Yet, Turkey should say that these are my citizens and give passports to them; so that they can come and go easily. Is there any harm from those who came from Bulgaria with double passport? The bad transformed to the good. This time they went back and possess their properties. They go there and vote; take care of their properties. I wish the same in our case, Macedonia too. That kind of a right has to be recognized.”

“Yani hep istedik ama istemedik hani bitsin okul ondan sonra gibi plan proje ama, esas en büyük nedenim Tito’nun ölümünden sonra oranın kötüleşmesi, fakirliğin başlaması, işte Türk-Gavur farkı, “siz Müslümansınız” gibi şeyler belirginleşmeye başladı. Nitekim birkaç sene sonra savaş da oldu.”⁶⁸

Here, İsmet is putting ‘gavur’-the word for those who are not Muslims- as opposed to ‘Turk’. In other words, the boundary between the terms ‘Turk’ and ‘Muslim’ is rather vague. Many tend to use one for the other.

Hence being Turk and Muslim – with their interchangeable character- are the main components of the immigrant identity. Apart from this initial emphasis in every interview about they being Turks and Muslims, there followed another tendency in almost every interviews. As soon as they declare themselves as the Turks of the Balkans, the Rumelia, they begin to give a historical account of their existence in the Balkans. This was in a sense an effort of justifying and proving their Turkish-Muslim identity through ‘history’. The most extreme example of this was Sırrı who shocked me with his half-an-hour history lecture on the Turkish-Muslim community in the Balkans that he gave right at the beginning of the interview. He told me -with an instructive manner, assuming that I do not know any history about the Balkans- the following: “Before you ask your questions to me, let me tell you about our history.” And he started to tell from the first Ottoman conquests of the Balkans and the subsequent Ottoman policy of settlement in the Balkans; the issue of migration from the Balkans as the Ottoman Empire started to shrink to the today’s situation in Macedonia.

It was not only Sırrı, but without exception all of my interviewees that narrate their ‘roots’ in that particular fashion. It was the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman past that explains their existence in the Balkans. The Ottoman policy of settlement, as discussed

⁶⁸ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “We always wanted it and did not want it, that is, we always planned it but waited for the schools; but my real reason is after Tito’s death the situation worsened there, poverty started, the discrimination between Turk and non-Muslim, they start to say things like “you are Muslim”. Likewise after a couple of years the war broke out.”

in Chapter II, was basically the transformation of the occupied lands in the Balkans into a homeland for the state through exchanging the Christian community in the Balkans with the Turkish-Muslim communities of the ‘Anatolia’. Indeed Anatolia is presented in their discourses as their original homeland, as their ancestors’ homeland. This at the same time makes their migration to Turkey meaningful and legitimate. They were returning to where they have come from centuries ago. To give a couple of quotations:

“İşte Fatih Sultan Mehmet’in fethiyle biz burdan gitmişiz oraya. Hani senin annen ordan gelmiş, ama önce burdan gitmiş. O bir kaç gruptan gitmiş, Karadeniz, Konya-Karaman, İzmir-Menemen. Bu üç gruptan giden insanlar ve aynı şiveler konuşulur.”⁶⁹

It was through the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and the settlement policy that Sırrı refers to in order to make his point about their origin clear. He supports his argument by pointing out the similarity in the dialects of the immigrants and the Karadeniz dialect. İsmet refers to the same history as she told me about her family:

“Biz nereden geldiğimizi çok iyi biliyoruz. Bizim kökümüz belli. Osmanlılar oraya gittiğinde, beyliklerden gitmiş, savaş zamanı topraklar verilmiş, Konya’dan geliyo zaten bizim sülalemiz, aile soyağacı da var, Arapça yazılı. Kadı olarak kalkmış, Karamanoğlu Beyliği’nden, kadı olarak görevlendirilmiş, o zamanın kadısı olmak ve Osmanlı zamanı bir görev almak, Türk olmayıp da noluyo?”⁷⁰

Knowing where one comes from, having a pedigree by which one can trace her/his descents and can learn about the profile of one’s descents (for instance having a descent who was an Ottoman Kadı appointed to Macedonia) all are signifiers of both belonging to an ‘established’ family and more importantly being ‘genuine’ Turks who were sent from Anatolia to the Balkans. This is the history that I have given a brief account on the

⁶⁹ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “Well, we have gone to there from here as Fatih Sultan Mehmet conquered those lands. That is to say, like your mother, she came from there, but in the first place she has gone from here. Those groups from Karadeniz, Konya-karaman, İzmir-Menemen has gone there. All these three groups of people have the same dialects.”

⁷⁰ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “We know very well where we have come from. Our root is evident. When the Ottomans went there, they went there from the beyliks, during the times of war, the lands were given to them, our family is coming from Konya, there is the pedigree too, written in Arabic. He went there as a kadı from Karamanoğlu Beyliği, was appointed as a kadı. If not a Turk, who else can be an Ottoman kadı at those times?”

previous chapter that they all are referring to when they communicate their identities to the locals in Turkey.

Then İsmet showed me the ancient pedigree:

“Bunu bi hocamıza vermiştim tercüme etsin diye. Kaç kişide var bu? Bak, burda şey yazıyormuş, tabi Arapça olduğu için, bütün aile şeyleri nerden gelmişiz, hangi soydan, bi sürü kayıt kuyut var, aile ağacı bu, soyağacı. Herkeste olmayan bişeydir. Benim haberim yoktu. Böyle eski ailelerin vardır, mühürlü şeyli baksana. Bütün ailede kim kiminle evlenmiş, kaç kardeş her şey biliniyo.”⁷¹

She was proud of what she was showing me. That family tree was more than a proof of which family she belonged to; it was more vitally the proof of her identity as a ‘genuine’ Turk and Muslim whose origins went back to the ‘Anatolian homeland’. Having mastery over one’s roots both in ethnic and familial terms via possessing a detailed pedigree, in general common sensical terms, is regarded as a sign of ‘nobility.’ İsmet was thinking within the same common sensical attitudes when she was asking the question of ‘how many people have this.’ She was both being proud of herself and her ‘rooted’ and ‘evident’ family, and she was implying the fact that not every one has got a pedigree like that, meaning not everyone in Turkey has that kind of a ‘rooted’ family and thereby not certain about where they really come from.⁷² Şükran is also referring to the same ‘Ottoman history’ and her family’s Anatolian origin while she was telling me about herself:

⁷¹ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “I have given this to one of our professors to translate it. How many people have this? Look here is written, of course it is in Arabic, all our family matters, where we have come from, from which lineage; there are numerous records; that’s a pedigree, a family tree. It is something that only a few has. I was not aware of it. The old families have that kind of records, look at it, it is signed and sealed. Who married who, how many siblings are there in the whole family; everything is known.”

⁷² With respect to İsmet’s emphasis on her Anatolian/Konya descent, as I have introduced a little bit under the subheading ‘Migrating to Istanbul: the city as a cause in itself’, I will later on dwell on the irony of how İsmet articulating her identity as Turk and Muslim through references to her Anatolian/Konya descent at the same time differentiating herself and her ‘progressive European’ profile from the locals in the Anatolia and exclusively in Konya.

“Kökenimiz Karadeniz, babamın tarafı Karadenizli. Benim dedelerim Arnavutluğa gitmiş, Osmanlı döneminde onları Arnavutluğa götürmüşler. Oradan Arnavutlukta Yugoslavya’ya geçmiş bizim aile, çoğu zaten öyle.”⁷³

This time the root is Blacksea but it is the usual story of Ottoman state sending the Turkish community to the Balkans. ‘We know very well where we have come from.’

‘Our root is evident.’ ‘Our root is Blacksea.’ All these statements are uttered in order to prove their identity claims as ‘genuine’ Turks and Muslims. They narrate themselves in such a way that their Turkish and Muslim identity is evident in their family roots, and in the Ottoman history. They are the Anatolian Turks who were sent to the Balkans by the Ottoman state. They make use of this history through referring to their familial lineage. İsmet’s statement ‘if not a Turk, who can be an Ottoman kadı’ summarizes the argument here.

The constant use of the word ‘root’ (*kök, köken*), which is an arborescent metaphor, is very telling. Because the word root also means source, origin, base; and it can be stretched as ‘homeland.’ Hence no matter how many centuries their family has lived in the Balkans and no matter they were born there, the Anatolia and Turkey –as its politically organized form- is their original homeland.

Indeed the idea of Anatolia/Turkey as ‘homeland’ is beyond an inference from their emphasis on the word ‘root’. Most of them use the word ‘homeland’ to refer to Turkey. Here are a couple of examples extracted from their responses:

‘Oradaki her Türk’ün bir gün anavatanına göç etme gibi bir fikri var; dar, zor bir yol olsun ama olsun biz çıkalım gidelim anavatanımıza...’ (Mesut); ‘Sadece biz vatandaş olalım anavatanımıza gelelim istiyoruz’ (Şükran); ‘...nasılsa gözümüz hep anavatanında...Göç etmek çok zor, çok zor bişiymiş; anavatanına gelsen bile çok zormuş.’ (Kerim)⁷⁴

⁷³ Şükran, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2004. “Our root is Karadeniz; my father’s side is from Karadeniz. My grandfathers have gone to Albania, during the Ottoman times they were sent to Albania. Then from Albania, our family crossed to Yugoslavia like many others.”

⁷⁴ ‘Every Turk there has an idea of migrating, let there be a narrow and hard road and we get out and go to our homeland...’ (Mesut); ‘we only want to be accepted to citizenship and come to our homeland’ (Şükran); ‘...in any

Yet still one should contextualize these usages meaning that one should not forget that the Turkish community is a minority in the Balkans. They are part of the Turkish diaspora. The political, sociological and psychological consequences of being a minority both ethnically and religiously in a complicated geography like the Balkans compel one to imagine, construct a ‘homeland’, a safe place where one will not be discriminated or persecuted on the basis of her/his identity. They have been taught to long for Turkey from their childhood years onwards. One can feel the yearning and love for Turkey even from their pronunciation of ‘Türkiye’.

Their insistence on Turkey does not overshadow their identification of themselves as ‘evlad-ı Fatihan’ (Fatih’s children) or ‘Osmanlı torunu’ (grandchildren of Ottomans) meaning basically the descendants of the Ottomans. These are the phrases that most of them use to define their standing as a Turkish-Muslim minority in the Balkans. Here are a couple of utterances of the phrase ‘evlad-ı Fatihan’ from my interviewees as well as from a text written by a Turk in Macedonia:

(Arnavutlarla Türklerden bahsederken) “Şimdi pek, daha eskiler de -ordaki Osmanlılar-, bizler de evlad-ı Fatihan olarak, Arnavut’u şey olarak görmüyor, düşmanı olarak görmüyor, kardeş olarak görüyor.”⁷⁵

“...Balkanlar, Türk tarihinin ayrılmaz bir bölümü olduğu gibi Balkanlarda yaşayan evlad-ı Fatihan da Türkiye’nin, Türk ulusunun vazgeçilmez mirasıdır. Türk kültürünü Balkanlara Anadolu Türkü getirdi ve burada 500 yıl geliştirdi, zenginleştirdi, yaşattı. Son bir yüzyıl içinde de bu bölgede yaşamaya kararlı Fatih torunları, kültürlerini yok olmaktan kurtarmaya, savunmaya, yaşatmaya ve olabildiğince değerlendirmeye uğraşmaktadırlar. (...) *(Balkan savaşlarının sonrasını anlatırken)* ...Evlad-ı Fatihan için ağır ve çileli günler, ölüm-kalım savaşı başladı...”⁷⁶

case our eyes are on the homeland... It is very hard to migrate, a very difficult thing; even if you come to your homeland.’ (Kerim)

⁷⁵ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “(Referring to Albanians and Turks) The former ones –the Ottomans there- and we as the children of Fatih, do not see the Albanian as enemies, they all saw and still see them as brothers.”

⁷⁶ Fahri Kaya (from the book *Balkanlar’daki Türk Kültürü’nün Dünü-Bugünü-Yarını*, 2002) “...like the Balkans which is an inseparable part of Turkish history; the children of Fatih that are living in the Balkans are too undeniable inheritance of Turkey and the Turkish nation. Anatolian Turks have brought Turkish culture to the Balkans and

“Onlar da (*Makedonya’daki Türkler’den bahsediyor*) Balkanlarda küçük bir Türkiye. Yani aynı şeyi savunur, aynı Osmanlı’nın kalıntısı, Osmanlı ile gurur duyar...”⁷⁷

The use of the phrase ‘evlad-ı Fatihan’ is conscious because it reflects the way the Turkish-Muslim community in the Balkans prefers to be identified with. It signifies the Ottoman and thus Turkish-Muslim character of the community. ‘Evlad-ı Fatihan’ is also an ‘appropriate’ term for serving the point that Burhan makes: he argues that the geography that the ‘Turkish-Muslim community’ survives in Macedonia is in fact like a little Turkey. Very much like Turkey which was founded on a part of the former Ottoman geography, ‘evlad-ı Fatihan’ surviving in Macedonia is a smaller version of Turkey with similar aspirations and affiliations.

This intimate association of themselves with the Ottoman past and being the remnants of the Ottomans in the Balkans, they emphasize their effort to maintain their Turkish-Muslim identity. The fact that they were ‘evlad-ı Fatihan’ (hence ‘genuine’ Turks and Muslims) and they have the same aspirations with Turkey was also supported by phrases like ‘we were struggling for Turkishness there’ (‘Biz orda Türklük için savaştık’). This specific narration also serves to prove the ‘non-assimilated’ character of the immigrants’ Turkish-Muslim identity. In Burhan’s below remarks we see how this struggle and its agents are exalted so much so that it becomes a way of constructing hierarchy within their imaginary of a ‘Turkish community’:

“Oradaki Türkler acayip milliyetçi. Türklüğün kalesi diyebilirim Balkanlara. Bizim memleketimiz için konuşuyorum (*Makedonya’yı kastediyor*). Benim

developed and improved it for 500 years. Within the last century, the grandchildren of Fatih who are determined to survive in this region are trying to save their culture from extinction, to defend it, to keep it alive and to practice it as far as it is possible. ... (*While telling the aftermath of the Balkan Wars*) ...for the children of Fatih the difficult and suffering days and the war of death-survival began.”

⁷⁷ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “They (*referring the Turks in Macedonia*) too are a little Turkey in the Balkans. That is to say, they defend the same thing, are the remnants of the same Ottoman; are proud of the Ottomans...”

Türkiye'ye geldikten sonra milliyetçiliğim azaldı. O kadar hararetli değilim. Çünkü o da nedir? Ben Türkiye Cumhuriyeti vatandaşım, bu ülkede yaşıyorum, birinci sınıf vatandaşım, karşımda didişecek kimsem yok. Ama onlar her şeyde Türk olarak mücadeleledeler... Arnavut karşısında, Makedon karşısında, konuşmasında, adetinde, örfünde, herşeyinde... Yani kısacası onlardan büyük Türk yok.”⁷⁸

There are two important points to be highlighted in this quotation. One of them is as I have mentioned just above, the nationalisms of the Turkish community in Macedonia that became more and more sharper through encounters with the other ethnicities in that geography exalted the Turkish community there to a higher place than a regular local Turk. Thanks to them, the Balkans became the ‘fortress of Turkishness’. The second point is again related to how the immigrants perceive the relationship between citizenship and identity. Burhan asserts that he is a first-class citizen of Turkey because he is a Turk while the same identity used to make him a second-class citizen back in Macedonia. It should not be forgotten and thus should be stressed that their experiences as a minority group in Macedonia and the discrimination and marginalization they have lived through there, have a prominent role in shaping their perceptions about the institution of citizenship and its relation to ethnicity. Nevertheless, the first and foremost condition of being a citizen of Turkey, according to the immigrants, is being Turkish (and thus automatically Muslim).

Having discussed the immigrants’ references to Ottoman past, their presentation of Anatolia as their homeland and their identification of themselves as the ‘grandchildren of the Ottomans’, and their efforts to maintain their identity in a geography like the Balkans; there is another way in which they reinforce and prove their Turkish-Muslim

⁷⁸ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “The Turks there are extreme nationalist. I can say for the Balkans the fortress of Turkishness. I talk for our homecountry (*referring to Macedonia*). My nationalism has lessened after I came to Turkey. I am not that ardent. Why is that? I am a citizen of the Turkish Republic, I live in this country, I am a first-class citizen; I do not have anybody to scrap. But they are in struggle for everything as Turks... As opposed to the Albanian, to the Macedonian, in his speech, in his tradition, in everything... That is to say, in short, there is not any Turk bigger than them.”

identity: the emphasis on their mother tongue, the Turkish language. It is another way in which they substantiate their identity as Turks primarily because the language is recognized as one of the main components of what we call a ‘nation/ethnicity.’ With respect to their language Mesut says the following:

“...Biz farklı bir şive de olsa Türkçe konuşuyoruz. Anne, ekmek, su, gel, git...böyle konuşuyoruz biz. Dolayısıyla biz Türk’üz...”⁷⁹

Mesut aims to give the message ‘it is as easy as it sounds: we speak Turkish therefore we are Turkish.’ Burhan, in a more ardent manner, expresses his anger to the reactions of the locals about their language:

“Vay Türkçe’yi çok iyi öğrenmişsiniz” diyenlerle çok karşılaştım. “Türkçeniz iyi” e tabii ki iyi olacak, benim anadilim Türkçe!”⁸⁰

He is mad at the exclamation of ‘Oh! You have learnt Turkish very well’ because while he is being appreciated with his mastery over Turkish language, he is at the same time not recognized ethnically as a Turk. ‘Learning’ Turkish here implies that Burhan is in fact ‘not a Turk’ but something else.

Having encountered such reactions very frequently, all my informants immediately underline the fact that they had enjoyed the right to have education in mother tongue back in Yugoslavia/Macedonia. As I have noted in Chapter II, especially in the settlements where Turks live, there are primary and secondary level schools where the language of instruction is Turkish. They are proud to have schools like that and thankful to have education in their mother tongue. All of my interviewees, except one who came from Stip, had their primary and secondary educations in Turkish.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Mesut, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 25 April 2004. “...Although with a different dialect, we speak Turkish. Mother, bread, water, come, go... We speak like that. Therefore we are Turk...”

⁸⁰ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “I have countered many saying “Oh you learnt Turkish very well”. “Your Turkish is good” of course it is good, my mother tongue is Turkish!”

⁸¹ Mesut: “Okul Türkçe okudum ilk sekiz yıllık mecburi olanı ve lisede de Türkçe, daha sonra üniversite Makedonca, üniversite düzeyinde Türkçe eğitim yok.”

When I ask Kerim to inform me about his education, he began right away with the sentence that “We had education in Turkish” and continued by giving a brief history of education in Macedonia.⁸² Unlike the others, Sırrı emphasizes in what language he was ‘not’ instructed:

“Yani orda bi asimilasyon politikası vardı, ama şeydeki gibi değil, Bulgaristan’daki gibi değil. Nasıl bi politika, ben hiç hayatımda, orda, Sırpça okumadım. Hayır!”⁸³

Hence even if he thinks that there was an assimilation policy back in Yugoslavia, it was not like the Bulgarian case primarily because he never had education in Serbian. And he declares it with proud. In another place, while talking about his higher education, Sırrı told me the following:

“71 senesinde ben Ankara Hacettepe’ye yazıldım, tıbbı. Deniz Gezmiş, Çayhan, Mayhan bilmemne o komünist şeylerin dönemi, istikrarsız bir anarşi vardı o zaman. Rahmetli babam bırakmadı, gittim geriye. Bu sefer de okumadım, gittikten sonra hiç üniversiteye gitmedim. Yani babama bi kızgınlıktan dolayı ki yani bırakmadı beni burda. İsyan ettim. (...) Beni orda (*Hacettepe’de*) Türkçe imtihanına koydular, o zaman da isyan ettim. Dedim ‘ben Türküm, benim diplomalarım Türkçe’dir’. Benim Türkçe diplomalarımı yine Türkçe’ye çevirdiler, sonra yine İngilizceye çevirdiler. Türkçe diplomaları!”⁸⁴

Şükran: “Okulda zaten ben Türkçe okudum, sekiz sene okudum. Eşim de Türkçe okumuş yalnız Türkçe lise yokmuş o zamanlar. O Makedonca okumuş, üniversiteyi de zaten Makedonca okumuş. Mecburen öyle.”

⁸² Kerim: “Türkçe okuduk biz. Hani 1952 yılından sonra Makedonya’da Türk dili üzerine eğitim verilmeye başlanmış. İkinci Dünya Savaşı’ndan sonra 52’ye kadar Makedonca ve Arnavutça eğitim varmış dolayısıyla Türklerin tamamı Arnavutça gitmiş, tabii Makedonca giden pek olmamış, başka bir din ve başka bir millet olduğu için, hani Arnavutlarla daha içiçe yaşamışlar. 52’de Türkçe okullar açılmaya başlayınca Türk asıllı olanlar arnavut sınıflarından çıkıp Türk sınıflarına geçmişler, o zaman yani 52’den beri Türkçe eğitim var. Biz biraz daha şanslıyız çünkü bizim ilkokul dönemi 1970’lere geliyor, o zaman bu Türkçe eğitim tamamen oturmuştu. Alt yapısı da var, Türk öğretmenler, orada yetişmiş Türk öğretmenler hani burdan gidenler değil, dolayısıyla ben ilkokulu hatta ilköğretim okulu vardı hani Türkiye’de yeni yeni oturmuş olan ilköğretim okulu. İlköğretim 1’den 8’e kadar devam ediyodu, ilköğretim okulumu Raptişt’a bitirdim. Sonra Gostivar’da liseyi bitirdik orda da Türkçe okuduk lise sona kadar. Ondan sonra Üsküp Kirili Metodu Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesine kaydımı yaptım, orda tıp fakültesini bitirdim. Makedonca. Yani ilköğretim okulu Türkçe, lise Türkçe, üniversite Makedonca.”

⁸³ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “That is to say, there was an assimilation politics, but not like the one in Bulgaria. What kind of a politics? I have never in my life had education in Serbian. No!”

⁸⁴ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “In the year 71, I have registered to the faculty of medicine at Hacettepe, Ankara. The times of those communist like Deniz Gezmiş and Çayhan, etc. There was anarchy then. My deceased father did not let me and I went back to home and did not go to university there too. That is because I was upset to my father. I rebelled to him. ... There (*at Hacettepe*) gave me a Turkish language exam, I rebelled that time too. I said ‘I am Turk and my diplomas are in Turkish.’ They translated my Turkish diplomas into Turkish, then to English. The Turkish diplomas!”

He felt ‘offended’ by the way the Hacettepe University, a university in the ‘homeland,’ did not recognize the language of his diplomas he had received from the ‘Turkish’ institutions in Macedonia. He ‘rebelled’ because ‘he was Turkish and so were his diplomas’.

I reserve a last quote in this section on the immigrant identity to Burhan who summarizes the major components that make up the immigrant identity while comparing the Albanian and Turkish community in Macedonia:

“Mesela Arnavutların üç dini var. Üç bölünmüş bir millet. Şimdi bunlar o birbirine Arnavut olarak millet olarak olabilir ama, bir bütün değil. Hristiyan Hristiyanla örf, adetleri, evlenme gelenekleri var. Müslümanın farklı, Katolik olanın farklı. İşte Türkler’de o yok! Bizde o yok! Biz tek dinimiz Müslüman, dilimiz tek Türkçe konuşulan ve adetlerimiz tamamen Osmanlı’dan kalan örf-adetlerimiz. Hani biz göçmeniz, Türk göçmeniyiz. Yani Balkan Türk’ü deyin, veyahut Vardar ovasının Türkleri deyin.”⁸⁵

One religion being Islam, one language being Turkish, and the traditions that are inherited completely from the Ottomans all make up the ‘Balkan Turk’ according to Burhan as well as the others. These are the ways in which they narrate themselves and moreover the ways in which they articulate and substantiate their identities as Turks and Muslims. By articulating and substantiating their identities as such, I argue that, they also and even more importantly rationalize their migration to Turkey and legitimize their claim to Turkish citizenship. Reinforcing their identity as Turks and Muslims through references to and emphases on Ottoman past; Anatolia and Turkish language is indeed a legitimation of their claim to be a part of Turkey, a citizen of Turkey. To settle

⁸⁵ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “For instance, Albanians have three religions. They are a nation divided into three. They may all be Albanians but they do not constitute a whole. The Christian ones have their own traditions, marriage rituals. The Muslims’ are different and the Catholics’ are different. Among the Turks, there is not such thing. We do not have that. Our religion is one, we are Muslims; our language is one, Turkish language and our traditions are completely those that are left from the Ottomans. We are immigrants, Turkish immigrants. Call us Balkan Turks, or the Turks of the Vardar plain.”

in Turkey and to become a citizen of Turkey, because of the very features that were presented above, are their natural rights.

Now I will move on to how this identity and the citizenship claim were interpreted and reacted by the local population and the ways in which the immigrants respond to these. The mutual arguments on both sides will reveal the contesting definitions over Turkishness and Muslimness.

Contesting definitions over Turkishness and Muslimness

Misrecognition and Marginalization

Charles Taylor argues that “non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm; can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being” (Gutmann, 1994, p.25). Misrecognition, then, is dangerous because it can harm the identity of a person and moreover work as an obstacle on the way to develop and recreate oneself; and interact with the rest of the community. The Turkish-Muslim immigrants from Macedonia –that I have interviewed- think that their identity is ‘misrecognized’ in Turkey. As paradoxical as it is, there are basically two ways in which this misrecognition works. It is directed to their ethnic identity by calling them not Turks but Albanians; and it is directed to their religious identity by labelling them as ‘sonradan dönme’ (later converts) and even ‘gavur’s (infidels).

When I asked my informants what they were asked by the local population in Turkey, majority of them point to the frequently asked questions about their ethnic and religious identities. Mesut says that he was always asked questions like ‘Are you Turk? Muslim? Is there any Turk in Macedonia?’ Enis also points out that most people in Turkey do not know that there are Turks and Muslims in Macedonia: “Many even did

not know the fact that we are Turks, even we are Muslims! Of course they do not know history well.” This expression of ‘they do not know history well’ is a common interpretation of every interviewee about their misrecognition and marginalization by the locals. They try to give meaning to these questions and reactions of the locals related to their ethnicity and religion by interpreting it as a lack of knowledge in history. It should be noted that these questions directed to the immigrants by the locals are not solely ‘questions,’ they are also the projections of the locals’ perceptions about a proper or genuine Turk and Muslim.

Kerim, who have settled in Turkey primarily under the foreigner status, told me about the bureaucratic processes he has to deal with and his experiences at the Faculty of Medicine in Çapa where he was working as a graduate student of medicine. It is clear from what he told me that it was a deep frustration that he went through:

“Bürokrasiye takılmak benim çok canımı sıkıyordu. (...) O zaman gidiyorum mesela Emniyet Müdürlüğü’ne orada da benim evraklarım başka bir masada, iltica bilmem ne masası. Öğrenci bürosunda evraklarım yok. Orada azarlandım bir polis amirinden. O zaman çok üzül müştüm. Hep bir şeydi, anavatan anavatan diyorsun, geliyorsun burda bir Afrikalı ya da ne bileyim ben yabancı muamelesi görüyorsun, o çok zor geliyordu. (...) Üniversitede de bazı hocalar TUS’a girmediğimiz için, başka birinin yerini tuttuğumuz için, yani bir Türk’ün yerini doldurmuşuz gibi bakan insanlar vardı. Bunun için bizi çok çalıştıran, azarlayanlar oldu. (...) Bazıları ne bileyim işte Türk değilsiniz siz ordan gelenler bunu diyen arkadaşlarımız vardı. Gavur bile diyenler vardı. Siz gavurlar diye düşünen, ama Balkanları çoğu zaten bilmiyor. Ordaki Türklüğü bilmiyor. Orda Türklüğü yaşatmak için bizim yaptıklarımızdan bihaber. Kimse hiç bir şey bilmiyor. Bilmiyolar ki biz orda ne kadar uğraştık.”⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “I was very bored at getting struck in the bureaucracy. ... During those times for instance I was going to the Police and my documents were at a different desk there, at refugee desk. There aren’t any of my documents at the student desk. There I was rebuked by a policeman. I was very sorry then. It was all like you say homeland homeland, but when you come here you are treated like an African, a foreigner, that was very hard for me. ... in the university too, some of our professors, because we did not take TUS (the examination for specialization in medicine), that is, treated us as if we were seizing the position of a Turk. There were many who made us work very much and rebuked us just because of that. ... Some say to us ‘those of you coming from there are not Turks’. There were even those who call us ‘gavurs’ (infidels/non-Muslims). Many of them do not know the Balkans. They do not know the Turkishness there. They are unaware of how much we tried for keeping Turkishness alive. Nobody knows anything. They do not know how much we have struggled there.”

The immigrants prior to their migration had those great expectations about the ‘homeland,’ where they will be welcomed, hugged and celebrated by the locals, the kinspeople. Yet, it turned out that the same kinspeople treated them as a ‘foreigner,’ just like the way they treat an ‘African’; and even ‘reproved’ them severely. They were seen as ‘foreigners’ or ‘non-Turks’ that seized the position of a ‘Turkish’ doctor. They were again, this time not questioned, but directly treated and labeled as ‘non-Turks’ and ‘gavurs’ by the same kinspeople. Kerim, like the others, tries to give meaning to these reactions and treatments of the locals by presenting it as a problem and lack of historical knowledge on the part of the locals. The immigrants think that the locals mistreat themselves because the locals do not know about ‘the Turkishness there’ and ‘how much they had fought for it’.

A further remark from Kerim exhibits how the immigrants see themselves vis-à-vis the other immigrants:

“...bizi yabancı olarak görüyorlardı. Bize en çok koyan şu yabancılık. Yani bitiriyor bizi, her yerde her alanda. (...) Yabancı uyruklusun sen. Yabancı diyen çok oldu. Zaten kimliğin senin yabancı Allahaşkına! Bana verdikleri kimlik bir Rus, Laleli’de kaçakçılık yapanla aynı. Ona da yabancı uyruklu kimliği veriyorlar bana da yabancı uyruklu kimliği veriyorlar veya bir Arapla aynı statüdeydik. Yasalar önünde zaten bir farkın yok Araptan. Tamamen yabancı muamelesi görüyorsun. O gerçekten en çok... Hala da öyle düşünenler var...”⁸⁷

Kerim, as I have indicated above, resided in Turkey as a foreigner, as a foreign graduate student at the Faculty of Medicine. He has problems with both the legal and the social label as ‘foreigner’ because he does not see himself as a foreigner. He feels offended primarily because he was considered no different than a Russian smuggler or

⁸⁷ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “...they were seeing us as foreigners. The hardest thing for us is that foreignness. That is, it finishes us in everywhere. ... ‘You are foreigner.’ There were many who called us foreigner. Your identity card is for foreigners please! The ID card they gave me is the same ID card of a Russian smuggler in Laleli. They gave me and him the same ID card or we were at the same status with an Arab. You are no different than an Arab in front of the laws. You are completely treated as a foreigner. Really that was very... there are still many who think like that...”

an Arab who were also given ‘foreigner’ identity cards to reside in Turkey. Because he is a ‘Türk asıllı Türk’ / ‘Turk of Turkish origin’ (that is how he calls himself at another place), he thinks he should be treated in a different and better manner compared to a Russian or an Arab both legally and socially.

If not Turks, what were these people in the eyes of the locals? Here comes the usual label: Albanian. All the interviewees expressed that they were called as Albanian by the local population and most of them with a couple of exceptions are extremely uncomfortable with this. They are aware of the fact that there have been many Albanian who have migrated to Turkey in the last years of the Ottoman Empire and in the first years of the Republic; and that this demographic move resulted in a general tendency to call all those immigrants as Albanian. Yet, still this does not make them to understand the persistence of this label.

In the first place, the immigrants that I have interviewed emphasize that Albanians do not speak Turkish, they speak their own language. Mesut compares the two ethnicities in an effort to show that they are not Albanians:

“Arnavutlar farklı bir millet, il il kökenli, İtalyanlara ve Romenlere yakın bir millet fakat onlar da İslamiyet’i kabul etmişler çoğunluğu gene günümüzde de bunların %70’i, 80’i Müslüman. Bunlar da dillerini korumuş insanlar ama biz işte buraya göç edenlerin çoğu bizim böyle bir kökenimiz yok yani biz buraya gelenlerin çoğuna ‘siz Arnavut musunuz’ derler ama biz buna karşı çıkarız her zaman çünkü Arnavut değiliz, Arnavut olanlar var, onlar da Müslüman, camiye gider, her şey aynı fakat evinde konuştuğu dil Arnavutça oluyor. Biz farklı bir şive de olsa Türkçe konuşuyoruz; anne, ekmek, su, gel, git... Böyle konuşuyoruz biz dolayısıyla biz Türküz sen Arnavut musun demenin bir anlamı yok!”⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Mesut, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 25 April 2004. “Albanians are a different nation, based on different cities; they are a nation close to Italians and Romanians but they too accepted Islam; today still the majority of them, 70%-80%, are Muslim. They too kept their languages but among us who have migrated from there, there is not such an origin. They say many of us ‘are you Albanian’ but we always oppose that because we are not Albanian, there are those who are Albanian, they are Muslims too, they go to mosque, everything is the same but the language that they speak at their home is different, it is Albanian. Although with a different dialect, we speak Turkish. Mother, bread, water, come, go... We speak like that. Therefore we are Turk...”

Hence despite the common religion of Islam that brings closer the Albanian and the Turkish communities in Macedonia, the major differentiating feature between the two ethnicities is the language. Mesut emphasizes how both ethnicities protected their languages and therefore they belong to different ethnicities. Şükran is another immigrant who is angry with the Albanian label. When I asked Şükran about the things that upsets her in Turkey, she responded as follows:

“Çoğu bana diyor ki sen Arnavut musun, Arnavut değilim ben! Osmanlı çocuğuyum, çünkü biz de sizler gibi Türk’üz! Bizim hoşumuza gitmiyor Arnavut demeleri. Ama kimi Karadenizli misin diyor, bu hoşuma gidiyor çünkü zaten kökenimiz Karadeniz, babamın tarafı Karadenizli. Benim dedelerim Arnavutluğa gitmiş Osmanlı döneminde, onları Arnavutluğa götürmüşler. Oradan Arnavutluktan Yugoslavya’ya geçmiş bizim aile, çoğu zaten öyle.”⁸⁹

Here we see how Şükran articulates her identity as a Turk through ‘sameness’, she says ‘I am not an Albanian. I am an Ottoman child. Because we are Turks very much like you are!’ Therefore she has no problem (even she likes it) with the questions like ‘Are you from the Blacksea region’ because labeling as ‘Karadenizli’ does not threaten her Turkishness but labeling as ‘Albanian’ does. In this quotation, one can again see the tracing of identity through Ottoman past and Anatolian roots. Another immigrant, Kerim, when I asked him whether he wished to be born in Turkey replied as follows:

“Belki bazı getirileri, avantajları var işte hani bana Arnavut demeyecektiler o zaman, isterdim doğrusunu söylüyüm, gavur da demezdiler, Arnavut da demezdiler. Hani tam Türklüğüm temiz olurdu.”⁹⁰

According to Kerim, the labels of ‘Albanian’ and ‘gavur’ pollute his ‘Turkishness’. These labels threaten and violate the identity that he claims to have

⁸⁹ Şükran, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2004. “Many ask me ‘are you Albanian’, I am not Albanian! I am an Ottoman child, because we are Turks just like you! We do not like them calling us Albanian. But, some say ‘are you from blacksea,’ that I don’t like because our root is from Blacksea, my father’s side is from Blacksea. My grandfathers went to Albania during the Ottoman times, they were sent to Albania. Then our family crossed to Yugoslavia from Albania, many are like that.”

⁹⁰ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “Maybe it would have some advantages, for instance they would not call me Albanian then; I would like to be born there; they would not call me gavur (infidel, non-Muslim). That is to say, my Turkishness would be clean.”

and therefore his claim to membership and citizenship to Turkey. These labels also reflect that the immigrants are not ‘genuine’ Turks and Muslims and therefore they are not ‘proper’ citizens. Burhan is another one who has great discontent because of the Albanian label and thinks that it is a problem (again originating from the lack of historical knowledge and the Turkish education system) to be fixed:

“...Ben kalkıp konuşurken bunu kanıtlarım, kendimi, ne olduğumu, ama burda bu toplumdan gene bilgisizlik. Balkanlarda Türklerin yaşadığını eğer bu toplum bilmezse ve beni gayrimüslim zannederse o bu toplumun eksikliği. Benim bir eksikliğim yok. Bu buranın, Türkiye’nin eğitim sorunu. (...) Burdakiler Arnavut derler. Mesela bizim konuşmamızdan “Ha Arnavutsun sen.” Şimdi ben oturup ona neyi izah edeceğim. Ben ne olduğumu kendim biliyorum. Herkese açıklamak zorunda da değilim, onun eksikliği. Senelerdir anlatıldı. Tarihler bakıp, göçlerin, demografinin yapısına bakıp, hepsi belli. Ama bu kimlik damgalanmış ve bizim için, Türkler için Arnavut kimliği kabul edilebilir bir kimlik değil. Yakışmayan bir kimlik. Takılmış yani, bir etiket takılmış arkamızdan. Ama bunu bir çok arkadaşlarımıza izah ederek, anlatarak düzeltmeye çalışıyoruz. Bu lobi faaliyetlerimiz devam ediyor.”⁹¹

All my interviewees, like Burhan, in a sense are trying to ‘externalize’ the token of Albanian by presenting it as an ignorance of the locals and by underlining their (immigrants’) attitude of ‘I am sure of what I am.’ In his response, Burhan exhibits an inconsistency because he begins by refusing to explain his Turkish identity to the locals and then as he keeps on talking about why it is wrong to call them Albanian, he switches and says that they are engaged in ‘lobbying activities’ to correct this ‘unacceptable’ label.

The immigrants’ discontent with the Albanian label reaches to the extreme in one story that Sırrı told me. Here is this story:

⁹¹ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “...when I talk, I prove that, myself, what I am, but here it is again the ignorance of the society. If this society does not know that there are Turks living in the Balkans and think that we are non-Muslims; it is the deficiency of the society. It is not my shortcoming. It is Turkey’s education problem. ... The ones who are here say to us Albanian. For instance from our speaking, they say ‘hah you are Albanian.’ Well what can I explain to him? I know myself. I do not need to explain to everybody, that’s her shortcoming. It was being told for years. Look at the history, the immigration, the structure of demography; all are evident. But this identity is labeled on us and for us, for the Turks, the label of Albanian is not acceptable. It does not fit us. It is like an etiquette on us. But we are trying to correct this by telling to our friends. These lobbying activities of us are continuing.”

“...Bir rahatsızlık duyuyoruz, ama bu ilerde daha büyük rahatsızlıklara yol açabilir. (*Ve hikayeyi anlatıyor...*) Bir şey anlatacam, bizi Rumeli Vakfı’na davet ettiler. Misafirimiz var gelin. Başkanımızla beraber gittik. Bir adamcağız İngiltere’den gelmiş, bir araştırmalar yapıyor, bir burs almış, kim veriyorsa, nasıl verilmiş, neden verilmiş... Ne araştıracaksınız burada, soruyoruz adama. Bilmiyoruz, kıt İngilizce. Adamcağız Türkçe biliyor biraz. 1.2 milyon €’nun üzerinde para almış bu araştırması için. İngiltere’den almış. Adam da İngiliz. Ne araştıracak? Diyor ki ‘Güney Marmara’da başka, farklı bir dil konuşan bir halk var. O halkı, yerini, nasıl gelmiş, nasıl yerleşmiş? O halk biliyor musun kimdir? Bursa-Karacabey civarı bir sürü göçmen var. Bunların arasında gerçekten Arnavut var, ben helallerim onları. Çok yiğit, yani Türkçe’yi bilmeden kalkmış gelmiş. Yani Türkiye’yi vatan olarak görmüş. Alkışlanması lazım yani, öyle pat diye atmak yok. Ama bizi de oraya koyarsanız biz rahatsız oluyoruz. Çünkü orda da rahatsız oluyorduk. Orda da aynı işi yapan bunlar, Arnavutlar. Yok canım sen Arnavutsun, Türk olmuştun bilmem ne. O adamcağız bedava gelmemiş yani. Halen çalışıyor bu yönde. Gelir bir gün böyle, çünkü artık karnın zayıf yerini buldu Amerika, İngiltere: Kürt, Arnavut. Bunlar Balkanlar’da ve Ortadoğu’da karnın yumuşaklığını buldu. Bu ilerde bizim çocuklarımıza, torunlarımıza kadar dokunur.”⁹²

The fact that this resembles more a conspiracy theory than a reality per se does not make this story less important. It reveals the seriousness of the discontent and uneasiness with the label of ‘Albanian’. Sırrı links their discontent through this story to Turkey’s minority problems. Because they are ‘genuine’ Turks, they do not want to be ‘instrumentalized’ in such separatist settings initiated by ‘the US and England’ who knows well how to manipulate the ‘soft bellies’ of the Balkans and Middle East. The soft belly here implies the ethnic politics which has the potential to cause serious political or armed conflict in the multi-ethnic and multi-religious regions like the

⁹² Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “We are feeling a discomfort, but in the future this may cause bigger discomforts. (*And he tells the story...*) Let me tell you, they invited us to Rumeli Vakfı. They said ‘we have a guest.’ We went there with our president. One man came from England, he is doing some research; he was funded; who knows who is funding him, how and why... ‘What will you search here’ we asked. We do not speak English. The man knows little Turkish. He took over 1.2 million € for his research. He took it from England. He is English too. What will he explore? He said that ‘there is a community in Southern Marmara that speaks another, a different language.’ Do you know who that community is? Around Bursa-Karacabey there are many immigrants. Among them there are those who are really Albanians, I honestly praise them. They are very brave, that is, they came here without knowing Turkish. They saw Turkey as homeland. That is something to be applauded, not a thing to be thrown away easily. But if you place us there too, we feel disturbed because we were being disturbed there too. There, the ones who did the same thing were Albanians too. ‘Come on, you are Albanian, you were Turkified.’ That man did not come here for nothing. He is still working on it. The day will come because the US and England have found the soft belly: Kurd, Albanian. These have found the soft belly in the Balkans and the Middle East. This may disturb our children and grandchildren as well in the future.”

Balkans and the Middle East. This English researcher who was funded with a considerable amount is enough to worry Sırrı because the implications of this research – he believes- threaten the Turkish-Muslim immigrants’ standing and their identity claims in Turkey.

This quotation also reveals another reason for the immigrants’ uneasiness towards the Albanian label. Sırrı explains that they were uncomfortable back in Macedonia too because of the Albanians’ claims that target to disprove their ethnic origins as Turks. Back in there, they had again the trouble to situate themselves as ‘original’ Turks, because Albanians claimed that they were originally Albanians who were turned into Turks and were converted into Islam during the Ottoman era. Therefore, as paradoxical as it is, they were treated as Albanians back in Macedonia too and were not recognized as ‘genuine’ Turks. Most of my interviewees mention about a serious threat of assimilation in the Turkish community in favor of the Albanian national identity. The common religion of Islam, the declining number of Turks as a result of migration from the region and the migration of Albanians to the Turkish settlements reinforce this possibility. Indeed, as I have pointed out in Chapter II, the Albanians apparently claim that ‘these are not Turks’ but actually ‘Illyrians (who are believed to be the forerunners of the Albanians) turned into Turks’ (Poulton, 1993, pp.92-93). Therefore their misrecognition in Turkey as Albanians had a traumatic effect on the immigrants, because they were being treated the same way in their ‘homecountry’ too. Sırrı’s below quotation further provides us insights into the related dynamics of the Albanian controversy in Macedonia:

“Milliyetçilik yapmayan Hristiyanlarla iyi geçinirdik. Biz de onlara karşı bi milliyetçilik... Bazı şeyler ne zaman koptu, bizim yerimize bi Arnavut kitlesi geldi, Gostivar’a, bunlar artık gördüler ki biz çok yanlış ettik, hata ettik. Yani bu iyileri gittiler, bu gelen dağdan gelen insanlar, Arnavutların %80’i dağ köylerinden

geldiler. Onları hor görmem ben ama bu bir gerçektir. Zaten “Ardanez” tercümesi dağ adamı gibi. Arnavutluğun kökü o. Yaşama şeyleri daha değişik. Nasıl diyeyim? Hayvanlarla aynı şey, hayvanlar altta kendileri üstte ya da bizim Anadolu’nun iç kısımlarında yaşayan insanlar. Ha şimdi bu şeyde Gostivar – Kalkandelen biraz Üsküp, Şuturga burda bazı yerlerde Makedon’dan çok Arnavut’un baskısı vardır bizlere. Nasıl baskı? Yok kalk git, Arnavut der ki sen Arnavutsun der. Ama Osmanlılar geldiği zaman Türkleştirmiş, Müslümanlaştırmış. Tamam. Tamam nasıl olur bu dersin sen bu köydesin ben burda bizim aramızda 1.5 kilometre var. Sen nasıl Türkleşmemişsin, ben nasıl Türkleşmişim. Onu açıklayalım. Sonra ikinci bi şey var, Arnavutlar hiç bi zaman dilini kaybetmezler. Yani böyle bir Fizan’a gitseler yine dillerini unutmazlar yani. Babadan oğula, dededen toruna geçer.”⁹³

Here we see a layered differentiation in Sırrı’s remarks. Layered in two senses: He is differentiating the Turks from the Albanians because they are two distinct ethnicities with distinct histories, and languages and secondly because Albanians are not urban but rural, even ‘mountain villagers,’ as opposed to urban Turks. Sırrı’s differentiation of the Turks from the Albanians with respect to the level of ‘civility’ and ‘urbanity’ has in itself a further sign of a ‘paradoxical’ effort on the part of the immigrants for differentiating themselves from the Anatolian Turks. Paradoxical because the immigrants’ claim to an Anatolian descent is one of the primary arguments which they use for maintaining and proving their Turkish and Muslim identity. Yet as Sırrı equates the Albanians and the Anatolian people whose style of living is extremely rural, he not only differentiates himself from Albanians but also from Anatolians ‘who used to live next to their cattles’. As I have further explored on this interesting point throughout my research and analysis, I have seen that this is not a mere instantaneous analogy that Sırrı

⁹³ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “We use to get on well with those Christians who were not nationalists. We did not behave them with our nationalisms too... when did things fall off, when an Albanian mass came to our place, to Gostivar, and they understood that they have made mistake. That is those good ones were gone and these people came from the mountains; the 80% of Albanians are from mountain villages. I do not look down upon them but that’s the truth. How can I say? They use to live in the same place with animals; animals down and they are up or like the people who are living in the innards of Anatolia. In places like Gostivar, Kalkandelen, a little bit of Skopje, and Shuturga the pressure on us comes more from Albanians than Macedonians. What kind of a pressure? The Albanian says ‘you are Albanian but you were Turkified and Islamified when the Ottomans came.’ Ok. Ok but you are in this village which is 1.5 kms away from us. Howcome I was turkified and you were not? Let me explain. Then there is a second thing, Albanians never lose their languages. Even if they go to far far away, they never forget. It passes from father to son, from grandfather to grandchildren.”

makes, yet there is a considerable effort and tendency by the immigrants to differentiate themselves with the ‘Anatolians,’ and the locals (Turks and Kurds). In the next section I will dwell on the immigrants’ articulation of their Turkish-Muslim identity this time through difference from the locals in Turkey. All these contradictions and paradoxes in constructing one’s identity show us once again how identity is a relational and complicated issue.

Re-articulation of Identity through Difference

As a reaction to their marginalization as Albanians and converts/gavurs by the locals; I argue that the immigrants re-articulate their identity this time through difference from the locals, coupled with an essentialist discourse that contains concepts such as purity vs. mixedness. Hence I will argue that the immigrants respond within the same essentialist paradigm that the local Turks used to marginalize themselves.

As we will see in what follows, the immigrants claim that they are ‘pure’ and ‘unmixed’ Turks and Muslims compared to the local Turks whose ethnicities and religions were most probably ‘mixed’: ethnically mixed with other ethnicities such as Kurds; and religiously ‘mixed’ because of the existence and multiplicities of ‘tarikats’. A second way in which they differentiate themselves from the locals, I will argue, is their ‘European’ experience and formation. Because they see themselves different from the locals, they willingly confine themselves within the immigrant milieu and all eventually underline the fact that ‘they cannot do with the locals.’⁹⁴

In understanding how the immigrants evaluate their Turkishness vis-à-vis the locals in Turkey, two anecdotes from Sırrı disclose one of the primary ways in which the immigrants re-articulate their ethnic identities through difference from the locals:

⁹⁴ ‘Buralı ile yapamayız biz.’

“Bizim Kapalıçarşı’nın sağında bi tane Mehmet abi vardı. Mehmet abi Elazığlı. Mehmet abi Kürt kökenli. İki de bir de bize gelip bakıyor, ‘Arnavutlar’ diyo ‘çok anasının gözü çocuklar onlar’ böyle anladın mı... Adam korkmuş bizden. Biz geldiğimiz zaman gerçekten kavga da çıkardık, yani bi duvar meselesi vardı, çıkardım havluları attım ben. ... Bir gün dedim gel buraya dedim ‘bak bi daha Arnavut deme’ dedim, ‘ikinci defa ikaz ederim, üçüncü defa kavga ederim’. ‘Ben Arnavut değilim’ dedim, ‘ben göçmenim’ dedim, doğrudur ben Rumeli’den gelmişim, ama Arnavut değilim. ‘Nasıl anlatayım size’ dedim, ‘yani ordan göçedenlere, siz Boşnaklara da Arnavut dersiniz; Yunanistan’dan da gelenlere Arnavut dersiniz; onu da demeysiniz gavur dersiniz. Çok acayip bişey’ dedim. ‘Yani bunu biraz düzeltin’ dedim. ‘Ben bi kere Türküm’ dedim. ‘Senden fazla Türküm’ dedim. Çünkü o Elazığlı ve Kürt. ‘Senden fazla Türküm’, böyle bi şey.”⁹⁵

Sırrı claims to be ‘more Turk’ than Mehmet abi who is from Elazığ –a city in the Eastern Turkey- and of Kurdish origin. The fact that his Turkish identity was harassed by a local who is ethnically a ‘Kurd’ is more than enough to make Sırrı upset this much. He accentuates it again in the end of the anecdote: ‘I am more Turk than you are!’ From this emphasis he tries to give the message to all those locals that suspect and question his Turkishness that he is not only ‘a Turk’ like them but also and more importantly ‘more Turk’ than they all are. Hence he is in a sense deconstructing the rhetorical ‘principal’ of Turkish citizenship that upholds the ones who says s/he is a ‘Turk’. Sırrı here –just like the locals who marginalize them on the basis of an ethnic and religious essentialism- differentiates himself and the immigrants from the locals through the same essentialism. This essentialism that was marginalizing the immigrants from the locals, this time differentiates the Kurds from the ‘genuine’ Turks. The genuineness of Turkishness in this essentialist paradigm within which the immigrants speak can be traced from the physical appearances and here is the second anecdote from Sırrı:

⁹⁵ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “There was a brother Mehmet in Grand Bazaar. Brother Mehmet is from Elazığ. Brother Mehmet is of Kurdish origin. He comes and looks at us here and there. He says ‘Albanians, they are very clever guys’... He was afraid of us. When we first came, we really had a fight, there was this wall thing. ... one day I told him ‘look, don’t call me Albanian again, I am immigrant; true that I came from Rumelia but I am not Albanian; you call all those who came from there as Albanians; the Bosnians as well as those coming from Greece alike and even you call gavurs (infidels). That’s a very weird thing.’ I said ‘Fix this’ and ‘I am a Turk for one thing, even more Turk than you’ because he is from Elazığ and Kurd. ‘I am more Turk than you are.’ That is something like that.”

“Kapalıçarşı’ya devamlı gidiyoruz biraderle. İlk tramvayı koydular Eminönü’nden Kapalıçarşı’ya. Şimdi herhalde genetik olarak bizde böyle yani şey, biraz daha beyazız. Yani daha çakır mavi bilmemne, kumral saçlı, sarı saçlı. Çocuklarımız her ikisi sarı saçlıydı. Biraz değil bayağı sarı saçlıydı Erdoğan’ın. Kapalıçarşı’ya gidiyoruz, bir tane adamcağız -benim birader şey yapmadı, yalnız konuştuğu zaman Erdoğan da kırmaz yani, buraya öz Türkçe’ye koşmaz yani, İstanbul Türkçesi ile konuşmaz yani, düz konuşur, ben çabalamıştım haa. Bir “bre” kullandı Erdoğan bana. “O bıktım bre!” dedi. Ama ona buna demedi. Biz aramızda konuşuyoruz. Bi tanesi ordan, Diyarbakır demiycem nereliydi bilmem kapkara bi adam, yani Türk ırkı o değil, Türk ırkı o değil. Döndü, ‘bıktım sizin bu “bre”nizden be!’ dedi. Başladı Erdoğan sinirlendi, ben ayağımı koydum, burda şimdi biz kavga mı yapıcaz, koydum iki ayağı arasına ben ‘tamam’ dedim. Zaten biz kalkarsak onu dövücez. Hiç hayatımda kavga etmedim ben ama. Sen bakma böyle ben delice, ben gerçek dövmem. Ama sinirden şey dövücem dersin işte. Ama adam bizi rahatsız etti.”⁹⁶

It is interesting how Sırrı began to narrate this anecdote by pointing out their genetic features such as they being blonde, having white skin, and blue eyes. Then he contrasts these features with the appearance of a pitch-dark man. He continues right from there by repeating the statement ‘that is not Turkish race!’ twice. After all these he utters the sentence that upsets him: ‘I am fed up with your ‘bre’s!’ From the order in his narration, it is important to point out that it is not only the sentence in itself but also and primarily the utterance of that sentence by a ‘pitch-dark man’, who cannot be of Turkish race but most probably is a Kurd, that disturbs and upsets Sırrı that much. That man’s discriminating Sırrı and his brother on the basis of their dialect and Sırrı’s remarks that discriminate that man on the basis of his skin color belong to the same essentialism which works to exclude one from the other on the basis of certain attributes of a ‘proper’ Turk.

⁹⁶ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “We regularly go to the Grand Bazaar with my brother. They put the trolley line from Eminönü to Grand Bazaar. Well, surely it is something genetic in us, we are whiter. That is to say, we have blue eyes, brown hair; we are blonde. Both of our children are blonde. While we were going to the Grand Bazaar, a guy –my brother did not do anything, yet Erdoğan does not try to speak in Istanbulite Turkish, he sticks on his dialect unlike me who worked for it, he used a bre to me; he said ‘Oh, bre! I got bored’. But he did not say it to him; we are talking to each other. Then this guy –I cannot say exactly from Diyarbakır but a pitch-dark man; that is not Turkish race, not Turkish race- turned around and said ‘Hey, I am get bored with your ‘bre’s!’ Erdoğan got very upset and I blocked him and said ‘ok, that’s all’. We would surely beat him up. I never fight in my life. Don’t get me serious when I talk like this much crazily; I do not beat in reality. But that guy disturbed us.”

There is a parallel anecdote of another interviewee, Meryem, with an officer at Kapıkule Border.⁹⁷ Meryem told that on that day the officer was making it hard for them to cross the border for no significant reason other than that they are not citizens of Turkey. Meryem and her family used to reside in Turkey with a residence permit and that officer –as Meryem told- was over-examining their ‘up-to-date’ papers, did not let them to cross the border for hours. Meryem eventually went in to the officer’s room and told him that they were Turks and everything was ok with their papers and that she could not understand why he was making them wait for hours at the border. The border officer, again a ‘swarthy’ man in Meryem’s words, replied: “Başlarım senin Türklüğüne!” Meryem, who got extremely angry with this sentence, replied ‘Who are you to make fun of my Turkishness? Look at you! You think you are Turkish?’ The controversy ended as Meryem’s family take her away from the officer’s room.

Here again as opposed to the border officer, who treated Meryem and her Turkishness with derision probably because of her dialect and her origin, Meryem rejected the officer’s Turkishness because of his ‘swarthy’ appearance which, for her, discloses his Kurdish origin. This is very much like the anecdote that Yael Navaro-Yashin’s (2002) conveyed in her book ‘Faces of the State.’⁹⁸ The anecdote is about two women one veiled, the other not, encountering one another in front of the Ayasofya museum. The short-haired woman, dressed in a skirt to her knees, asked the other woman who was wearing a black veil, about the queue for the tickets to the museum. The veiled woman asked in amazement “You speak Turkish?”. Yes, I am Turkish!” asserted the short-haired woman. “Oh! You don’t look Turkish. You look like a

⁹⁷ Because I was not able to record this interview, here I convey the anecdote from my notes that I have taken during the interview.

⁹⁸ I am indebted to my advisor, Prof. Arat, for reminding me of this anecdote in Yashin’s book.

Westerner,” said the veiled woman. “You don’t look Turkish either,” said the other. “I thought you were an Arab.”

Yashin interprets this anecdote in the following way: “Both these women were claiming exclusive “nativeness” through their own respective manners of dress and public comportment, mutually ascribing “foreignness” to one another, each wanting to dissociate the other’s appearance from her respective notions of “Turkey” (Yashin, 2002, p.19). Very much the same, in Meryem’s encounter with the border officer, it can be argued that firstly the officer and then Meryem claimed exclusive ‘genuineness’; the officer through his legal and occupational position and Meryem through her ethnic origin and physical features. Therefore both the border officer and Meryem mutually ascribed ‘otherness’ to one another, each wanting to dissociate the other’s standing and features from their respective notions of a genuine ‘Turk’.

In all the three anecdotes (two from Sırrı and one from Meryem) we see that ‘Kurdishness’ emerges in the narratives of the immigrants as a primary concept that differentiates themselves from most of the locals and therefore that dissociates ‘genuine’ Turkishness from Kurdish effects. Indeed it is uttered clearly and overtly by Sırrı when I asked him about the differences between the Turks in Macedonia and the Turks in Turkey. He replied me in a concise and determined manner: “The Kurd! The major difference is the Kurd!” Hence it is the absence of a Kurdish population in Macedonia that makes the major difference between the two Turkish communities. This brings us to a second set of concepts that the immigrants use in articulating their ethnic identity through difference from the locals: pure vs. impure and unmixed vs. mixed. These concepts explain why the major difference of the Turks in Turkey is the existence of the Kurds. The local Turks, from the immigrants’ point of view, are mixed with the

Kurds and therefore have lost their ‘genuine’ Turkishness as opposed to themselves who have managed to protect their ethnic purity.

Enis, in response to my above question (the differences between the Turks in Macedonia and the Turks in Turkey), said that he could not do a comparison because ‘there are so many millets here and everybody claims to be Turk but they are different... the people of some cities happen to be different.’⁹⁹ It is more or less clear that Enis implies with ‘some cities’ the cities in the eastern Anatolia and with the ‘different people’ the people of Kurdish origin. More importantly ‘everybody claims to be a Turk in Turkey’ and this is the major obstacle for him in making a comparison between the Turks in Macedonia and the Turks in Turkey.

Yet the Turks in Macedonia, although they lived in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious community, succeeded in protecting their ‘purity’ and here is how they articulate this claim:

“Ekonomik problemlerden dolayı, siyasi baskılardan değil. ... 33 sene orda yaşadım. Türk olarak işe girdim. Türkçeyi konuştum. Yani nasıl diyeyim, ramazanımı tuttum. Niye oruç tuttun diyen kimse olmadı. Bir tek bizim onla toplumlarla karışmadığımız ortada. Aylarca mesela ben o tür toplumlara hiç gitmedim.”¹⁰⁰

This was Burhan’s remarks while he was telling me about their reasons for migrating to Turkey. He asserts that they did not migrate because of any political pressures directed to their identities as Turks and Muslims. To make his point clearer, he underlines the facts that he was hired as a Turk, he spoke Turkish there all the time and he used to practice his religion. He continues by saying that ‘it is evident that we had never ‘mixed’ with the other communities there’. He was proud while saying that

⁹⁹ “...Şimdi burda o kadar millet var ki, herkes Türk geçiniyor ama değişik... Bazı illerin değişik oluyor insanları.”

¹⁰⁰ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “It is because of economic problems, not because of political pressures. ...I have lived there for 33 years; I was hired as a Turk. I spoke Turkish. How do I say? I practiced my religion, I fasted during the Ramadan. No one asked why. For one thing, it is evident that we were not mixed with the other communities. For months I have never entered those kind of communities.”

there were times that for months he had never entered into ‘those kind’ of communities. Here it is interesting how Turkishness and Muslimness are intermingled in Burhan’s response. Like Burhan, İsmet also emphasizes how they have protected their identities back in Macedonia:

“...Hep Türktük, hep Türk gibiydik. Yani oranın adamı olalım diye sıkıntımız yoktu ki! İstemedik hiç bi zaman.”¹⁰¹

They were determined that they are Turks and that they do not want to be ‘one of them’ (the non-Muslim and non-turkish people of the region) and this determination was enough to protect their purity as Turks and Muslims. As opposed to their ‘purity’, the immigrants think that the locals were mixed. İsmet, while she was comparing her standing as a Turk back in Macedonia and here in Turkey, explicitly expressed this dichotomy they built between the locals and the immigrants:

“... Çünkü oranın şeyiyle biçiliyosun, yetişıyosun ve tabi konuşman da mükemmel, hiç bi şekilde Türk olduğun belli değil, tipin de zaten onların hafızalarındaki, okudukları kitaplardaki Türk tipi değil. Hiç bir şekilde Türk olduğun belli olmaz, ismini söyleyene kadar. Ama buraya gelince bi kere tipin de farklı, konuşman zaten bozuk, ofsayt. ... Herkes bakıp bakıp, ‘siz nerelisiniz’, ‘a ben Türküm,’ ‘adın ne,’ ‘İsmet’, o kadar. Burda çok daha rahatım, çünkü Türk olduğum için, onlardan daha Türküm. Onlar karışık, kimbilir nerelerden gelmişler? Bizim geldiğimiz soyumuz, moyumuz bellidir çünkü.”¹⁰²

While she was having a hard time to participate in the community as a Turk back in Macedonia, although she was very much like them in her appearance, talking and formation; she accentuates that she did not and never feel uncomfortable in Turkey although she does not resemble the local Turks in her appearance, talking and

¹⁰¹ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “We were always Turks, always like Turks. That is to say we did not have an aim to be one of them! We never wanted that.”

¹⁰² İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “...because you are grown up with that place’s qualities and surely your speaking is perfect too; it is not known that you are a Turk; your look is not like the look of a Turk in their imaginaries and the look of a Turk in the books. The fact that you are a Turk is never known unless you say your name. But when you come here, your look is different for one thing; your speaking is already bad, off-sight. ... Everyone looks at you and says ‘where are you from?’; ‘I am Turk’ I say; ‘what’s your name?’ they say; ‘İsmet’ I say and that’s all. I am very comfortable here because I am a Turk, more Turk than them. They are mixed, who knows where they come from. But because our root and where we came from is all known.”

formation. The major reason for this paradox is that İsmet thinks that she is a ‘genuine’ and an ‘evident’ Turk compared to the locals who are ‘mixed’ and whose origins are not known. Therefore she thinks she is ‘more Turkish’ than the locals, falling into the same essentialist and exclusionary trap that the locals fall when marginalizing the immigrants.

In response to their marginalization as later converts and even as ‘gavurs,’ the immigrants –very much like when they are claiming purity in their ethnic identities in contrast to impure ethnic identities of the locals- claim that they are pure Muslims and used to practice one form of Islam back in Macedonia. Burhan, in response to my question about comparing the Islam that is practiced in Macedonia and in Turkey, replied:

“Bir tek orda biz tarikatçılık görmedik. Biz orda tek bir Müslümanlık gördük.”¹⁰³

This response is one step further than articulating the religious identity through sameness. Burhan differentiates their religious identities from the locals’ by emphasizing that they practiced ‘only one form’ of Islam back in Macedonia; and that they have never experienced ‘tarikatçılık’ meaning ‘multiple forms’ of practicing Islam. Hence again a dichotomy emerges between a ‘unique’ Islam, and a ‘multiple’ Islam of ‘tarikats’. Kerim expresses this dichotomy in a more explicit manner:

“Bizde islâmın farklı versiyonları yoktur burda olduğu gibi, biz tek bir İslâm, çok bozulmamış bir müslümanlık var içimizde. Hani Hacı, Veli, Bektaşî grubu, bilmem Süleymanlılar, bilmem ne cılar, cılar yok ki bizde. Bizde, biz var, biz Türk, Müslümanlar var, dolayısıyla böyle parçalanmadığımız için bizimki daha saf kalmış. Burda bir sürü versiyon görüyorduk o zaman benimki temiz hani...”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Burhan, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 May 2006. “We only did not see tariqatism there. We saw there only one form of Islam.”

¹⁰⁴ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “There are not different versions of Islam in us like there are here; we have a single Islam, an uncontaminated Muslimness in ourselves. That is, we do not have the groups of hacı, Veli, Bektaşî or Süleymanlıs, ists, etc; these are not present in us. There are only we, we Turks, we Muslims. Therefore, because we were not torn apart, ours stayed as pure. We were seeing numerous versions here then mine is the clean one...”

In his response Kerim, moving one step ahead Burhan, attributes purity to the Islam that they practice and accordingly attributing impurity to the Islam that was ‘polluted’ and ‘divided’ with tarikatçılık in Turkey. From his manner of talking and his choice of certain made-up words such as ‘cılar’ to deride the existence of numerous tarikats in Turkey, it is clear that he re-articulates the immigrants’ religious identity as Muslims not through emphasizing their sameness with the locals but through accentuating their difference and hence superiority compared to the locals. Sırrı is another one who describes the Muslims in Macedonia as ‘very pure Muslims, very good Muslims’ and asserts: ‘there is perhaps not that much sincere and genuine Muslims here in Turkey.’

In reaction to the infamous label of ‘later convert’ (sonradan dönme) by the locals on the immigrants, İsmet responded in the following way in an ardent manner:

“... insanlar göçmenliği bilmiyor. Bulgaristan’daki, Yugoslavya’daki, Romanya’daki tarihi bilen, biraz kültürlü, biraz okumuş, biraz tarihi bilen bizim Osmanlılar oraya gittiğinde... Biz nerden geldiğimizi çok iyi biliyoruz. O dönme diyenler daha dönmedir. ... Dönme nasıl oluyoruz? Biz burdan gitmeyiz. O kadar belli ki! ...Dönme, kim dönme? Oralarda Boşnaklar. Dönme olayı varsa vardır. Ama Boşnaklar. Bak Boşnaklardan kimse diyemez ki biz Osmanlı zamanında geldik. Boşnaklar oranın ırkı, insanı... Belli bi şey karşılığında dönmüşler, Müslüman olmuşlar. Pomaklar... onlar dönmedir. Türkçe konuşmayı bilmeyen insan dönmedir. Boşnaklar Türkçe konuşmaz. Müslümandır ama o kadar. Tarihi bilen, kültürü bilen insan hiç şüphe etmez. Ama Bulgaristan’a giden tamamen Osmanlı zamanında gitmiş insanlardır, yerleşmiş ve kalmış. Sadece zamanı bitti, şimdi dönüş yapıyo. Yani kimliğimiz ne diye sorgulamıyoruz ki, biliyoruz. Bilmeyen varsa cahildir, kalmış geride. Tarih okusun. Biz dönme miyiz, değil miyiz, hiç bi sorunumuz yok.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “...people do not know about immigrancy. The one who knows the history in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania; the one who is cultured, who knows that we went there during the Ottoman times... we know very well where we have come from. Those who say ‘converts’ to us are more converts. ... Howcome we are converts? We went there from here. That’s very evident! ... Who is the convert? The Bosnians there. If there is a convert, there is. But Bosnians. Look, Bosnians cannot claim that they went there during the Ottoman times. The Bosnians are that place’s race, people... They have converted for a certain thing, they became Muslims. The Pomaks... they are converts. The one who does not speak Turkish is convert. The Bosnians do not speak Turkish. They are Muslims and that’s all. The one who knows history and culture do not suspect. The ones who are from Bulgaria all went there during the Ottoman times, they settled and stayed there. Only it’s time has ended, now it is the time for return. That is to say, we are not questioning our

It is interesting how İsmet does not even question the concept of ‘convert/dönme’ itself and its exclusionary and essentialist character yet makes references to ‘the history’ in order to demonstrate their ‘genuine’ Muslimness. She, again referring to ‘the history’, states who is a convert and who is not in the Balkans, falling into the essentialist trap that excludes ‘some unoriginal Muslims’ from ‘the genuine Muslims.’

İsmet, again in her usual determined manner, asserts that the label of ‘convert’ on the immigrants is a sign of the ignorance of the locals in historical knowledge and underlines that they do not care the locals since they all know what they are and where they have come from. This attitude is common in all of my informants.

Having presented one major way in which the immigrants articulate their identity through difference from the locals by claiming to be ‘pure and genuine Turks and Muslims’ as opposed to the ‘mixed’ and ‘impure’ ethnic and religious identities of the locals; I will now move on to another way in which the immigrants articulate their identities through difference from the locals: their European experience and formation.

As the immigrants compare themselves with the locals and stress their differences from the locals, they start to draw a boundary between ‘us’ being the immigrants and ‘them’ being the locals. Apart from the immigrants’ claim to ‘purity’ in ethnic and religious terms, there are a number of issues (i.e. physical, cultural, educational, and civilizational) that construct the ‘us’ of the immigrants in opposition to the locals. In all these issues that make the immigrants different from the locals, there is a print of the ‘European’ experience that the immigrants had. To put it differently, in the self-narratives of the immigrants, we see references to an idea of ‘being European’ or to

identity, we know it. If there are those who do not know, then they are ignorants, they stayed backwards. They must go and read history. We do not have such a problem whether we are converts or not.”

their experiences and background in Europe. They posit this ‘Europeanness’ in opposition to an ‘Anatolian’ culture.

The immigrants’ re-articulation of their identity through difference in this particular way is paradoxical to their articulation of identity through sameness with the locals. Therefore in the self-narratives of the immigrants; one can observe contradictory statements simultaneously such as ‘we are Turks and Muslims just like you are’ and ‘we are Turks but different because...’

In the self-narratives of the immigrants, they articulate their differences from the locals in a number of aspects. One of them is their physical features. İsmet is the one who emphasized this difference most:

“...ordan kökeni bozuk çıkmaz. Çalışkandır, dürüsttürler, yemek şeyleri güzeldir, onun için farklıdır. Göçmenlerle evlenen insanlar hep şanslıdır. O aileye farklılık gelir, aydınlık gelir. Çünkü kafa yapısı çok farklı. Biraz da karışır, güzellik gelir. Biz olmasak buradaki kara mara millet kara kalırdı. Karışa karışa bizden böyle renkleniyolar.”¹⁰⁶

This quotation is interesting because it both refers to the differences and more importantly ‘superiority’ in the immigrants’ physical appearances and in their level of ‘enlightenment’ –so to speak- compared to the locals’. The ones who marry the immigrants are lucky for her because both their physical features and their mindset will differ and ‘enlightened’. The ‘swarthy’ locals would stay ‘swarthy and dark’ in every term (physical as well as cultural) forever if there was no immigrant from the Balkans. In this sense, the ‘whiteness’ in the immigrants’ skin is both a sign of ‘beauty’ and ‘civilization’ that would ‘enlighten’ the darkness of the locals’ in both physical and cultural aspects.

¹⁰⁶ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “...there is not anyone who is of spoiled origin there. They are hardworking, honest; their food is beautiful; therefore they are different. The ones who marry the immigrants are always lucky. Difference and light come to that family. Because the mindset is very different. They also get mixed a little and beauty comes. If we were not here, the swarthy people here would stay swarthy forever. By mixing and mixing with us, they are get colored like this.”

İsmet's use of the word 'karışırılar' ('they would mix') is also a subtle reference to the practice of endogamy (marriage within the relatives) that is widespread in Anatolia. For the immigrants, endogamy is unacceptable and almost never practiced. All the cousins are always treated as siblings. Sırrı told me that one major difference between them and the locals was the absence of endogamy in their culture. Hence when İsmet says 'Biraz da karışırılar, güzellik gelir', she is also implying the argument that the practice of in-marriage takes away the physical beauty and diversity.

As there are different and sometimes opposite practices in the immigrants' 'culture' when compared to the Anatolian culture, we see many associations and societies (Rumelililer Derneği, Gostivarlılar Derneği, etc.) that promote the 'immigrant culture' and they are widespread especially in Istanbul. When I asked Kerim why he was a member of 'Gostivarlılar Derneği,' he responded as follows:

"Yani biraz burda olan göçmenlerle daha da yakınlaşmak, tanışmak ve bence derneklerin en büyük amacı çünkü biz neticede gene farklı bir kültürden geliyoruz ne kadar da Türk-Müslüman olsak da hani biraz orda modifiye olmuş bir topluluğuz, buraya gelip bu derneklerde topluma daha iyi adapte olmak için ben derneğe girdim ve görev de alıyorum artık. Rumeli Türklerini Anadolu Türkleriyle daha iyi kaynaştırmak için çalışmamız lazım. Bir de ordan göçedenleri biraraya getirip belki bir şekilde birbirlerine daha iyi destek olmalarını sağlamak. Ufak da olsa farklı bir kültürümüz var onu da yaşatmak için burda."¹⁰⁷

In the final analysis, for Kerim, although they are Turks and Muslims, they are from a different and 'modified' culture and they want to preserve that 'modified' culture. The choice of the word 'modified' is interesting because the word 'modified' means 'adjusted, changed, moderated, adapted.' Hence their culture is 'adjusted' and

¹⁰⁷ Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. "That is, in order to get closer with the other immigrants here; to meet them and in my opinion the biggest aim of the associations –because we are coming from a different culture, even if that's a little difference. Although we are Turks-Muslims we are a group that was modified there; I entered the organization in order to be adapted to the society and from now on I am also in the administration. We have to work to join together the Turks of Rumelia and the Turks of Anatolia; and also to get together the immigrants from there and make them support each other. We have a different –even if a little- culture and here we are trying to keep it alive."

even ‘moderated,’ meaning ‘softened’ when compared to the Anatolian culture. That is why he believes there should be platforms to mediate the Turks of Rumelia and the Turks of Anatolia. These associations also serve the immigrants for their adaptation process in Turkey.

The ‘culture’ of the immigrants is ‘modified’ in the Balkans, that is, in Europe. And at this stage ‘being European’ enters the scene. İsmet is the one who most explicitly and frequently refer to her ‘European’ identity:

“Ben farklıyım, konuşmam farklı, yapım farklı, hareketlerim farklı. Biz de böyle mi olsak? Ama olamıyolar. Yani ay millet zayıflıycam diye ölüyo, yapamıyo. Yahu kardeşim Avrupalıyız biz, uğraşma öyle. Biz inceyiz, farklıyız, boyluyuz. ... Bence farklı kalmamız, olmamız iyidir. ... Yani ama en büyük farklılık kafada. Ondan memnunum... Ne kadar da Türk gibi davransam, çalışıyorum davranmaya, bi yerden çıkıveriyoy farklılığım. Burdakiler gibi düşünmemek, bazı çok sıkıntısını görüyorum ama, bazen de çok rahat ediyorum. İyi ki böyle geri kafalı değilim diyorum. Töre cinayeti, hiç kafama bunu anlatamazsın. Yani saatlerce izah et bunun durumunu, benim aklım hafsalam almaz böyle bi şeyi.”¹⁰⁸

Apart from being thin, tall and different; it is also and more importantly their ‘mindset’ that makes them ‘European’ and hence ‘different’ from the locals. It is fascinating to observe how she both defines herself as a ‘Turk’ and at the same time says ‘although how much I try to behave like a Turk.’ It is at this point that one can comprehend the contingent character of the concepts like ‘Turk’, ‘European’, or ‘Anatolian.’ The shifting usages of and relational meaning-attributions to these concepts in the end make these concepts ‘empty-signifiers’ that can be defined and interpreted in any way depending on the context within which it is uttered. Hence while İsmet is proud to be a ‘Turk’ and to live in ‘Turkey’, she is also thankful that she is not ‘that

¹⁰⁸ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “I am different, my talk is different, my structure is different, my behaviours are different. They ask ‘can we be like this?’ But, they cannot. The people are all trying hard to lose weight, but they cannot succeed. Please, my sister, we are Europeans, don’t work that hard. We are slim, different, tall. ... For me, it is good that we are and we stay different. ... But the biggest difference is in the mind. I am glad because of that. ... Although I tried hard to act like a Turk, I am working to behave like that, at some place my difference comes out. Not to think like the ones here; sometimes I am having trouble with it, but sometimes I am very comfortable. I am glad I am not backward minded like them. Honor crimes, you can never tell me that. Explain the reasons for it to me for hours, I cannot comprehend it, never.”

backward-minded’ ‘like the locals’ and as she has said in another place that she is proud that she has grown up there and that ‘their yeast is formed there’¹⁰⁹. She is again giving the example of ‘honor crimes’ to substantiate this ‘backward-mindedness’ and underlines that she even cannot ‘comprehend’ the reasons and conditions behind this practice. To get rid of the paradox of ‘being Turkish and not like Turkish at the same time’, İsmet prefers to call herself in the end as a ‘Turk in the European culture’ or ‘perhaps as an Istanbulite Turk’ because for her ‘Istanbul and Europe is the same thing’.¹¹⁰ In her narrative we see that she is associating ‘backwardness’ with Anatolia and ‘being enlightened’ with Europe. While she associates herself with Istanbul, she constructs her ‘other’ in Turkey as Anatolia and Anatolia is represented by cities such as Konya and Adana.

When I have asked another interview, Enis, whether he sees himself as European or not, he replied: “E tabii normaldir biraz olacak o kadar... Ama zamanla bunlar da yola girerler, zamanla uyarlar bunlar da, ama ne kadar sürer, biraz uzun yani”.¹¹¹ He takes being ‘European’ for granted but thinks that ‘bunlar’ (‘these’ being the locals) need time to become ‘European.’

Kerim, as an answer to the same question, responded in a similar manner:

“Avrupalıyım demek, ne bileyim bazen o damar tutuyor, çünkü görüyorsun hani bazen çok hatalı, orda olmayan bir davranışı görüyorsun, o zaman o özelliğin biraz ön plana çıkıyo, e ağzından da kaçır, ‘bizde böyle değildi’ diyorum. Bazen işte buralılıktan çıkıyor insan, hani bu içimizde olan bişey, hani tamamen, belki

¹⁰⁹ “E yani orda yetiştiğimi de her zaman gururla söylerim. Onun da altını çiziyim çünkü her zaman iyi ki çocukluğum orda geçti, iyi ki orda yetiştim, iyi ki farklı düşünüyorum, buralılar gibi fazla düşünmüyorum. Korkutuyo buralıların düşünmesi, yani düşün beni, Adana’da olsaydım nasıl biri olurdu? Nasıl bi tip olurdu, nasıl bi düşünce tarzında. Yok yok... Orda mayamız atılmış, memnunum, ama burda da hayatımı sürdürmekle daha da memnunum. Yani yarım yarım oldu, olsun oldu.”

¹¹⁰ “Kendimi tabii önce Türk, o kimlik bir numaraya geçiyo, ondan sonra da yani Avrupa kültüründe Türk diyebilirim. Yani Avrupalılığı da inkar edemiyorum, çünkü tam buralı olursam... olamıyorum. Ama belki Istanbullu bir Türk diyebilirim. Çünkü hakikaten -inan- İstanbul - Avrupa aynı şeydir.”

¹¹¹ “Well, of course, it is normal... Yet in time these will also be adapted to it. But it takes a little longer.”

çocuğum öyle demeyecek hep burda yetiştiği için, yaşadığı için... Çoğu defa bu Avrupalılık ön plana çıkıyo, ama Türk'üm, Müslüman'ım.”¹¹²

From the phrases like ‘that vein’ to define ‘Europeanness’; ‘blurting out’; ‘it is something internal to us’; one can see that like Enis, Kerim also internalized being ‘European.’ The critical sentence ‘bizde böyle değildi’¹¹³ is a common reaction to the ‘mistakes’ that he never saw in Macedonia which make him ‘get out of being from here.’¹¹⁴ The difference between here and there, Turkey and Europe, with respect to a number of issues ranging from the daily city life to the working of the institutions like the banks; from the order of the streets and houses to the overcharging traders in the bazaars of Turkey; from the transportation conditions to the educational system; is summarized in the discourses of the immigrants in phrases like ‘bizde böyle değildi’ and ‘Avrupa’da bu yok, ayıp!’¹¹⁵

Apart from these more or less mechanical differences mostly related to the level of economic development, there is one quotation from İsmet which refers more to the embedded sociological differences between Europe and Turkey. Here, İsmet is telling about her experiences after migrating to Turkey:

“Sesler değişik geliyo, araba kullanmak, trafik değişik geliyo, insanların tavırları, bakışları, otobüse biniyosun yiyecek gibi bakmaları, ne oluyo, niye bakıyorlar, anlamıyosun ki... Yani nedir bu bakma, nedir bu bıyıklı adamlar her tarafta? ...nereye baksan bıyıklı adamlar, küçük küçük bıyıklı adamlar. Ben öyle şok yaşadım tabi, bir ay gelip de tatile gitmek farklı bi şeymiş... Tabi o zaman genciz... Bi biniyosun, böyle askılı bi bluz, millet ters ters bakıyo, ay niye bakıyo da anlamıyorum, bakıyorlar, ne var? Hani askılı giymek kötü bi şey midir? Alışmışız biz şortla, askılı şeylerle gezmeye, burda da öyle olucak zannediyosun. Ne bilesin ki? Aaa o bile suç oldu. Bakıyo bakıyo, sonra anladım ki, yani askılı giymemen

¹¹² Kerim, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 May 2005. “To say I’m European, I don’t know sometimes that vein becomes superior, because you see very wrong things, mistakes that were absent there; then that feature of yours came to the forefront, and then you blurt it out and say ‘things were not that way in us’. You sometimes get out of being from here; that is something into us, it is not complete, perhaps my children won’t say that because they were brought up and lived here... this Europeanness comes to the fore front many times, but I’m Turk and Muslim.”

¹¹³ “Things were not that way in us.”

¹¹⁴ “buralılıktan çıkıyor insan”

¹¹⁵ “This does not exist in Europe, what a shame!”

lazım, yani şort-mort nerdeeeee... Otobüse şort giyip nereye binecen. Ondan sonra başladım saçımı toplamaya böyle, daha kapalı, daha böyle kapalı mapalı, ama gene de bakıyolar, dedim ya bıyıklı o küçük küçük adamlar... Sonra alıştık tabi. Ama o kafayla hala düşünemiyorum. Hala algılayamıyorum.”¹¹⁶

İsmet’s experiences as a woman wearing ‘relatively’ marginal dress in her daily life in Istanbul compared to the average dress weared by the local women ‘taught’ her in the end that she ‘should not wear’ those particular dresses. Yet, more important and interesting than that is the way İsmet is describing all these. She is repeatedly mentioning the ‘gazes’ of those ‘little men with mustaches’ who are ‘ubiquitous’. She is differentiating and ‘othering’ these locals from her milieu, the immigrants. Those men are not tall like the immigrants, but they are short; they are even mustached (which İsmet interprets it as an ‘Eastern’ tendency) and moreover these ‘short mustached men’ are not used to see women wearing shorts and strapped blouses. She is shocked with those ‘little mustached men’s gazes’ because she never used to be gazed like this back in where she came from. It is the usual way of dressing for her and she has never thought that it is something to be gazed at. Although she had realized that she ‘should not dress like this’ in her daily life, she is still saying that she can never understand and perceive the reason for that.

As the interviews deepened and as they differentiate themselves from the locals more and more; a common statement of choice emerges in all the interviewees: ‘buralı

¹¹⁶ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “The voices sound different, to drive, the traffic comes different, the attitudes of people, their gazes, you get on a bus and they look at you like they will eat you, what is happening, why do they look at you, you do not understand... what is this looking; who are these little mustached men all around? ...wherever you look at you see those mustached men, little little mustached men. I was shocked of course, I have learned that it is a different thing to come here for a vacation of one month... of course we were young then... you get on the bus, you wear a strapped blouse, people look at you badly, and I do not understand why, what is it? Is it a bad thing to wear strapped blouse? We are used to wear shorts and blouses like that; you expect the same here. Howcome you know that? That became guilt too. Then I understood that I should not dress like that. Then I start to tie my hair like this, and dress more covered, but they continue looking, like I said those little mustached men... then we get used to it. But I still cannot understand, cannot comprehend.”

ile yapamayız biz.’¹¹⁷ Therefore, all prefer to be with the people like themselves, mainly the immigrants, in their immediate and private spheres. The immigrants that I have interviewed, except one, prefer to live in such neighbourhoods that the majority of the immigrants from the Balkans also reside. A more important and critical choice than the place of residence is exercised in marriage. Marriage is vital because it is a realm within which a family re-constructs and re-defines itself. Whom one chooses to marry says a lot about one’s identity, affiliations and aspirations. Indeed, it is a reliable reflection of people’s preferences and images of the ‘proper’ ones to marry. Therefore I have asked questions to my interviewees about whom they marry and whom they prefer their children to marry. All the immigrants I have interviewed marry people from their homecountry. Even the ones who have married after they have migrated to Turkey marry immigrants (first or second generation) like themselves. When it comes to their children, they assert that they prefer but ‘of course’ do not obstinately insist or force their children to marry immigrants or people from that geography like themselves.

İsmet provides me an honest account of why she had married a man whose family has an immigrant past. I asked her if she married a local or not, she answered “He is from here yet, they also have immigrancy; they are familiar with those kind of things too. We cannot do with the local Anatolian people because we do not fit them; their traditions are unbearable for us. Our mentality, culture, mindset, structure is extremely different from a Turk. We think different.” Then I asked “from which aspects you think you are different from a Turk?” and she responded in detail as follows:

“Bir kere özgürsün, bir tipik Türk insanı olamaz. Ev kadını, 5 çocuk doğuracak, çalışmayacak. Yani Anadolu şeyi, işi gücü ne, kadın evinde otursun. Bizde çok farklıdır. Eşitlik, kadın-erkek farkı yok. Kadın çalışır, kadın okur, kadın özgürdür, istediğine gider, ben kocamdan izin mi alıp gidicem? O mümkün değil, bu benim

¹¹⁷ “We cannot do with the locals.” The word ‘local’ here in this translation is mainly describing the Anatolian people.

özgürlüğümü kısıtlar, bana de gelirler. En büyük benim burda gördüğüm şey “a eşimden izin alayım”, noldu senin şeyin yok mu, ne izini, ne oldu, ne yapıcaz ki eşimden izin alıcan? Bi saat geç gelecekmiş. Ha haber ver, merak etmesin, ama ne izni, çocuk musun sen? Biz çocukken izin almadık. Onun için bir Anadolu’lu, bir Adanalı erkekle Allah korusun (*knocking on wood*) düşünebiliyor musun onları? ... Öyle biz yaşayamazdık. Yani her ne kadar Türküz-Mürküz ama bir farkımız var yani. O fark da hissediliyor bizde. ... Yani onun için, sizin yetiştiğiniz tarz anneniz, babanız, tipiniz herşeyiniz farklı. Ben eminim, size de bulaşmıştır o farklılık. Siz de burdakiler gibi değilsinizdir. ... Yani o kültür çatışması dediklerini, yeni yeni insan görüyo ne demektir. Çok bir şeyi de değiştirmek mümkün değil. Herkes çocukluktan nasıl yetişirse öyle kalıyo. O çocuk öyle gördüyse babadan muamele anneye, o da aynısını yapar. O evde varsa bi sıkıştırma, sıkıştırır. Ama free bi evse, anne çalışıyorsa, baba çalışıyorsa, çocuklar rahat büyüdüyse, aynı şeyi o da yapar. Baba dövüyorsa anneyi, çocuk ne kadar da yargılasa büyüdüğünde aynısını o da yapar. Kadın kısmı da ne kadar hürmet gördüyse babaya, abiye; evlendiği zaman kocaya, oğlan çocuğuna tapar. Yani bu bir gelenek, o gelenekler orda var. Bizim tarafta öyle bi şeyler yok. Yani çok daha modern, çok daha açık, çok daha aydın tipleriz biz. Onun için o tiplerle geçinmemiz çok zor....bazı var öyle aileler daha modern olan ama... Yani kadının yeri ev demeyen kişiye bakıcaksın. Öyle düşündü mü, bitmiştir bu iş.”¹¹⁸

According to İsmet, a ‘typical Turk’ is an ‘Anatolian’ Turk and ‘being Anatolian’ represents a whole bundle of features that are in sharp contrast to the ‘culture of the immigrants’. It is fascinating again to see how İsmet, during the interview, is both claiming to be a Turk and even ‘more Turk’ than the locals and at the same time claiming to be ‘different’ than ‘a typical Turk’; in her fascinating expression ‘Türküz-

¹¹⁸ İsmet, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2006. “You are free for one thing, a typical Turkish person cannot. She will be a housewife, will give birth to 5 children, and will not work. That is an Anatolian thing, women sit in their homes. It is different in us. Equality, no difference between woman and man. Woman works, woman has education, woman is free, can go anywhere she wants, will I go anywhere with my husband’s consent? That is not possible, that will restrict my freedom, and I will freak out. I see one thing here that women say ‘I have to get permission of my husband’; why don’t you have the initiative? Ok, call her and tell her that you will be late so that he won’t worry. But what permission, consent; are you a child? We did not get permission even when we were children. Therefore I cannot imagine being with an Anatolian man, a man from Adana; God saves (*knocking on wood*); can you? ... We could not live like that. That is, ok we are Turks but we have a difference. And that difference is felt in us. That is, therefore, you the way you were brought up, your mother, your father, your look; everything is different. I am sure that difference had captured you too and you are not like the others. ... One can see that culture clash. It is not possible to change things much. Everybody stay the way they were brought up. If that child sees his father treating his mother in a certain way, he will do the same to his wife. If there are strict rules, he will put the same rules. But if that’s a free home, mother working, father working; if the children were brought up comfortably; that child does the same. If the father beats the mother, no matter how much the child judges that, he will do the same when he grows up. If a woman sees extreme respect to the father and brother; she will worship to her husband and son the same way. That is a tradition and those kinds of traditions are there. On our side there are no such traditions. We are much more modern, liberal, enlightened people. Therefore it is hard for us to get on well with those types of people... there are some families who are more modern but... that is to say, you have to search for those who do not claim that home is where women belong. If he thinks that way, that does not work.”

Mürküz ama bir farkımız var.’¹¹⁹ She also uses ‘bizim taraf’ (our side) to signify the immigrants as opposed to the locals. These shifting usages of us and them are the kernel of the self-narratives of the immigrants that I have interviewed. Therefore while İsmet was in the beginning of the interview emphasizing the fact that her family is originally from Anatolia, from the city of Konya; towards the end of the interview she, knocking on the wood, says that she cannot imagine herself marrying an Anatolian man. In this respect, she associates ‘Anatolian culture’ with patriarchy, restrictions on women, tradition, backwardness in opposition to her ‘culture’ which she associates with egalitarianism between women and men, lack of restrictions, freedom, modernity, enlightened outlook and progress. That is why she thinks there is a ‘clash of cultures’ between the immigrants and the locals and that is why ‘the immigrants’ should take into consideration this when it comes to marriage; because, as she says in another place, ‘You can manipulate the one in the street. If you do not like, you can turn your back around. But, when it comes to marriage it is different.’ Hence it is the immediate milieu that matters most in preserving and promoting the immigrant ‘identity’ and ‘culture’.

Before moving to the quotations from the other interviewees on this issue, I think it should once again be noted that İsmet is different than the other immigrant women for instance Şükran or Kerim’s wife who wear headscarves hence relatively more ‘traditional’ and who are not that critical to the patriarchal order hence who may take the ‘consent of their husbands’ when they will do something. Therefore the egalitarian character of the ‘immigrant culture’ that İsmet is articulating may not be valid for all the immigrants. Indeed another immigrant man, Burhan, in a sense, confessed that the Turks in Macedonia –especially the older generations- in order to preserve and protect

¹¹⁹ It should be noted that -as it is seen in this quotation- she sympathizes with me because she knew I am coming from an immigrant family too from my mother’s side. That might have provided comfort for her in making these comparisons honestly and openly between the immigrants and the locals.

their identities and ‘Muslimness’ did not send their daughters and women to schools; and after a certain age orient them to wear headscarves. This heterogeneity of the immigrants, in their profiles and orientations, resulted in multiple and different ways in which they are marginalized in Turkey. While İsmet (with her shorts and strapped blouse) was being marginalized in Turkey by the gazes of the ‘short mustached men’ because of the way she is dressed; Kerim’s wife (with her headscarf and long coat) was also marginalized in the neighbourhood by the label of ‘yeşil pardüseli kadın’ (the woman in green coat) because of the way she is dressed. Therefore, in this thesis I did not aim to make generalizations that are valid for each and every Turkish-Muslim immigrant from Macedonia. Within the scope of my research, I have only tried to develop hypotheses and arguments about the relationship between citizenship and identity by analyzing the narratives and experiences of the post-1980 Turkish-Muslim immigrants from Macedonia.

To return to the immigrants’ reflections and preferences on the issue of marriage, like İsmet, Sırrı also emphasized how the immigrants pay attention to marry the ones from ‘their place’. It was right after when Sırrı has migrated to Turkey that an elder immigrant, who has migrated long before him, advised him the following:

“Bak dedi Sırrı Bey dedi, sen sen ol, çocukların var mı dedi, var dedim, sen sen ol dedi kendi yerinden al dedi, kendi insanını al dedi, kız alırsan ya da evden gelin verirsen yakının olsun dedi, herşeyini bilesin dedi, çünkü, burda dedi çok şeydir bu olay. Niye dedim, burda hep herkes Türk dedim. Ne değişiklik var? Yooo... Bak dedi ben sana söyleyeyim, en büyük örnek ‘ben’ dedi. Ne var sende dedim. Ben dedi bi Laz kızı aldım çaldılar beni dedi. Ben dedi arkadaşlarımın suratlarını dahi unutmuşum dedi. Bunları hep niçin anlatıyorum kızım, bunlar işte muhacirliğin hep dikkat ettiği, baktığı şeyler. Burdaki yerli Türkler, bunlara bakmıyor.”¹²⁰

□ Sırrı, interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 April 2006. “He said ‘look Sırrı bey, do you have any children?’ I said yes. He said ok then take from your place, if you take a daughter-in-law or son-in-law, take from your place because they will be close to you and you will know everything about them because here this thing is different. I said ‘why, everybody is Turk here, what is the difference?’ Nooo... he said ‘look I took a Laz girl and they have stolen me’. I have even forgotten my friends’ faces he said. Why am telling all these, my daughter, these are the things that the immigrants always pay attention. The local Turks here do not look at these.”

The phrases ‘own place’, ‘own people’, ‘the ones who are close to you’ are the expressions that reinforce the ‘us’ of the immigrants as opposed to the ‘them’ of the locals. For the immigrants, the other immigrants are like the safe waters that they ‘know everything about it’ therefore they would not be under the threat of detachment from her/his own identities and milieu. As a reply to Sirri’s reaction ‘Why? Everybody is Turk here, what is the difference?’ the man said a big ‘no’ and told how himself was ‘stolen’ by a Laz family. Sirri concludes his answer ‘this is something that the local Turks did not pay attention’. Hence because everybody is not ‘Turk’ in Turkey, for instance a Laz, a Turk should ‘pay attention’ when choosing whom to marry. An immigrant or a ‘Turk’ should find the ‘proper’ one to marry and that proper for the immigrants are the immigrants themselves. Likewise I asked Burhan whether he wants his children to marry the locals, he replied me ‘My daughter-in-law is from Edirne.’ I said ‘but that is a close shot too’. He responded defensively ‘But her family has migrated long before. We do not have a certain preference yet my wish; desire is my children marrying the ones from our own place.’

In spite of the fact that the interviewees are diverse in their profiles, in all of them there is a double and paradoxical process of articulating identity through sameness and difference simultaneously. They both claim to be Turks and Muslims just like the locals yet they also claim to be different than the locals in a number of aspects. This paradoxical articulation and construction of identity shapes the immigrants’ preferences in their private and immediate milieu. They want to preserve and protect their identities from the locals through being with the ‘people from their own place.’ To put it differently, according to them, the proper Turks and Muslims are the immigrants like themselves both in their private spheres and as well as in the public sphere.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have tried to explore the relationship between citizenship and identity in Turkey through analyzing the narratives and the experiences of the Turkish-Muslim immigrants from Macedonia who have migrated to Turkey during the post-1980 period. By looking at the experiences of the immigrants in Turkey, their interactions with the local population and how they make sense of and narrate these experiences and interactions; I have tried to have an insight into the extent to which the citizenship in Turkey is constructed along Turkishness and Muslimness and the different ways in which Turkishness and Muslimness are defined by the immigrants as well as the locals.

In this thesis, I have demonstrated the paradoxical nature of the experiences of Turkish-Muslim immigrants from Macedonia in Turkey. I have asserted that these immigrants have migrated to Turkey and have made a claim to citizenship on the grounds that they are Turks and Muslims. They see Turkey as their original ‘homeland’ dating back to Ottoman times. I have argued that the immigrants articulate their identities, (in a sense ‘prove’ their Turkish-Muslim identity) basically through highlighting *three* themes: that they are the descendants of the *Ottomans*; they –as Turks and Muslims- have gone to the Balkans in the Ottoman times from Anatolia; therefore their roots are evident and *Anatolia* is their original homeland; and that they speak *Turkish* which is their mother tongue. I have argued that these are the basic reference points from which they articulate their Turkishness and Muslimness; and legitimize their claim to citizenship.

Yet, these claims became the very foundation on which they are discriminated as the local Turkish population came to view the immigrants' claimed identities as Turks and Muslims with suspicion. As I have stated, the immigrants are treated as 'foreigners' because in the eyes of the local population, they are 'converts to Islam', even 'gavurs' and are not Turks but 'Albanians'.

Therefore, I have argued that even though being Turkish and Muslim end up constituting the basic parameters of citizenship in Turkey above and beyond the claims of 'civic citizenship', paradoxically these two parameters define the very grounds on which Macedonian Turkish immigrants are marginalized in Turkey.

The fact that the immigrants are marginalized on the basis of the very identity they claim to have showed us the extent to which essentialist approaches to ethnicity, religion and citizenship are prevalent in Turkey. Indeed, I accentuated that the labels of Albanian and convert/gavur on immigrants implicitly serve to define who is not a 'genuine' Turk and Muslim and therefore who is not a 'proper citizen' of Turkey.

In reaction to this marginalization, I argued that the immigrants ironically respond within the same essentialist paradigm by 're-articulating' their ethnic and religious identity as 'pure' and 'unmixed' and positing it in contrast to an 'impure' and 'mixed' identity that the locals hold both in ethnic and religious terms. For instance, they claimed that they are more 'Turks' than the locals are since the locals are ethnically 'mixed' (sometimes implicitly sometimes explicitly referring to Kurds). They also claimed that there was one Islam in Macedonia which was not 'polluted' with tariqats like it is in Turkey. Therefore the immigrants claimed to be 'purer' and 'better' Muslims than the ones in Turkey.

In relation to these counter-essentialist claims of the immigrants, I have pointed out an effort on the part of the immigrants of ‘differentiating’ themselves from the locals with respect to their culture, mindset and outlook. They emphasized that ‘they cannot do with the locals’ (“buralı ile yapamayız biz”) and uttered the sentence ‘we are Turks but different because...’ which helps them to enumerate a number of features that make them different from the locals. I have argued that the European experience and identity are the main reference points in this regard. I have indicated how -in their narratives- they build dichotomies between the immigrants and the locals through the dichotomies such as ‘West and East’, ‘Europe and Anatolia’, ‘modern and traditional’, ‘developed and backward’, and ‘enlightened and dark’.

As ironic as it is, this effort for ‘differentiation’ is in contradiction with the former effort which emphasizes ‘sameness’ with the locals in terms of ethnicity and religion. Hence, I argued that in the self-narratives of the immigrants, there is a double and paradoxical process of articulation and construction of identity through sameness and difference at the same time.

I have argued throughout the thesis that both the locals, by marginalizing the immigrants on the basis of their identities, and the immigrants, by articulating their identities in the above manner, all came to define a profile of the ‘proper citizen’ of Turkey. For the locals, the immigrants are not proper citizens because they are not Turks and Muslims; but they are Albanians and converts, even gavurs. For the immigrants, they are the proper citizens for Turkey firstly because they are pure and therefore genuine Turks and Muslims in contrast to the locals who are ethnically and religiously mixed and secondly because their European experience, identity and outlook

make their citizenship and participation to the society a positive contribution, and ‘added value’.

Therefore throughout this thesis I have tried to emphasize that the everyday, mundane experiences of these immigrants with the local population (including state officials), the ways in which the immigrants narrate these experiences and their marginalization, and the contesting definitions over Turkishness and Muslimness demonstrate once again the intimate relation prevalent between the citizenship and Turkish-Muslim identity in Turkey.

Indeed I have argued in the thesis that the contesting definitions over the ‘genuine’ Turkish and Muslim identity by the immigrants as well as the locals determine at the same who ‘the proper citizen’ is in Turkey according to that particular group.

The emphasis on ‘genuineness’ and ‘authenticity’ in defining Turkish and Muslim identity in the narratives of the immigrants as well as in the logic behind their marginalization by the locals is a significant finding of this thesis not only for this specific case study on the Turkish-Muslim immigrants from Macedonia but also and more importantly for its reflections on the literature concerning recognition and identity. As I have stated in Chapter I, identity as such and the feature of authenticity in his definition of identity are central to Charles Taylor’s political theory of recognition which in turn has further implications for his theory of multicultural citizenship, justice and equality. In contrast to Taylor’s emphasis on authenticity as central and critical to identity, this thesis tried to reveal the dangerousness of the concept of authenticity and a concept of recognition that is constructed upon this authenticity. I have tried to show how the emphases upon the concepts such as authenticity and genuineness work for not furthering recognition of different and authentic identities but for excluding those who

do not fit well within the definitions of ‘authentic Turks and Muslims’. Throughout the thesis, I have demonstrated how both the locals and the immigrants define their identities along authenticity and genuineness; and how –because of these very definitions- they came to exclude one another. Particularly by analyzing the narratives of the immigrants, I have tried to point out how these emphases on authenticity can easily be stretched to essentialism and therefore are very dangerous primarily because the emphasis on authenticity in defining identities rivet the forms of discrimination and marginalization.

Beyond the above reflections on the literature concerning recognition and identity, this thesis has also implications on a number of issues such as citizenship, nationalism, national/religious identity and eventually democracy in Turkey. To begin with, it demonstrates us how the citizenship in Turkey is being defined and made sense of primarily through Turkishness and Muslimness. Yet, with this study we also notice the existence of contesting definitions over Turkishness and Muslimness. In close relation to this, it also shows us particular and contesting definitions of the ‘proper citizen’ in Turkey. This thesis has also implications eventually for democracy because the immigrants’ marginalization by the locals is an obstacle for practicing their citizenship equally and substantively.

Last but not least, this thesis is a contribution to the academic field on the migration from the Balkans in Turkey which is mostly dominated by the quantitative studies on the statistics of the immigration figures from the region and thereby lacking any qualitative outlook or focus on the political and sociological implications of this significant demographic movement of the twentieth century that affected Turkey tremendously.

APPENDIX

Interview Questions

Personal history:

1. Where were you born and when? Could you mention about the place you used to live and also about your education?
2. Are you married? How did you meet your spouse? When and where did you get married?
3. Is the place you were born the place your parents used to live before?
4. Could you mention about your parents and their occupations?
5. Did they ever think of migrating to Turkey? Why?
6. Was Turkey used to be talked of during the family talks?
7. What were you thinking when you heard about Turkey during these talks? How did you feel?

Migration to Turkey:

A. Prior to Migration:

8. Did you have any prejudices about Turkey?
9. Were you in contact with those relatives of yours who have migrated to Turkey? Who were you communicating with and how (via letter, telephone, visiting)?
10. What were you wondering about Turkey?
11. What were they telling you about Turkey, what were they advising?
12. Do you think they were pleased with their lives?
13. Have you ever come to Turkey prior to your migration? How many times? How long have you stayed?
14. What did you feel like and experience when you came to Turkey those times?
15. How did you evaluate Turkey? What did you like and did not like?

16. What were the things you like about your life in Macedonia? What were the things you did not like and wanted to change?

B. Migration process:

17. What did you think about migrating to Turkey when you found your own family? Why did you think that way?

18. How frequent and in which context this issue was highlighted in the agenda?

19. How did your spouse think about this?

20. When and how did you make the decision of migration? (With your spouse? With the outside effects? As a result of family insistence?)

21. When did you migrate? Why did you migrate?

22. Why did you migrate at that specific time and not before?

23. What were the factors that pushed you to migrate? (Would you think of migrating if there was no war?)

24. What were the factors that pulled you toward Turkey/Istanbul?

25. What were your expectations about Turkey and Istanbul?

C. Aftermath of migration:

26. What kind of an experience was migration?

27. What did you experience when you migrated here? Could you please explain?

28. Did you feel yourself belonging to here?

29. Have you ever wished that you did not have to migrate?

30. Do you have children? What did they feel about coming here?

31. How old were they when you migrated and what were their reactions?

32. Did they experience any difficulties in their adaptation to Turkey? Could you give any examples?

33. What were the things you liked about Turkey? What were the things you did not approve?
(It may be about values; traditions or breaking from traditions; a more comfortable / liberal life; or about financial opportunities.)
34. Was there anyone who helped you when you first came here? Whom do you ask for help mostly?
35. Did you become a member in society organizations like Gostivarlılar Derneği or Rumelililer Derneği? Why did you feel the need for becoming a member in those kind of organizations?
36. Where did you stay in the first place when you migrated? How long did it take you to move your own house? Did you experience any difficulties?
37. Who were your neighbors? How was your communication with them? How did they react to and treat you? How is your relationship now?
38. Was there any change in their attitudes when they learned your origin? What kind of experiences did you have with your environment?
39. Whom do you see most here? (Relative, neighbor, friend?)
40. Did you communicate anyone here except your relatives? How did you meet them?
41. How much time did it take for you to get used to here and feel comfortable?
42. What were the things that upset you or worried you during this adaptation period? Could you give examples?
43. Do you feel yourself different in Turkey? If yes, could you give a couple of examples of when you felt different?
44. Have you ever compared yourself with Turks in Turkey? Do you think there is a difference between the Turks in Macedonia and the Turks in Turkey?

45. Did ‘having lived in Europe’ affect you? What kind of contributions did it cause? Do you think coming from Europe puts you to a different place from the Turks here?
46. Did you go to Macedonia after migration?
47. What did you feel like when you encounter things that remind you Macedonia?
48. How often do you visit Macedonia? Do you prefer to visit more frequently?
49. How do you feel when you go there?

D. Vatandaşlık Süreci:

50. When did you apply for citizenship? Could you please mention about the application process? What kind of an experience was that?
51. What kind of hardships did you encounter? What kind of solutions did you try to find to overcome these hardships?
52. What is the attitude of the state institutions and state bureaucracy towards you?
53. To whom did you ask for help during this process? Did you feel the need to have an acquaintance in bureaucracy? Were you able to find one? Did it help?
54. What were the requirements of the state for citizenship?
55. What do you think of the state’s attitude towards the immigrants? Is there any discrimination?
56. Do you think that the state is fair towards you in the citizenship issue?
57. Have you ever thought that you were treated as foreigners? When?
58. What does citizenship mean for you? How do you express being a citizen and define citizenship?
59. As a person who went through the process of application to citizenship, how do you describe Turkish state’s definition of citizenship? What are the most important features and concept in the definition of citizenship?

60. What do you think of the debates around the ethnic character of citizenship in Turkey as opposed to a weak civic character?
61. How do you feel when you became a citizen?
62. How would/did you feel when you were rejected citizenship? How would/do you explain that?
63. What kind of difficulties did you encounter resulting from your being a non-citizen? What kind of changes occurred after you were admitted to citizenship?
64. Did you apply for double citizenship? Why? Why not?
65. What are the benefits of holding a double nationality? Do you have an idea of returning to Macedonia? Under which circumstances would you think of returning back?
66. Could you compare your citizenship in Macedonia with your citizenship in Turkey? What kind of differences and sameness are there between the two? How would you compare the attitudes of the state institutions in these countries?
67. How is the overall attitude of the society towards you and did it change after you became a citizen?

Belonging:

68. What do you say when they ask you where you are from?
69. Where do you see yourself belonging: to the city or the region you were born; the city you are living in now or to Turkey?
70. How do you define yourself? What are the most important components of your identity?
(For instance being Yugoslavian, Macedonian, Turkish citizen, Turk, Muslim, European, woman or man)
71. Do you wish to be born in Turkey? Why? Why not?
72. Do you feel yourself European?

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