

“WE LIVE LIKE SEA FOAM”:
EXPERIENCES OF LIMINALITY AMONG AFGHAN MIGRANTS IN CEZA
CITY-TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

**“WE LIVE LIKE SEA FOAM”:
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CITY-TURKEY**

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This study attempts to better understand gender relations in the process of resettlement among families of Afghan forced migrants in Turkey. In addition it tries to gain an insight into whether those gender relations have been changed by this migration. In order to ascertain these possible changes a field study including participant observation, in depth interviews and interviews with experts was conducted in a city in Central Anatolia to which Afghan migrants are assigned.

Since 2007 Afghan asylum-seekers represent a new event in Turkey. They have admitted the right to seek asylum in Turkey very recently. Furthermore, as their population has risen to become the third largest of the non-European asylum

seekers in Turkey; there is a need for more research about them and the associated issues.

The research findings demonstrate patterns of changes concerning gender relations. Changes can be explained by using the concepts of liminality. Those changes sometimes accommodated emancipation for women; alongside this the opposite occurred too. Liminality produced different patterns of gender relations.

Key words: Forced migration, gender relations, Afghan refugees, liminality, Turkey.

ÖZ

"DENİZ KÖPÜĞÜ GİBİ YAŞIYORUZ": AFGAN GÖÇMENLERİN TÜRKİYE-CEZA ŞEHİRİNDE EŞİKTELİK TECRÜBELERİ

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Bu çalışma, zorunlu göçe maruz kalmış Afgan ailelerin, Türkiye'deki yerleştirme süreçlerinde cinsiyete dayalı ilişkilerini daha kapsamlı anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bununla beraber bu ilişkilerin göç ile birlikte değişip değişmediği de araştırılmaktadır. İlişkilerdeki olası değişiklikleri saptamak amacıyla, Afgan göçmenlerin yerleştirildiği bir Orta Anadolu şehrinde katılımlı gözlemler, ayrıntılı görüşmeler ve uzmanlarla yapılan röportajlar içeren bir saha çalışması gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Türkiye'ye sığınma talebinde bulunma hakkını yakın zamanda edinen Afgan sığınmacılar, 2007'den beri Türkiye'nin gündemindedir. Türkiye'deki sığınmacılar arasında Avrupalı olmayan üçüncü büyük sığınmacı topluluk

konumuna gelmiş olmaları da, kendileri ve kendileriyle ilişkili konular hakkında daha fazla araştırma yapılması ihtiyacını doğurmuştur.

Araştırmanın bulguları, cinsiyete dayalı ilişkilerde farklı biçimlerde yaşanan değişimleri göstermektedir. Değişimler eşitlik kavramı üzerinden açıklanabilir. Bu değişimler bazen kadına eşitlikçi haklar sağlarken, bazen de daha kısıtlayıcı koşullara vesile olabilmektedir. Eşitlik, cinsiyete dayalı ilişkilerde farklı biçimlerde değişikliklere neden olmuştur.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Zorunlu göç, cinsiyete dayalı ilişkiler, Afgan mülteci, eşitlik, Türkiye

*To my Love,
Who always showed me the light when I saw myself in the darkness..*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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ASAM	Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants
EU	European Union
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
MOI	Ministry of the Interior
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Displacement and forced migration affect the lives of millions of people every year. Conflict is one of a main driving factor which forces people to leave their homes and seek refuge in other countries. The Afghan people began seeking asylum in 1977 when the Soviet army invaded their country. Even though the Soviet invasion ended many years ago, for many reasons such as the civil wars and USA respond to the September 11 the lives of many Afghan people have been disrupted and they began to look for asylum in other countries. Since 1977 Afghanistan became one of the largest producers of refugees worldwide.

Since then, many scholars have written about Afghans in exile. However, there are few studies about gender relations among migrants; Writing as recently as 2001, Mahler and Pessar emphasize that on transnational spaces and transnational migrations gender has rarely been a main focus (Pratt & Yeoh 2003).

The goal of this study is to investigate the experiences and practices of the everyday life of Afghani male and female forced migrants in Turkey, as a transit country, and the process of resettlement from anthropological perspective. The research questions concentrate on gender relations within this community.

By conducting this study I want to draw attention to the everyday life of Afghan asylum seekers in Turkey. Thus while conducting research on gender relations, additional information about everyday life and problems of being in a transit country have also been collected. As I focused on everyday experience from the beginning of the research, the identification of transforming factors had a high priority as an outcome of the research. Therefore, the concepts of transformation and living in limbo appeared during my research and had added to the research question. The reason for starting with everyday experiences was also to get closer to the Afghan migrants, to build trust and to create networks of informants by spending time with them and sharing their everyday life.

It was my goal to discover how the asylum seekers perceived their new life in Turkey, and to see if women and men have different perception of their new life and the new location. I was interested in how they perceived the new location in relation to the previous place they had lived (including Iran and Afghanistan). In addition, the relation between the new environments and new social structure with those forced migrants was my concern. I also wanted to explore how the migrants were adapting to this evolving and unpredictable context.

Then I intended to explore whether the forced migrants from Afghanistan, especially the women, became empowered in this challenging environment and if so, how this had happened. I considered the main challenges to be dealing with smugglers, international organisations, the police and the Turkish government.

The aim of the research was to better understand the ways in which gender roles have been remade or re-shaped by displacement and in a context, where culture, customs and social norms are new for them. In addition, I focused on whether the gender hierarchy is transformed in the course of these experiences in the new environment.

In this research the other questions which I tried to consider were: How do non-elite women cope with their everyday experiences? How do they build their new life and how do they resolve their problems and face the difficulties? Also, how do they take control of their lives in their new environment?

Those questions led me to my main questions which pointed more directly to the gender relations and the situation of the women migrants. Therefore, I have tried to understand the patterns of gender relations and how they are enacted in this group of refugees. From that point I tried to go deeper in to the gender relations and obtain an insight into whether forced migration affected gender relations. If it did, what were those changes? In other words what are the patterns of changes in their community and under which conditions do they occur? What is also very important is to discover how those changes affected their everyday lives and if their perceptions of gender issues have been affected or not.

Besides, emancipation or liberty can have different meanings for people living in different countries, or associated with different cultures and customs. As one aim of the study, I wanted to find what those women consider as emancipation/liberty. In summery the research question of current study is: Whether and how forced migration and being in transit has an impact on gender relations among Afghan forced migrants in Turkey.

Those questions became important, particularly in Turkish context, as Afghan refugees in Turkey are a relatively new issue. Since before 2007 the Turkish police did not consider Afghans as asylum seekers because Afghanistan does not

have a border with Turkey, therefore, they would not let them enter the country in any way to apply for asylum¹.

However, after 2007 with help of the UNHCR new regulations were introduced in Turkey and Afghans were able to approach UNHCR and apply for asylum like those people from neighbouring countries like Iranians, Iraqis and the citizens of Azerbaijan and Syria (Official Gazette, 1 January 2006, No: 26061). This regulation change is explained further in the section on the Turkish asylum system.

After explaining the research questions of the current thesis, I will briefly sketch the focus of the following chapters of this study. The second chapter is the methodology of the research where the methods of collecting data are explained. After that related literature has been illustrated in two parts, first part is a general literature related to refugees and gender relations in liminality, second part is state of the art on refugees and Turkey. The second part is exclusively about literature regarding to Turkey and diaspora. After that the path that Afghan families who participate in this research went through has been demonstrated. There, the first part is dealing with some ethnographic information regarding the city followed by biographical information of families. Then the places where those families are tied to are presented with details of roles and social conditions. At the end of chapter six the concept of liminality is discussed and, consequently, in the final chapter I open up how the state of living in limbo has impacted on gender relations. There, three different patterns of change in gender relations regarding life in limbo will be suggested. And I will demonstrate how the intersection of many factors caused each pattern.

¹ According to interview with head of Public Information 18 May 2011, Ankara

In short the last two chapters of this study represent the main finding, which is gender relation in a liminal life. The liminal life for non-European refugees is produced and re-produced by social, economical and political elements in the transit country of Turkey. The argument of liminal life is followed by patterns of changes in the gender relations and women life and that is presented in the last chapter.

1.1 Getting into the field

My first contact with refugees was in June 2010 when I started work for the UNHCR. I had a six month contract as an external interpreter from Farsi to English and vice versa. During the last month of my work in Ankara I met another student who wanted to write his thesis about refugees. Alex² wrote me that he already found 20 Afghan families. I was very keen to meet him and found out how he found those families. Later we met and he told me that he had a Turkish classmate from one of the eastern provinces of Turkey who was the manager of an English institute. That Turkish friend knew one Afghan refugee (Karim) who knew English very well and is teaching in that institute. Karim had introduced Alex to other Afghan families.

Alex told me that he was going to carry out his research in his Turkish friend's city in eastern Turkey and he was sure that Karim would help him. During that time some of my colleagues at UNHCR suggested that I conduct my field work in Van since there was a large population of Afghan families and furthermore, that there was an UN office and other international refugee organizations located in the city. However, after Alex spoke about the city where Karim lived, I

² 'Alex' is a pseudonym that is used instead of this person's real name. Disclosing the real name may lead to identification of the city in which the research has been done.

thought maybe it would be good to do my research in the same city since it would be very helpful to have a contact there. Besides, I did not want to be connected to any refugee organisation in my fieldwork since it could impact on my relations with the people and all aspects of the research. From my experience at UNHCR I could see that the refugees were very sensitive in relation to organisations for refugees and asylum seekers, particularly the UNHCR. For instance, when there was a psychological meeting between asylum seekers and the psychologists and I was present as an interpreter, I could see difference when the meeting was at the UN office or at psychologist's office. The psychological meeting held in UN office usually, from my point of view, the refugees or asylum seekers made the assumption that this meeting would impact on their case with the UNHCR.

When I shared my idea regarding my research, Alex was very encouraging. At the time of the meeting I had nearly two weeks to the end of my contract with UNHCR. So we agreed to go together to the field two weeks later. Since I knew that I was going to stay for quite a long time in the field and I wanted to find some families and friends there. One of my good friends in Sociology department was from same province and he told he had a relative there. So for my first trip I stayed in their house and they were very hospitable. Later, I found a teachers' hostel and I stayed there during my second visit. Then for the rest of my fieldwork, I stayed with a very hospitable Turkish family, who were working at the University.

Alex introduced me to Karim, the Afghan man who was teaching English in the institute. I went with him to his home to meet his wife. It was my first access to respondent and fortunately they were friendly and we soon became friends. However, I did not see Alex again after this first trip. During most of the field work, I was introduced as a friend of Alex. This was probably because he had

introduced me to my informant's family. Thus, I had different representation for them, which means I was not a researcher or a student in the first instance but rather a friend of Alex, which was not really true (we never met each other after the first trip). We both understood that our aim and understanding of the situation is very far from each other.

As an Iranian citizen who grew up in Iran with Afghan neighbour I had some basic knowledge about Afghan refugees in Iran. In Iran, there are more than 2 million Afghans. While living in Iran, I very often met and interacted with people from Afghanistan in various situations. However, when I was in Iran I was not familiar with problems of the Afghan refugees. Before starting my fieldwork I did not think about any cultural differences between Afghans and Iranians. Back in Iran, I perceived Afghans as people who speak the same language and practice the same religion as Iranians. I knew that there are some minor language differences, but I did not consider them to be significant, so for me, Afghans were very much like Iranians. However, during this research one of the important things that I learnt was that to them I am a foreigner who can just understand their language.

For example during my field work when I was watching Afghan TV channel with them sometimes they asked me if I could understand the language and when it was Farsi-Dari I could easily understand. For me it was only like another accent, but for them it was another language. Once, while I was in one of the families' houses the head of the household would, every so often, ask me if I could understand what the TV presenter was speaking about. When I answered yes he tried to explain to me the differences in the languages:

There are lots of different words in Persian-Farsi and Dari-Farsi, you have more Arabic words in your language and we have more English words in ours. (Informal talk with Kazem)

It could be considered that they were creating boundaries for me as an Iranian. There are more situations when I saw the ‘we’ and ‘they’ when they spoke and in the way they behaved; in the beginning of the field work I tried not to stay for meals in their houses because I felt they always prepare more things for me and they are not eating so much. But once when I refused one of the family’s offer for eating dinner with them, the woman asked “*Do you think our food is dirty?*” I told her of course not and that night I stayed there for dinner. That night was a turning point of this fieldwork when they (particularly women) started to consider me as one of their friends; after eating food that day together, I had the feeling that I could get closer to women and I can be more with them especially in the kitchen what they perceive as women’s private space.

The research was conducted in a satellite city, but many times I had a feeling that there, life for refugees is similar in some aspects to the life of the refugees who live in a camp.

Some of the respondents called this city Ceza³, which means city of punishment. The city is located in central Anatolia and for purposes of confidentiality for all the respondents it will not be disclosed. Also, all the names and basic information of the respondents have been changed to maintain/guarantee anonymity. Some of the migrants believed that the Turkish government only sends those asylum-seekers to this city who committed a crime. The migrants thought this because the city was far from the capital and other big cities. They

³ It has a Turkish pronunciation, C is pronounced as an English ‘J’ in “Jar”

complained about the cold weather during three seasons⁴ and they believed they were there because of their bad luck having to be with other asylums seekers that were criminal. In addition, Ceza is far from Iranian border and it was difficult for them to access foods and goods from Iran, which will be discussed in chapter five.

There were about 20 Afghan families in Ceza city and as explained later, all had been relocated from Van to this city. Previously, there were huge populations of Afghans in Van, a city near border of Iran and Turkey on the East side. However, since about 2009-2010, the Turkish government has decided to distribute Afghan populations to other satellite cities. Consequently, some of the families were sent to Ceza city.

Apart from the Afghan families, there was one Iranian asylum seeker in Ceza city and a few Iraqi refugees. However, I did not get precise information about their population. I never saw any Iraqi families and I was told that they lived in another neighbourhood. However, I used to hear about them from the Afghan forced migrants who continually compared their lives with Iranian and Iraqi refugees. The Afghan refugees also compared the help they were given from organisations and the Turkish government with that received by refugees from other nations and felt discriminated.

In addition, there were some refugees from Chechnya who had been living in the city for many years⁵. Thus, we can consider the city as a place with history of hosting refugees and the hospitality of the inhabitants has later been strongly emphasized by the Afghan families.

⁴ During my field work it was snowing almost all the time, neither Afghans nor me were used to that much snow and cold weather.

⁵ This information was given to me by Turkish families from Ceza city

One of the negative sides of the city was the lack of facilities for refugees. Unfortunately, there were neither international organizations nor any NGO for the refugees. This issue is explained more in the other chapter under subtitle of ethnography of Ceza City. In Turkey most of the satellite cities have one office of Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM). However, in Ceza when a refugee needs help about an issue which cannot be dealt by the municipality they need to go to the nearest satellite city which has ASAM office for assistance which is about three hours away by bus.

In Turkey, Ceza is considered to be a very religious and conservative city, with some history of non-tolerance of other religious groups. However, my respondents never complained about the conservatism of people from the city.

I also found that the city governors were quite helpful for refugees as they were to the poorer Turkish families. There was a governmental organization near the city centre where people could take free courses such as hair dressing or first aid. Also, my informant told me that the municipality was willing to open Turkish language classes for refugees free of charge, if they could create a group of at least ten people.

There, like in all other satellite cities all refugees have to report to the police station as foreigners and once a week sign an attendance list to show that they are present in the city. If they need to leave the city for their UNHCR interviews or other necessary appointments they need permission from the police. This is one of the reasons why this big and 'free' city is for the Afghan people very similar to the situation in a refugee camp. My respondents complained about this issue, and felt like prisoners. Besides that, state of living for temporary in Ceza and waiting for the resettlement, which is discussed later, was other reason for considering their place as *ceza* (punishment). During two years of living in Ceza

(as families told me), only one Afghan family had been resettled, and the waiting with little hope of resettlement combined with the weather conditions and other aspects make them think of this city as one of punishment.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The method used in the current research is the method of grounded theory. I have used the approach developed by Strauss (Strauss & Corbin 1990). There are basically three steps to this methodology. The first step is called data gathering and theoretical sampling; in this part of investigation I have applied various data collection tools, including semi-structured interviews with experts, participant observation, informal talk and in-depth interviews.

Before starting the field work, I was able to conduct semi-structured interviews with experts. As Borger and Menz argue, the “expert interviews can be used for exploration for orientation in a new field in order to give the field of study a thematic structure or generate a hypothesis” (Burcak 2011, p.50).

In the context of non-European refugees in Turkey, the decision makers on UNHCR Turkey can be considered the main actors of the field, or the experts.

This is due to the fact that for the non-European forced migrants in Turkey the main organisation to deal with is the UNHCR which is also responsible for the 'decision' (Flick et al. 2007) about their lives. Therefore, I have conducted the interviews (1) with the head of public information (PI in short) of the UNHCR Ankara office (it was conducted during my field work on 18 May, 2011), and (2) with the head of the UNHCR field office of Van on 20 December 2010. These two actors had been selected as representatives of the UNHCR in Turkey due to their 'right to rule', as it was mentioned, the migrants' lives. As the greatest, in comparison to other satellite cities, population of Afghan forced migrants is located in Van, the semi-structured interviews have been conducted with the head of the Van office. The interviews were of an even greater importance since all Afghan forced migrants who enter Turkey with smugglers first arrive in Van. The data gathered from these two interviews, in addition to my work experience at UNHCR, provided some insight for the present research. As I mentioned before, I had a chance of being in touch with the refugees from my workplace at the UNHCR. Therefore, there have already been some concepts and questions developed before the first trip to the city. These data helped me at the very beginning to make the literature review part of the present study.

Another method applied in the research in order to initiate the field work was participant observation.

For anthropologist and social scientists, participant observation is a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture (K. M. DeWalt & B. R. DeWalt 2002, p.34).

The first weeks of the field work started with spending the considerable amount of time with forced migrants' families, to learn more about their everyday life. What is more, I tried to participate in their everyday life .Namely, I had the knowledge of the community language (Farsi), which helped me to communicate and get acceptance. Participant observation was one of the main methods for the data gathering process.

In the course of the first weeks of my field work, during the time I spent with families, I tried not to ask them too many questions in order to learn more and to find out which sort of questions are appropriate for them and what way they should be asked. I was mainly spending time in their houses and during the day we watched TV together, sometimes cooked and if they wanted to go for shopping or to the hairdresser I would accompany them in order to develop a closer relationship. This time spent in the houses of forced migrants' families helped me to generate some of my data based on the informal talks with the families. Sometimes they felt like complaining and talking about their lives with someone who could understand their language; this was particularly the case when it came to the memories of their life in Iran, they were more interested to share it with me being an Iranian. Being involved in those activities was necessary at the beginning of the research in order to gain the participants' trust which has been one of the greatest challenges of the present research.

Besides using semi-structured interviews for data collecting at the first step of the grounded theory method, the informal talks and selective discussions with the families have been used; meaning when some topic of our talk was interesting and related to my research questions, I continued the discussions. As it was mentioned above during the field work I did not stay in the city all the time. The field work started on 9 of January 2011 with my first short trip to the city. After that I kept in contact with informants by phone and e-mail and

approximately after one month I went to the city to spend more time in the field until my last trip in the middle of May, 2011. As Juones and Watt mentioned in their book: “One can move in and out of the field setting and yet still immerse oneself in a particular social world” (Juones & Watt 2010, p.6).

During the time spent in Ankara I always kept close contact with my informants. Moreover, once when I was in Ankara I was able to meet some of the men from Ceza city who came to the Ankara UN office in order to participate in a hunger strike⁶, which actually did not happen.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) mention four types of specific data analysis: (a) micro analysis; (b) open coding; (c) axial coding and (d) selective coding. Open coding, axial coding, and selective coding are the three main data analyses (Livingston & Education 2009, p.50; see also Bornheim 2000 and Balke & University 2006).

The three main data analyses were conducted consequently according to the succession mentioned above. First, on the open coding stage the concepts are

⁶Reason for doing hunger strike was basically migrants’ problem with the resettlement unit of UNHCR. One of my informants explained that he had sent an email to the USA embassy in Istanbul to the department for refugees. Somebody from the embassy called him few days later and asked his case number in the UN. Then the person told him his case was not in their database and UN had never sent it to them. They, however, promised to call UN and ask the reason immediately and offered my informant to hold on the line. After calling UN, the person from embassy told my Afghan friend that UN said they had not sent his case because they were Afghan and their case was not very important for resettling; that they should prepare themselves for a life in Turkey for a long period of time. My Afghan friend was angry and said: “if it is like that why UN never told us? And why every time we call them they only say we are trying to find a suitable country for you.” After that call Karim and four other men who have the status of conventional refugee came to Ankara for the hunger strike. But at the end police did not give them the permission for doing so. Luckily they managed to get an appointment to meet and to talk about their problem with someone in UNHCR. After that event, I was informed by families that the UNHCR office started paying monthly money to each of those families.

identified by analytic process; in this phase some primary concepts were developed “in terms of their properties and dimensions” (Bornheim 2000, p.50). In this phase simple concepts and terminology came out from the data via coding the field notes sentence by sentence. All informal talks and observations were written in a small notebook⁷ (which was easy to carry) and later every night when I came back to my room I typed all notes in English in the Maxqda 10 programme. With Maxqda I coded all the sentences and paragraphs. Some of the primary concepts were changed, with the participants’ own words in the other phase of coding. The concepts in the open coding step were quite wide and general such as ‘gender relations’, ‘perspective and practices of everyday life’ and ‘communication’.

First open coding allows the researchers to break data down in to the simplest forms, of concepts. As concepts are noted by the researcher, they are placed in categories, defined as more abstract explanatory terms (Strauss and Corbin 1998, cited in Livingston and Education 2009, 50).

The second part of coding is axial coding, which is “a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 96). In this phase comparison between the established concepts were made and I tried to generate sub-categories. This means the categories discovered through open coding are focused and subordinated and/or re-linked, which is accomplished by developing causal conditions, but also involves context, strategies of action and/or interaction and consequences (Bornheim 2000, 77-78). Thus in the axial coding

⁷ During the time when I was at the families’ houses, I tried to write down brief statements of each informal talk in my notebook when everyone was watching television and then at night when I was alone I tried to put onto the paper everything I could remember.

the relation between categories, set in open coding, is shown and different categories are linked to each other according to the relation and the consequences of each concept.

Following the establishment of the relationships between categories, the core category was identified via selective coding. The categories and the concepts of 'living in temporary or transit', 'sources of stress', 'fear of departure', 'resettlement fantasy' and 'relation with smugglers', which are described throughout the present thesis, brought me to the 'Ceza city' in vivo code. Connecting these data with current literature on refugee studies and on anthropology I was able to define the core category – the 'liminality'.

Consequently, I had to re-shape some of the research questions and add more concepts which were not considered important before the field work. For instance, while the empowerment of forced migrant women was the main part of the present research before conducting the field work, after some weeks of field work I understood the importance of the concept of being in transit. Accordingly, the concept of liminality appeared. What is more, before the field work, I did not consider UNHCR or smugglers to be important factors on the social life of forced migrants. However, later they [UNHCR and smugglers] were added to the work because they were very important in their community and everyone was speaking about them.

Summing up, the data collection is not a homogeneous process. Various ways are used in order to obtain more reliable data. Thus, collecting data through different methods helped me later in my work when establishing the concepts.

The second step of the grounded theory is called theoretical sampling (Strauss and Corbin 1990) and it started in the middle of the field work. At that stage I learnt about the existing families' boundaries and their red line – the facts that

they do not like/want to speak about. For example, by that time I have understood that we can speak about current life in Turkey and they like to speak about their problems. However, speaking about the reason for leaving their country was a red line which no one wanted to talk about. I could understand their sensitivity concerning this question because I knew that this was, in fact, the first and most important question asked in the UNHCR. Every forced migrant who approaches the UNHCR office gets a form with two questions; the first question is why they left their country; and the second is what will happen to them if they go back to their country⁸. Recognizing or rejecting a refugee by the UNHCR basically depends on these two questions, thus this becomes a very sensitive issue and after some weeks my field work I realized that it was impossible to ask the families such questions. Another reason why they did not like to speak about this part of their life may be that it could be a painful memory for them.

During my field work experience I have been learning more about the families' interests. I have, for instance, found out their interest towards TV channels and Internet portals, thus I started my questionnaire with the relevant questions concerning TV and their Internet access. Though those questions were not a relevant type data for the research and I did not use them, starting the questionnaire with asking about what families find interesting appeared to be a good way to start the conversation. It was noticed that women, in particular, liked to talk about and analyse various series' and films.

Another issue I discovered at this stage was the fact that it was very difficult to talk to and get information from the families who did not have a safe status.

⁸ The sources for this information come from my own experience at the UNHCR as well as from Afghan people who have mentioned this issue several times

Therefore, during my last trip to the field I made 15 in-depth interviews with families who were either recognized as refugees or who had been rejected. Families who were still waiting for their result did not want to take risk; therefore, it was not possible to conduct interviews with them. Upon the completion of this step of data gathering, I tried to build the answer for the research questions set in my study.

The third step on the grounded theory is building theory; which is presented in the last two chapters where the concept of liminality has been employed. The key relevant concept of liminality helped me to theorize the field in step three.

In this respect, in my work I have used the grounded theory. There had been used different sources of 'theoretical sensitivity' "which represents an important creative aspect of grounded theory. This sensitivity represents an ability not only to use personal and professional experience imaginatively, but also "literature" (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 22). Before my first trip to the field I had preliminary knowledge about the refugees in Turkey and Turkey's regulations about refugees (this will be described in details in the course of the following chapters). My professional experience of working with refugees at the UNHCR can be added to this knowledge. I had the opportunity to listen to the refugees' stories and interpret for them, I gained further information on this issue interpreting at various interviews such as 'registration', 'gate cancelling': for new arrival asylum seekers, refugee status determination, finance interview and psychological interview. Referring to the code of contact of the UNHCR I did not use anything I learnt at the UNHCR in my thesis work. However, that information helped me to get a deep insight into this topic.

In addition to the field work I have conducted, I tried to corroborate the data with the relevant literature resources. Thus, after every trip I went back to the

university and reviewed the literature that can be supportive for the data I had obtained being in the field. This process helped when there were any discrepancies between my background knowledge and the facts from field work. One of the examples can be the fact that before going to the field, based on my work experience, I assumed that Afghan women worked in Turkey. This was because I saw some Afghan women in Ankara talking about their jobs. However, in my field work none of the women was working, or to be more precise, I did not meet or see any working woman. Therefore, after working in the field for a while, I realized that there had been a need in reviewing the literature on the relevant topic. After such a review some of my concepts were to be changed or deleted as it was mentioned earlier. Some other concepts and aspects of the research on opposite were deepened and developed further during the fieldwork.

At the beginning I had a list of questions I tried to ask people; however, most of the times they refused to answer. It was because I did not know their red line and their interests; therefore, another questionnaire was prepared for the last trip. Every step of my fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the grounded theory method, and hence my field work shaped the questionnaire and the questionnaire re-shaped the field work. According to Refine “in grounded theory studies, you want to explain phenomena in light of the theoretical framework that evolves during the research itself” (Cope and Elwood 2009, 30).

Before the last trip to the field the final version of questionnaire was made. The creation of the questionnaire was conducted in several steps. First, the questions were constructed in English according to each concept and category that appeared during the fieldwork. Then I discussed the questions in English with some colleagues and we tried to arrange the questions so that the sensitive issues were in the last part. Next we decided to make two different questionnaires – one for men and another for women. Both questionnaires included same questions;

the only difference was that the one for women contained an additional group of questions concerning contraception. Since the person who conducted the process of questionnaire procedure was a female concerning culture it was barrier to ask male participants those questions. Moreover, according to their interest in TV programmes and talking about their problems, the relevant questions were put at the beginning of the questionnaire. After all the necessary changes and preparations were made, the questionnaires were translated into Farsi and showed to some independent friends, who were speakers of Farsi, in order to be sure that all the items were understandable.

During my last trip to the field I conducted 15 in-depth interviews⁹ with six men and nine women aged 19 to 37. Each interview took from 20 minutes to 90 minutes. No voice recorder was used for the interviews because of the topic sensitivity and to avoid adding more stress to the participants' lives. Thus, I wrote down some words from every uttered sentence and after the interviews I tried to re-write everything according to what I had heard in complete sentences.

The interviews were conducted in the refugees' houses in order to provide the environment in which both women and men can speak freely. Every participant was asked to come to a yard or to a kitchen so as not to conduct the interviews in front of other family members. I explained to the participants that it is necessary to be focused and that the interviewer and the interviewee should be alone. Only after this did they agree to come out, otherwise women stated they do not have anything secret and preferred to speak in front of their husbands. This approach appeared to be very useful, especially for women; previously I realized that it

⁹ In the next chapter the interviews are stated referring to the date and name of interviewees (for example interview with Karim 25.04.2011), and informal talks are stated referring to a participant's name (example: Informal talk, Karim). I do not add the places of interviews since all the interviews with Afghan people were conducted in Ceza city and in the interviewees' house.

was hard for them to answer questions in front of their husbands (more explanation is given in chapters four). In order to not cause any conflict between the women and their husbands I showed the questionnaire to the men and asked for their permission to distribute it. What is more, before every interview I showed the questionnaire to the participant and asked her/him to read it through and if he/she thinks he/she cannot or does not wish to answer any of the questions, she/he could cross them out so they would not be asked. Fortunately, no questions in any of interviews were crossed out by the participants.

It was important to get a positive attitude from the participants and to motivate them, therefore, as mentioned before, the first page of questionnaire contained questions about various TV programmes; after looking through the questionnaire the participants became interested in the topic and felt more confident, whereas before having a look at it they sometimes were worried and some explained that they might be not able to give answers due to their low intelligence level. However, when I gave them some time to read the questionnaire they showed positive reaction towards it.

Another important point to note is that all the Afghan forced migrants' families in that city live in the same neighbourhood, very close to each other; this made it easier for me to contact with them and get to know them better.

A refugee is a person who has escaped from his/her country because of persecution and he/she usually still feels being in danger unless he/she is resettled in the resettlement country. Some refugees in Ceza had experienced trauma thus it was very difficult to gain their trust and build my relationship with them as a researcher. Besides, the state of being in transit makes it more difficult for them and for me to get close to each other. This issue is explained in more details in the last chapter of the present study. As Brewer comments on his

research about prisoners: “methodologically, it is impossible to be absolutely certain that ethnographers have been gaining trust” (Brewer, 1990 cited in Juones and Watt 2010, 81). The “fieldworker's legitimacy had to be earned continually and skilfully, and trust was gained as a result of a progressive series of negotiation” (1990:585 cited in Juones and Watt 2010, 81).

As it was mentioned above for the first weeks of the fieldwork my main methods were participant observation and informal conversation. There were certain difficulties with conducting this kind of data gathering. Namely, in some cases when the participants started talking on the issues interesting for the research I started asking them additional questions. This often led to their gossiping about me. Thus there were two families talking with others and spreading rumours

She is in fact a spy from the UNHCR who came here to report on us. Because if she is researcher why doesn't she ask us questions? And where is her questionnaire? (Informal talk with Zohre citing from Sanaz)

It was a challenging situation, since the main reason I did not ask them any questions and did not go to their houses with a questionnaire was exactly because not to let them think that my research was for the UNHCR's sake. Due to the fact that I had worked for the UNHCR I knew the procedures of their interviews, therefore I thought I should not go there with a questionnaire in my hand. I did not want to behave in the way similar to the UN officials. Simply, I thought I could create closer relations with them by not doing those things.

Therefore it was very difficult at that stage of the research to explain to my participants why I did not have a questionnaire. The rumour of me being a ‘UNHCR spy’ was spread particularly by the families who felt being at higher risk because their cases were rejected by UNHCR and they were either living

illegally or were waiting for the outcome of their appeal application. As Oliver Smith stated, “trust is especially problematic for the forced migrant given the loss of familiar and social cues” (Oliver Smith 1991, p.2). Another problem which occurred during my fieldwork was the fact of me being an Iranian. As it will be described further, before coming to Turkey most of those families had lived in Iran for quite a long time; and for the most part they had experienced racism and faced a lot of hardships in Iran. Due to such bad memories coming from Iran, some of the families felt hostile towards me. Fortunately, this kind of behaviour changed as my field work continued. However, it should also be mentioned that from the beginning of the research there were families which had a friendly attitude.

Last but not least, dealing with forced migrants brings psychological pressure and emotional difficulties. I had experienced all these difficulties during my work at UNHCR and later in my field-work. Since I started my fieldwork just after I had finished my contract with the UNHCR I felt myself to be very much between the UN and the refugees. The conflict of being with refugees and a feeling loyalty to the UNHCR increased when some of the refugees from Ceza city decided to come to Ankara for the hunger strike.

Throughout the whole research I had a feeling of loyalty towards the UN since I knew that the people working there, at least in Ankara office, were trying to help the refugees; but I had also the empathy to the refugees since I saw the lack of support they were receiving. UNHCR people in the Ankara office were trying to help asylum-seekers and refugees as much as they could. For instance, my supervisor in the UN could sometimes work for more than 9 hours a day and he was not the only one working hard for the life of refugees in Turkey. What is more, there are certain rules and regulations the office had to follow; therefore the organisation cannot help everyone.

After the completion of my field work I was (and still am) in touch with those families. This was difficult as well, since in the situation when I saw people in need of help, being a student, the only thing I could do was to write about their life. To conclude on this argument I would like to use Scott Jones' comment: "Such feeling of loyalty and empathy are compounded and tensions created when researchers identify with multiple (contradictory) positions" (Jones and Watt 2010, p. 215).

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPTUALIZATION

In this chapter I will review a number of concepts and introduce the theoretical frame work of my research. These concepts, revolving around forced migration, will be used in the rest of this chapter. I shall then briefly introduce what a refugee is, however the particular meaning of refugee and asylum seekers will explain in the following chapter because the detail of this particularity will be important for me to analyse the situation. In the latter section, the concept of liminality (which is, after all, one of the central issues to my research) will discuss with the theoretical background which I will use in order to shed light on various aspects of this research.

3.1 **Forced Migration terminology**

My approach to forced migrant and people whom I worked with in this research is based on their life and their stories, it is not necessarily related to the official meaning of *refugee*. Some of the people whom I am writing about did not have refugee status; some were rejected by UNHCR and governments. Nonetheless it

is important to know the definition of those concepts as forced migrants are dealing with them in their everyday life.

It is necessary to know therefore the nuanced yet important differences between 'refugee' and 'extended mandate refugee'; as forced migrants are dealing with those concepts in their everyday life. In addition to conventional refugee and extended mandate refugee that will describe here, in the next chapter I will explain the concept 'Asylum-seeker'. Also the specific regulation of the Turkish Republic regarding refugees will describe in the next chapter with more detail of Afghan refugees.

Conventional Refugee

While the notion of refugee within a sovereignty, or sovereign state dates to the late seventeenth century in Europe, and while the "Right of Asylum" may be documented as early as 1725, it is not until the early twentieth century that political protection and statutes dedicated to the legal guarantee of the rights of refugees emerged as part of the international agenda, first within the League of Nations and subsequently within the United Nations (Braziel 2008). Therefore the definition of refugees has been incorporated into the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and its 1967 Protocol which extended the Convention's provisions to current refugees (Ferris 1993). This definition was made to fulfil the need of peoples feeling persecution particularly after the war. However, the conditions of this definition have developed over the time. And today "about 106 countries have ratified either the 1951 convention or the 1967 protocol and the UN definition of refugee has been incorporated into many nations' law" (Ferris 1993, p.42).

According to the definition of UNHCR, a refugee is

someone who, owing to a well- founded fear of being persecuted for **reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion**, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. [Emphasize MO] (UNHCR 1951)

Extended mandate status¹⁰ is given if UNHCR considers that an asylum seeker does not meet the Convention’s definition however is “fleeing from serious and indiscriminate threats to life, physical integrity or freedom resulting from generalized violence or events seriously disturbing public order. This most commonly “applies in civil war- like situations” (Nash et al. 1988, p.53).

The claim of most of the Afghans, who approached the UNHCR office in Turkey, does not match under the five groups of persecution definition of the UNHCR for refugee¹¹. However if their case is rejected by UNHCR there is high chance of getting deported by Turkish police. Currently Afghan citizen are facing general violence in their country and their problems cannot be fixed to one of any of the five categories listed on the UNHCR definition – thus, most of them get protection under the extended mandate¹². This means that they only temporarily resettle in Turkey and are expected to go back after the situation in

¹⁰ Also called broader mandate

¹¹ interview with Thomas Faustini, the Head of UNHCR's Van Field Office; 20.12.2010, Ankara

¹² interview with Thomas Faustini, the Head of UNHCR's Van Field Office; 20.12.2010, Ankara

their country improves. Therefore the UNHCR regarding the person's place of living and/or ethnic background sometimes recognizes the case of the Afghans under an extended mandate. Refugees who get this will not be resettled in any other country but they can live in Turkey until the situation in their country improves. They are expected to go back to Afghanistan one day. (See UNHCR, Resettlement Handbook, November 2004, p.III/2); Thereby the extended mandate is the critical situation where people are living under two skies. On the one hand, they have no possibility of being sent home (for now), and on the other hand there is no opportunity for them to be resettled.

By way of conclusion I shall emphasise Afghan forced migrants in Turkey (as it is a transit country) are living within categories which are made by UNHCR and/or Turkish government, such as extended mandate or asylum seekers, but they also subverted these categories, to create new ones.

3.2 Liminality

Regarding the particular geographical position of Turkey, crossroad between Europe, Africa and the Middle East, it became a transit country for millions of people passing legally and illegally to Europe seeking a better life. In addition Turkey does not accept refugees from Non-European countries which will be fully explained in the next chapter. Referring to the particular situation of Turkey for non-European refugees they are living in Turkey for a temporary time and I found the state of 'being in transit' in their life, very similar to the second phase of Turner and Gennep's theory on Rite of the passage (Gennep et al. 1961).

Van Gennep explained this phase when he is speaking about rite of the passage;

I propose to call the rites of separation from a previous world, preliminal rites, those executed during the transitional

stage liminal (or threshold) rites, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world postliminal rites (Gennep et al. 1961, p.21):

Liminality is the concept that I found the most suitable for describing and analysing my fieldwork. The concept of liminal first used by Arnold van Gennep (1960, originally 1908) on rites of passage; however it was Turner (Turner 1995) who re-made the concept and re-shaped it for use of analysing contemporary societies in anthropology.

Both liminal and liminality are derived from the Latin “limen,” which means “threshold”—that is, the bottom part of a doorway that must be crossed when entering a building. In Turner’s theory liminality is a midpoint between a starting point and an ending point, and as such it is a temporary state that ends when the initiate is reincorporated into the social structure liminality is a state of being “betwixt and between” (Weber 1995). In addition, liminal individuals *have* nothing: “no status, insignia, secular clothing, rank, and kinship position, nothing to demarcate them structurally from their fellows” (Turner 1967, p.98).

Liminality is a concept which is used in the literature of refugees and anthropology quite often. Sarah Mahler (1999) and Lisa Malki in their research about refugees also described a turning point in the refugees’ life which they called the rite of passage. In further chapters I shall open up the way that they used the concept of liminality in their work. In addition, (King-Irani 2006) and Abourahme (2011) while speaking about refugees discussed the liminal life where refugees are between two phases. The practice of waiting and limbo life of refugees are mentioned also in (Vreecer 2010) work on Bosnian and Herzegovinian refugees. She described different aspect of luminal life including

psychology and social life and how refugees integrated in their new life in a limbo.

Liminality in the context of non-European asylum seekers in Turkey is also pointed in some literature (Danis 2005). Danis explained how non-European asylum-seekers who unsuccessfully tried to pass from Turkey to Europe, integrated in limbo life. I shall describe how and why Afghan refugees in Turkey are considered as liminal individuals in the process of resettlement in the fourth and fifth chapters of current thesis.

3.3 Theoretical framework

My theoretical background is basically framed by the following two main aspects:

- Anthropology and forced migration
- Forced migration and gender studies

3.3.1 Anthropology and Forced Migration

There is a variety of definitions for refugee and asylum-seekers. For this research I am going to look at those issues from anthropological and gender perspective, thus it is important how refugees are defined in anthropology. (Harrell-Bond & Voutira 1992, p.8) stated “in anthropological terms, refugees are people who have undergone a violent 'rite' of separation and unless or until they are 'incorporated' as citizens into their host state (or returned to their state of origin) find themselves in 'transition' or in a state of 'liminality’”. This status of being 'betwixt and between' (Turner 1969) may not refer to legal and psychological, but also social and economic. “Moreover encoded in the label 'refugee' are the

images of dependency, helplessness and misery” (Harrell-Bond & Voutira 1992, p.117).

Liisa H. Malkki provides another aspect for the concept of refugee in anthropology which is more critical toward anthropology and social sciences. She explained that:

Refugees are at once no longer classified and not yet classified. They are no longer unproblematically citizens or native informants. They can no longer satisfy as ‘representatives’ of a particular local culture. One might say they have lost a kind of imagined cultural authority to stand for ‘their kind’ or for the imagined ‘whole’ of which they are or were a part (Malkki 1995, p.117).

Anthropological literature on refugees and forced migration is developing gradually. Many social scientists, including anthropologists and ethnographers focus upon life in the new country also the integration process, and working more on host countries and “their citizens who frequently feel threatened by the influx of a large number of perceived aliens rather than reasons for migration and their life”(Indra 1999, p.23).

Recently anthropology has brought a different approach to refugee studies. Now besides host society and integration there is also a focus on the life of refugees. We can see on B. E. Harrell-Bond and E. Voutira’s works about the interaction between anthropologists and forced migration; which is a step forward in the literature of anthropology and refugee studies. They put the emphasis on differences among refugees and avoiding generalization. Task of anthropology in their work is described as “documenting and interpreting the variety and diversity of human cultural phenomena” (Unterberger 2009, p.8).

However, there are some difficulties that anthropologists should try to overcome in this field in order to improve the literature. Firstly, there is a strong assumption of what a refugee *looks like*. Most of us can easily imagine a refugee family and forget about the existing diversity. Secondly, as Malkki pointed out, “there is a ‘structural invisibility’ of refugees in anthropology and political theory” (Malkki, 1995, p.7). She compares this invisibility of refugees in the literature of nation and nationalism with the familiar old anthropology of people and culture.

In addition to the definition of refugee in anthropological literature, in this research I tried to work more with the literature of refugees in camps, such as Szczepanikova. Referring to the temporality of Turkey for Afghan refugees, I found many similarities between the social, economical and psychological condition of Afghan refugees in the satellite city with literature on refugees in camps. For instance, the fact that Turkey is not a destination place for non-EU refugees gives the theme of ‘temporality’ to whole situation. Therefore, I tried to compare the situation of Afghan refugees with others who find themselves in liminality in order to get better analysing tools. Also, for some parts, I used literature on undocumented migrants, such as Sarah Mahler’s work on an undocumented migrant in the USA (Mahler 1995). She showed how undocumented refugees are challenging with sources of stress and how this stress and liminality impact on the everyday lives of refugees. The reason that this literature is highlighted here is that in Ceza city there are some families who could not get any status from UNHCR (their cases were rejected). Thus they were living without any legal permission and, as Mahler emphasizes, with ‘sources of stresses’. I used this literature in order to give better perspective on my work.

As a conclusion to this part, I shall mention Malkki's words where she writes: "understanding displacement as a human tragedy and looking no further can mean that one gains no insight into the lived meanings that displacement and exile can have for specific people" (Malkki 1995, p.16). Based on that, this research tried to understand the changes brought by displacement of Afghan forced migrants in Turkey. And what is more, I tried to go beyond the anthropology and forced migration by adding literature of gender relations to the context of Turkish-specific condition for refugees.

3.3.2 Forced Migration and Gender Studies

For a long time forced migration was considered as male action with women and children following the men. However, with both international and internal migration, female migration has been almost as numerous as male migration.(IOM 2002) In some studies, refugees seem undifferentiated 'people' without gender, age or other defining characteristics except ethnicity.

Below are the statistics of both asylum-seekers and refugees in Turkey by age and gender. We can see in the table that in 2011 the number of Afghan asylum-seekers in Turkey aged between 18 and 59 is 1122, of which more than 44 percent are female.

Table 3.1: Asylum Seekers by Age, Gender and Country, 31.09.2011¹³

Asylum Seekers by Age, Gender and Country As of 31.09.2011											
Country	0-4		5-11		12-17		18-59		60+		Total by Country
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
AFGHANISTAN	120	128	189	229	175	277	496	626	17	24	2281
IRAN	33	43	55	79	56	69	555	951	22	20	1883
IRAQ	50	57	80	99	65	78	290	471	23	36	1249
SOMALIA	25	27	33	36	32	60	131	167	2	2	515
OTHERS	73	102	73	82	46	75	339	662	6	6	1464
TOTAL F/M	301	357	430	525	374	559	1811	2877	70	88	-
GRAND TOTAL	658		955		933		4688		158		7392

F=Female, M=Male

The next table shows the statistics of females and males whose cases were accepted by the UNHCR and officially they could get refugee status. In this table we can see that, for the same age group of Afghans, more than 45% are female.

Table 3.2: Refugees by Age, Gender and Country, 31.09.2011¹⁴

Refugees by Age, Gender and Country As of 31.09.2011											
Country	0-4		5-11		12-17		18-59		60+		Total by Country
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
AFGHANISTAN	93	95	12	23	186	266	549	649	203	240	2316
IRAN	76	79	41	36	96	142	881	1231	129	129	2840
IRAQ	298	323	152	159	271	347	1601	2365	404	479	6399
SOMALIA	45	58	1	2	62	74	322	312	93	95	1064
OTHERS	30	26	0	1	23	27	136	258	17	32	550
TOTAL F/M	542	581	206	221	638	856	3489	4815	846	975	-
GRAND TOTAL	1123		427		1494		8304		1821		13167

F=Female, M=Male

¹³ Source: UNHCR Ankara website:
http://www.unhcr.org.tr/uploads/root/asylum_seekers_table_eng_as_of_31-09-2011.pdf

¹⁴ Source: UNHCR Ankara website:
http://www.unhcr.org.tr/uploads/root/refugees_table_eng_as_of_31-09-2011.pdf

During the last decades in anthropology gender emerged as a one of the main categories of analysis. “Though still equal attention is not given to women and men in migration. Women are still not perceived as equal actors and as equally important in being surveyed and counted” (Schrover et al. 2010, p.11). Besides gender-specific reasons for forced migration, women migrants suffer gender discrimination as well as other forms of marginalization also during and after migration.

For the beginning the focus of feminist writing was mostly on women; now the approach of gender theories emphasizes on gender rather than women, and focusing more on the social construction, on the production and reproduction of gender. And on the ‘forces’ which form and inform gender relations and social ideology. From this aspect, my approach to gender is including both men and women and the power relations and interaction between them. It is only relatively recently that researchers have critically considered the nexus between gender and migration (Hongagneu-sotel 2001 see also Pessar & Mahler 2003).

Emilio A. Parrado and Chenoa A. Flippen explained that “gender is one of the most important social forced shaping migration patterns, and migration is a powerful catalyst of social change” (Parrado & Flippen 2005, p.26).

3.3.3 Nexus between gender studies, anthropology and forced migration

Pioneering studies on gender and migration, viewed migration as an emancipating experience for women (Boserup 1970) and (Grasmuck & Pessar 1991); For instance Pedraza stated that “Women working outside, bring other changes and important effects. Patriarchal roles in the household were transformed, the women’s self-esteem was heightened, their capacity to participate as equals in household-decision-making” (Pedraza 1991, p.322).

On the other hand some theories explain that, in the situation that migrant men feel threatened particularly when they were unable to fulfil their expected roles as bread winners, they tend to withdraw support, exacerbating gender inequality by making women responsible for both economic and domestic maintenance of the household.

Therefore in some cases migration empowers women, in other instances women uphold male power in return for support from men in an unfamiliar environment. Migrating to accompany a spouse has a negative impact on their likelihood to work (Katie Willis & Brenda Yeoh 2000).

For the nexuses of gender and migration we should take in our account that these changes are deeply dependent on the lives of migrants which are structured by class, race, age, gender, ethnicity, and their status of being a foreigner and also the degree to which migrants are isolated in the receiving society and available social networks, also the host country regulation and policies toward migrants should be considered as an important factor. Migrants' background is as well important. Also we should be aware that "Conflict and disasters impact differently on men and women" (El-Bushra 2000, p.9).

In addition, besides gender relations and anthropology approaches, I shall take from feminist geographers for the current research, due to feminist approach to the domestic division of labour which is important issue in this research regarding the gender relations. In research and literature migration scholars pay little attention to the divisions of childcare or housekeeping labour. This approach "structure gendered migration possibilities, because in most non-feminist research on migration such 'private' work is assumed to be less important than formal sector wage-work in shaping mobility" (Pratt & Yeoh 2003). Besides, the emphases that feminists put on migration and their

relationships to 'work' and 'place' (Silvey 2004) is important for my approach in gender relations in the current research.

Feminist geographers have been centrally involved in developing advances in the theorization of place and space. Historically, most migration research has conceptualized the spaces through which migrants travel in largely economic terms with very little attention to the cultural struggles that shape the meanings of spaces and migrants' experiences of them (Massey, 1994; McDowell, 1999 cited in Pratt and Yeoh, 2003, p.72).

Migrants' geographical places used to be considered as an economic terminology of encouraging and discouraging elements of migration. Besides, their boundaries refer basically to empirically visible distinctions rather than as political constructions in case of interrogation. "Though feminists link the places of work, home and nation to understand the complex ways in which citizenship status, gender roles and labour markets interact"(Silvey 2004, p.146).

To sum up, in this research for answering my questions I tried to use different approaches of gender and feminist studies, and anthropology. I considered life of Afghan refugees in Turkey as 'betwixt and between' two worlds and two different lives. I will use concepts which have been reviewed in this chapter to make for clearer understandings of Afghan forced migrants. As for describing and analysing gender relations, as it is mentioned once, this research looks to the interaction and intersection of different factors such as time and space, host society and international organizations roles.

3.4 State of the art in refugees in Turkey

In this part I will outline some of the literature regarding the general situation of Turkey in the context of asylum regulation. Much of the scholarly focus in this area centres around two main issues. The first is the geographical limitation of Turkey for non-European refugees. As mentioned before, Turkey does not accept refugees from non-European countries. This issue is under debate and may change in future. The second issue is the Turkish asylum regulation and its relation to Turkey's application to join the EU.

The remainder of this sub-chapter is some local studies which are specifically about a community or a city. For instance Calhan (2008) has argued that there is a relationship between forced migration and the religious identity of Iranian refugees' children in Turkey. There are some other studies which specifically relate to forced migrants in Turkey in this chapter.

One critical study was conducted by Mannaert (2003), her evaluation report for the UNHCR starts with a history of asylum seekers in Turkey. She asserts that the Republic of Turkey hosted asylum seekers from Europe during the Second World War; most of the refugees were from Greece, Bulgaria and the Dodecanese Islands, along with Jewish refugees from Europe. She goes on to describe that Turkey, "during the 1990s, witnessed large influxes of refugees and asylum seekers fleeing events taking place in Southeast Europe" (Mannaert 2003, p.2). Between 1992 and 1994, more than 25,000 Muslim Bosnians sought asylum in Turkey. During 1970s, one of the largest groups of non-European refugees from Iran entered Turkey. After the Iranian-Revolution and during the Iran-Iraq War, about 1.5 million Iranians sought temporary asylum in Turkey and the majority resettled in Europe and North America. Mannaert explains that the other flow of refugees during and after the Gulf War, from Iraq to Turkey, by

describing different waves of refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey. She explained that Turkey is not a destination for non-European asylum seekers; the preferred destinations are Germany, United Kingdom and the Netherlands, and there are two main routes for those travelling over land:

(a) Iran, Iraq or Syria – Turkey – Bulgaria or Greece – the Balkans – Italy – Western Europe or (b) Iran, Iraq or Syria – Turkey – Bulgaria – Romania – Hungary – Austria – the Czech Republic – Slovakia – Germany (Mannaert 2003, p.3).

There are 13 points of entry, including official and illegal crossings, along Turkey's eastern and south-eastern borders. Moreover, there are 10 points of exit on the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts, according to the report issued by the Security Department's Smuggling and Organized Crime Unit in 2000.

Mannaert explains different reasons for asylum seekers choosing Turkey as a transit country. One of the main reasons is its "unique geographical location" (Mannaert 2003, p.7) where East Turkey share borders with countries with political conflicts, such as Iran, Iraq and Syria; such conflicts are one reason for seeking asylum. The Greek Islands on the other side of Turkey, which are easily accessible, are considered to be a gate to Europe. Compared with EU countries, Turkey does not have restrictive entry rules and many neighbouring nationalities may enter the country without major problems. Such facilitation makes Turkey an attractive transit country for asylum seekers.

Mannaert claims that many asylum seekers, whose cases were rejected by the authorities, remain in the country illegally and prepare for their own journey to Western Europe. The reasoning behind her idea is "apprehension of unauthorised

foreigners in Turkey is reported to be low as a result of the high detention costs for the enforcing agencies” (Mannaert 2003, p.7).

In the other part of this paper, she describes Turkey as a source of asylums and illustrated different waves of asylums from Turkey to Europe. The report then explained the criticisms of Western governments toward Turkish asylum regulations. I did not find better way of explaining these than using the author’s own words:

In recent years western governments increasingly criticize Turkish asylum regulation and also border and migration policy. The main idea is that Turkey is now in the situation to issue problem with asylum by itself instead of systematically resettle them in West. Moreover, human rights advocacy groups have joined the ranks of Western governments in condemning what Kemal Kirisci describes as a concern more for ‘deterring applications for asylum than ensuring protection’ for asylum seekers and refugees (Mannaert 2003, p.32).

Another criticism surrounds the violation of asylum seekers’ and refugees’ rights. The idea is that the 1994 Asylum Regulation (which refers to Turkey’s geographical limitation for accepting refugees), in particular, is not a fair system of asylum procedures and protection. The other important area of criticism concerns security arrangements: “Turkey concluded with countries such as Tunisia or Iran for the immediate repatriation of opposition activists” (Mannaert 2003, p.33). As a consequence of these measures, genuine asylum seekers fear persecution in the host country.

Mannaert, in her report, also explained the situation of non-governmental organizations in Turkey and their useful contributions. She explains that, even though NGOs in Turkey have not had a huge impact on Turkish asylum policy and practice, they have nonetheless brought some discussion to the public with the Turkish authorities and they have achieved some results:

The International Catholic Migration Committee (ICMC), for example, has a long history of collaboration with the Turkish Government as well as with UNHCR on the issue of resettlement. The Association of Solidarity with Migrants and Asylum Seekers (ASAM) founded in 1995 has played a part in raising public awareness on refugee and asylum issues. The Anatolian Development Foundation (ADF) has also been active in resettlement issues and in providing emergency relief in refugee crises such as that which occurred in 1991 (Mannaert 2003, p.11).

The writer also explained the relations of Turkey's application to join the EU and its eastern border. She explained that, as Turkey has a large border with countries producing high number of asylum seekers, the EU is always worried about this issue.

This prospect, together with high rates of immigration coming from Turkey, has led EU countries to apply increasing pressure on Turkish authorities to strengthen controls at entry points in the East and exit point in the West and South and to tackle illegal flows on its soil and inside territorial waters (Mannaert 2003, p. 10).

Mannaert also describes improvement in Turkey's asylum regulations. In practice, a number of changes have been made including: the five days limit for completing the asylum application has increased to ten days. Also, departure points in the west of Turkey have decreased. Turkey also shows its willingness to discuss the possibility of lifting the geographical limitation. Nevertheless, regarding the improvement process, Kemal Kirisci notes the greater concern for Turkey in aligning itself with EU policy in matters of asylum and migration is that, "although co-operation is seen as a necessary requirement for accession, Turkey has no guarantee as such that it will in the end be granted EU membership" (Kirisci 2003, p.13).

Regarding Turkey and EU membership, research conducted by Tarımcı (2005) discusses Turkey's geographical limitation; he explains significant aspects of this limitation. His thesis, "The Role of Geographical Limitation with Respect to Asylum and Refugee Policies within the Context of Turkey's EU Harmonization Process", addresses the EU membership regulations for Turkey. He explained the process of negotiations between the EU and Turkey, which began on 03 October 2005, and stated that "it is estimated that it might take at least 10 years" (Tarımcı 2005, p.131) to complete the EU policy regarding refugees and asylum seekers. He concluded that, "the prospect of Turkish membership to the European Union will certainly provide a better situation for refugees in Turkey" (Tarımcı 2005, p.135).

Another study regarding Turkey and its asylum system was conducted by Ulku Zumray Kutlu (2002). In her thesis, "Turkey as a Waiting Room: Experiences of Refugees in Turkey", she elaborated on the situation of non-European refugees and asylum-seekers mainly from Middle Eastern countries. Kutlu described the conditions of non-European refugees in Turkey as 'idle', and Turkey itself as a 'waiting room' for them until UNHCR assists their cases. Moreover, after the

recognition as refugees, they still had to wait to move to resettlement countries. Thus, the research aimed to reveal how asylum seekers cope during the period of transition, regarding language, job, health, housing and education issues. The research findings explained that the existing international refugee way of operation is not an effective solution for contemporary asylum seekers' and refugees' issues. The author argued that Turkey still has some particular issues as a transit country, and criticized the dual strategy of the Turkish asylum system and its politics regarding humanitarian aid. Also Kutlu, based on her in-depth interviews with ten recognized refugees by UNHCR, claimed that refugees' perception of Turkey is that it is a 'waiting room' on their way to the West. Therefore, they cannot take any new action or plan while they're living in Turkey. She also explained that, as Turkey is a transit country, there is no process for integrating refugees culturally, economically and socially. The other issue that Kutlu raised relates to living strategies of refugees and asylum seekers, which are based on 'kin-friend-refugees network' rather than relying on NGOs or official organizations.

In fact, Kutlu's finding is close to my understanding of Afghan refugees' situation in Turkey. In particular, the perception of refugees of their life in Turkey without any particular purpose except waiting is what I heard many times from Afghan families. In the following chapters I will explain this issue in detail.

Regarding Turkish policy towards illegal migrants, a study was conducted by Levitan and others; his paper (Levitan et al. 2009) focused on the conditions and practices of Turkey's migrant detention centres which are called 'foreigners' guesthouses'. The authors, by method of interviewing migrants in those guesthouses, acquired the refugees' perspective of Turkey's practices with illegal migrants. In the first part of the paper a brief explanation of Turkey's migration

system and legal context regarding refugees was made. Concerning the bureaucratic process, the author explains:

Non-European refugee claimants in Turkey are required to file two separate applications, one with the UNHCR and one with the MOI. The UNHCR conducts refugee status determination (RSD) to adjudicate individual refugee claims. Those who are found to meet the definition of a refugee as defined by the *Refugee Convention* are “recognized” as such and subsequently resettled in a third country. The main resettlement countries for Turkey are the US, Canada, and Australia (Levitan et al. 2009, p.80)

The author proceeds to explain the legal process of non-European asylum seekers, and the legal framework of detaining refugees in Turkey. He argued that the provisions of Turkish law, which are relevant to the detention of refugees, relates to irregular movement. He explained the law as follows:

In particular, domestic law provides that foreign nationals in violation of their residence status may be detained, and criminally charged, for the following violations: illegal entry, illegal exit, and leaving the designated city of residence without permission (Levitan et al. 2009, p.82)

This paper examines the issue of detention of refugees’ from a legal aspect. The author’s research is interested in the concept of law and European Court of Human Rights. Nevertheless, as the focus of current research is on a different point I kept this part short.

Another publication regarding Turkey and its geographical limitation is called “Turkish Immigrants: Their integration within the EU and migration to Turkey” (Refik & Kirisci 2006 see also Vreecer 2010). In this paper Refik and Kirisci

focused on immigration issues in EU and Turkey's negotiations. They pointed on Turkey as an immigration country in the recent decades. Between 1923 and 1996, Turkey admitted more than one million immigrants from Balkan and Eastern Europe. This was one of the first waves of immigrants into Turkey, but other waves of immigrants have entered Turkey since the 1970s and the Gulf War from the eastern border. Thus, the authors argued that, "Turkey already is in the process of becoming an immigrant's country" (Refik & Kirisci 2006, p.6). They explained that:

Turkey too will need to address the consequences of this development in relation to its laws and policies in the realm of asylum, work and residence permits, and political rights, not to mention its bearing on national identity (Refik & Kirisci 2006, p.7).

Similarly, Icduygu (2004), in an article, "Demographic Mobility and Turkey: Migration Experiences and Government Responses", argued relation between Turkey becoming an EU member with asylum system of this country. Thus, he began his argument with history of World War Two and moved to conflicts in Eastern Europe and the way in which they impacted Turkey and migration. The author then elaborated on the new wave of migration from the east to Turkey, and the way Turkey changed in the last decades by opening its border to migrants. In another article, Icduygu discussed the fact that Turkey, "increasingly becomes a major country of immigration and of transit" (Icduygu 2005). He then elaborates on the economic, social and political impacts of this new feature of Turkey, but also in a wider sitting, as Turkey became a transit country in the East-West and South- North way. The author explained that the transit migration patterns and politics which Turkey has made in order to prevent migrants and asylum seekers crossing borders to Europe. Icduygu, in his other

work, “Globalization, Security, and Migration: The Case of Turkey” (Icduygu & Keyman 2000) noted three features for Turkey: first, as a transit country; second, as a country receiving migrants; and third, as a country for sending migrants. Using these three features, he discussed the way in which globalization reshaped the “international migration regime” (Icduygu & Keyman 2000, p.389) in Turkey. He then moves to the discussion of globalization and security, his main point being the way in which migration and immigrants influenced not only the receiving country, but also other countries that they went through and also their country of origin. For him this is one part of the nature of globalization.

Up to this point, the literature presented has been concerned with the wider aspect of refugees in Turkey and the present shadow of international relations on refugees’ lives. Here, I would like to introduce more specific research regarding forced migrants and Turkey.

For instance, some scholars focus on forced migration and the diaspora impact on identity. Calhan (2008), in her Master’s thesis about national and religious identities of children of Iranian asylum-seekers in Kayseri, examined relations between childhood experiences with the national and religious identity of children. Her findings explained that while for Shi’i children religious identity reduced its strength for Bahai children in diaspora, religious identity remained very strong.

The study by F. Kaya & Kocaman (2010) centres on the demographic features and reasons behind the migration of asylum-seekers and refugees who now live in Ağrı. This case study deals with economic, political and social problems in the province of Ağrı, and delivers some suggestions for improving the lives for refugees. The suggestions include increasing social services, providing training for local people to reduce prejudice and help to adapt refugees to their new

environment. Those suggestions can help refugees who feel they are in the 'waiting room' to integrate to the new culture. Even though this study was conducted in a small city of Turkey, it is representative for many satellite cities, where forced migrants reside.

Hoodfar (2004), in her research regarding Afghan refugees in Iran, provides a different context to refugees' lives. She used quantitative and qualitative methods for her research in the north-east of Iran, where thousands of Afghan refugees have lived since 1978. At the time of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, millions of villagers and ordinary people left the country as the state began to interfere with traditional society, including the authority of men over women. Lots of these families prefer "displacement over dishonour" (Hoodfar 2004, p.31). Hoodfar's research, however, shows an ironic change in gender role and role of women, and also the structure of family. She explained two major reasons for the changes; firstly, the absence of any economic and social support from Iranian state, this issue is explained also in chapter five under the subtitle of Iran; and secondly, the way of interpreting Islam in the Islamic Republic of Iran. For example: the notion of a 'good Muslim' who should gain education as much as it is possible, made Afghan refugees reconsider their traditional opinion regarding education. Lots of Afghan families who left Afghanistan during the Communist regime because they did not want the dishonour of sending their daughter to school, returned to Iran after the rise of the Taliban, because of the way that women were treated and the lack of school for women. Hoodfar showed this change by interviewing women who were in exile for the second time.

My findings regarding Afghan refugees in Turkey are very different to the findings in Hoodfar's research. I will explain that the living conditions in Turkey are far from the conditions explained in Hoodfar's research. In another chapter, I

will also compare the living conditions in Iran and Turkey, despite Iran not being a transit country to the West. The issue of Turkey as a transit country and its impact on the lives of forced migrants is discussed in the following chapter.

There is another book published by UNHCR in Turkish, “İltica, Uluslararası Göç ve Vatansızlık” (in English: Asylum, International Migration and Statelessness) (Celebi et al. 2011)¹⁵. This book is a good collection of essays showing different areas of interest in the field of asylum in Turkey. For example Tolay Juliette, in her article “Türkiyede Mültecilere yönelik söylemler ve söylemlerin politikalara etkisi” (p. 201-213) looks at the Turkish population's perception of refugees, asylum seekers and illegal migrants, and finds that Turkish people who are not specialists on this topic have little knowledge about the asylum system and what the different terminologies mean. Furthermore, she specifies six main discourses in regard to refugees: hospitality; multicultural Turkey; pity; nationalist; why Turkey?; refugees as an economic problem.

In another article from the same book, Ateş Selahattin: “Türkiye ve Mülteciler” (p. 309-347), she elaborates on the general overview of refugee legislation, situation, and numbers in Turkey; and refers to the dilemma of the geographical limitation. The author argued that the geographical limitation is not optimal, but removing it would mean accepting all the asylum seekers coming to Turkey, plus the ones that are returned to Turkey as a secure third country by the EU countries (Çelebi et al. 2011, p.346). Şeker Dilara, in her research “Geçici Sığınmacı/ mülteci gruplarda kültürleşme” (p. 348-356), writes on acculturation. A general conclusion is that living in a different environment affects people and Şeker

¹⁵ Based on translation provided by Theresa Weitzhofer and Koray Yurtisik

advocates for considering the different experiences of refugees/asylum seekers and other kinds of migrants.

Deniz Orhan in the same book published an article called, “Türkiye'nin Doğu Sınırında Yasadışı Geçişler” (p. 176-193). This article is about illegal migration to Turkey, especially from the eastern border (Iran, via the mountains). The writer explained the problems encountered during this transit such as difficult paths, means of transport, cold, being left without food and water, sexual and psychological abuse, mistreatment and also smugglers taking money but not keeping promises. Another problem mentioned in this article is the risk of being caught and deported. And finally, a research was conducted by Özçürümez, Saime and Türkay, Şirin called “Türkiye'de İltica Politikası, Aktörleri ve Çalışmaları: Bir “Epistemik Topluluk” Oluşurken” (p. 27-48).

In this section the summary of literature has demonstrated that many scholars focus on the international relations of Turkey and, particularly, Turkey and EU relations and how this impacts on Turkey's asylum regulations. There have been also some studies which touched some problems of asylum seekers in Turkey.

What makes the current study different from the existing literature is that this thesis concentrates on asylum seekers lives in Turkey from their own perspective. I tried to show the way that their life is being reconstructed under all those rules and regulations and how national and international policies impact on the lives of asylum seekers.

Based on a summary which has been presented in this chapter we can see that literature on Turkey and diaspora is very wide. There are many issues to talk about and there are different aspects to work on.

CHAPTER IV

CEZA CITY

4.1 Ethnography of Ceza City

This chapter contains ethnographical information relating to Ceza city. It starts with a brief historical introduction followed by demographic information. The latter helps to provide the reader with an insight into the living conditions of refugees. It is followed by a description of the city's facilities and the neighbourhood where Afghan families live. The remainder of the chapter comprises a bibliography of families of whom this thesis concerns.

Ceza is located in the eastern part of central Anatolia. From a historical perspective, the city is quite important; it has a long history of civilization. The first settlement in the area dates back to 2600 B.C (Howorth 2008).

In 2009 population of Ceza was estimated to be 338000 inhabitant and according to Turkish Statistic Institute¹⁶ since 1990 Ceza population increased by about twenty percent. The more recent history of Ceza, for lots of Turkish citizens, recalls a collective memory of intolerance and hate regarding Otherness, referring to an event that had occurred. However, as discussed in the following chapter, Afghan families emphasized that residents of the city are friendly and I

¹⁶ Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu

did not hear anything of that event from Afghans. As mentioned before, what Afghan families spoke very much about was cold weather, they felt that the city's cold climate is a kind of punishment for them.

The climate of Ceza, according to the Köpper climate classification, is hot and dry in summer, and snowy and cold in winter. According to this classification the temperature can drop as low as -34C during winter, and from September until May the temperature can be less than zero. In fact, winters are quite tough in Ceza and it was one of the points that everyone was unhappy about. Ceza's weather is described as "bad" and "difficult" for Afghan families. As mentioned previously, one of the reasons of calling this city 'punishment' referred to the weather conditions.

Weather condition was only one part of finding life hard in Ceza. Families were not use to this weather but also for them making their house warm with coal stove was something outstanding. They always spoke about their warm house in Iran and compare the coal stove as an old method "like life in Afghanistan".

Their other problems regarding the city's feature was the lack of NGOs. In Ceza there was no NGO for asylum-seekers and refugees. One of the most common NGOs in Turkey is ASAM, and this organization has offices in most satellite cities. Before my field work, I met the head of ASAM at a seminar¹⁷, and in response to my question of why there is no ASAM office in that city, he explained that, in order to establish offices in satellite cities, the number of asylum seekers should reach specific figure. Apparently, the number of asylum

¹⁷Türkiye'nin Tarihi İltica Geleneği: Yasal Çerçevelerin Oluşturulması Bağlamında Geçmişte ve Gelecekteki Uygulamalar, İkinci Akademik Ağ Semineri, Gündem, 6-7 Ocak 2011-Ankara (Historical Tradition of Asylum in Turkey: Past and Future Applications in the Context of legal framework, the second Research Network Seminar, 6-7 January 2011, Ankara)

seekers and refugees in Ceza is not high enough. According to the head of ASAM, every two months they send a representative to cities where there is no ASAM office, to compile a report on migrant problems. He also explained that, when someone from such a city has a problem or an urgent need to meet ASAM, they can reach nearest office in three hours by bus. Usually, asylum seekers approach ASAM for help completing their appeal for UNHCR, meeting lawyers and medical help which is not covered by their health insurance; for instance, meeting with psychologist.

However, city councillors have a duty to help those families. Therefore, sometimes they receive donations, including dry food (such as rice, beans and etc) and during the winter, city councillors provide coal for the families. Moreover, if they have an issue regarding their health insurance, or they need a letter for their children's school, they can also turn to the city councillor. Information provided on the city council's website states that in 2005, 32% of inhabitants of the city were covered by social insurance while in 2009 it increased to 43%. Forced migrants are also provided with health insurance.

Furthermore, I was told that the city councillor is also willing to organize Turkish language course for families. The city councillor's office is located in the main square of the city; it's a large, old building in the centre, which was easy to access. Next to the office are the city's main streets. Afghan women used to walk to the city centre for shopping or window shopping. Women described shopping in the centre of the city as a safe place where they can go easily.

A hospital and some beauty salons are also located near the main square. I often walked with women to that shopping centre and beauty salon. The shopping centre includes small shops on both sides of the street and around the square along some fast food establishments and restaurants around the city centre.

The other site that families used to go was the foreign affairs branch of the police. This office was quite far from their houses and, to go there, they had to take two buses, or walk to the city square and then take a bus. The public transportation is based on bus and minibus services. All men had to go to that office every week to sign their presence in the city. As families told me in Van, where they used to live, women also had to go and sign their presence, but not in Ceza. They had to get permission from this branch of the police to go to other cities they had to get permission from this branch of police by stating her or his reason and providing the relevant documents. In addition for prolonging their resident permit they had to visit the same office.

Regarding the landscape, there is a river in the south-east of the city. Near the river, is a park and I heard that families sometimes have a picnic there. One could continue the road after the river where there are some new apartments and the University which has been established on 1974. The University and the apartments around it are located in a new part of the city. That neighbourhood is mostly inhabited by university staff and students who came to Ceza from other cities. I did not hear from families anything regarding the university area which was far from the city centre. However, the river and park were interesting places for them when the weather improved. As my fieldwork was conducted during winter and the beginning of spring I did not have a chance to accompany them to the park or river area as it was snowing and cold.

Ceza is surrounded by agricultural lands and hills. The main agricultural products of this province are vegetables, including leek, spinach, cabbage, lettuce, chard, tomatoes, herbs, and corn. There are many animal farms around the city. One of my Turkish host families was working on an animal farm very close to Ceza. The city's economy is mainly based on agriculture and 70% of the

labour force works in agriculture. There are also some small industries around the city including stone cutting workshops and carpenters.

In the following part I will explain more about the families and their neighbourhood. Through relations with four Afghan families, I obtained my own data for the current research. However, besides those four families, there were some other families that I knew from spending time at their houses, but my knowledge of them is limited. Nevertheless, I conducted in-depth interviews with a total of 15 adults from eight families who are described as follows. Sometimes I met other Afghan migrants who were visitors and I tried to contact them on the other days. That said, as I mentioned in the first chapter all Afghan families were living in one neighbourhood so that it was easy to visit them during shopping and walking. The neighbourhood where most of Afghan families were living was in the eastern part of Ceza city. There were buses from the main square of the city to that neighbourhood, which were three stops far from the square. One could also walk for 35 minutes and arrive there. In that neighbourhood there were two schools; one elementary and one secondary school. Also, there were some small markets and grocery stores. The overview of the neighbourhood was very typical and similar to other cities. There was no sign of poverty and I could not say it was an area for poorer people. Each street has some relatively narrow alleys and on both sides of the alleys were houses. Most of the houses were two floors located in the middle of the yards. In the front yard of the houses usually there were sheds where people kept their coal. There were not many trees in the yards and in general in the neighbourhood. Each house was occupied by two families and the houses have two different entrances for each floor. Some of the houses also had basements. Only one Afghan family was living in a basement but apart from that family, basements were usually used for storing tools and not for living as there were quite cold.

The Afghan inhabitants were not isolated from Turkish families, their houses were among those of Turkish families and from outside it was not possible to tell if the inhabitants were Turks or Afghans.

At the end of my field work I had got to know nine families. I could conduct in-depth interviews with them and the information that some of them gave me was related and interesting for my research. Here I am going to introduce first the four families that I had closer relations with, and then I will give brief details of the other families.

4.2 **Biography of Families:**

Karim and Zohre (a small family with big ambitions)

The first family that I could visit with help of Alex was Karim and Zohre's family. Establishing contact with them allowed me to approach other families, which was crucial for the research. Karim step by step was introducing me to other families. Karim is a young man about 25 years old. He was a very ambitious person who truly wanted to improve his family life. As he told me, he was born in Afghanistan in a family of rural background. His family understood importance of education so when he was young, he started going to school. In fact, he was attending two schools - in the morning he was attending regular school and in the afternoon *Mektab* – school where a local religious figure (*imam*) was teaching about religion. After three years the imam of the village told his father that he was very intelligent and if he let him educate Karim, could become a very good imam himself. However, the imam wanted to teach him full time, so Karim would not be able to attend regular school. Despite that fact, his father accepted the offer and Karim was learning religion under the imam's

instruction. When he was 12 years old, the imam told his father that, there is nothing more that he could teach him and even at that time his knowledge was greater than his own. Karim remembered that during that time he was reading large religious books and was able to memorise them from the first page to the end. Based on what he memorised he was performing public speeches in front of people. Later he immigrated to Iran (Karim like most of the other families did not want to speak about the reason of migration as it is already explained before) There, in Iran, he resumed attending school and at the end he obtained a high school diploma. Karim's family however is still in Afghanistan most probably, since he does not have news from them he was guessing that maybe they moved to Iran, however they have never meet and never heard from each other since Karim left Afghanistan. He got married in Iran with Zohre who also belonged to his native Hazara ethnic group. She is a young woman aged 24. Zohre was born and grew up in Iran and she had never seen Afghanistan in her life. She has three sisters and one brother and her mother are all living back in Iran. Zohre never speaks about her father and she refused to talk about her childhood and her life back in Iran. She told me that it bothers her when she remembers those memories. Sometime after marriage, Karim and his wife decided to emigrate from Iran. Again, they did not want to tell me the reason for migration; however, from time to time they spoke about racism in Iran and their hard life because of this. Karim and his wife Zohre came to Turkey with the help of smugglers. Zohre became pregnant before coming to Turkey and two months after they arrived in Van, a city in the east of Turkey, she gave birth. When I met them, they have a two years old daughter who was born in Turkey.

At the beginning when I started my field work, Karim was teaching English in the English institute during weekend and during week he was working in a governmental organization as a tea man. His English was quite good and he said

he had been learning English for years in Iran at different schools. He also learned Turkish whilst here and before coming to Ceza city when they were in Van, he was teaching English and computer to other refugees and asylum seekers. While I was conducting my fieldwork I understood that Karim was not happy with his job as a tea man. After some weeks he quit that job and he found first aid course. The classes were every day for 5 hours. All participants were promised that after two months attending the course they will be able to find a job. To register for that course he had to prove that he knew how to read and write in Turkish. After short time he could pass the language exam and participate to the class. It was governmental course and it was for free. He was attending the course while I finished my field work. However I have heard later that he got a job in a hospital. This family were thinking about future, for instance among all the families only Karim and Zohre were planning not to have more children until they have a stable situation

Karim, Zohre and their daughter were living in a first floor of a two story house. The upper floor was for their land lord and he was living there with his family. The house was in the middle of an alley, with a small yard. There were two apple trees and one cheery tree in the yard, also small room in the corner of the yard where they kept coal for winter. During my field work as it was snowing all the time no one used yard. Inside their house it was small corridor where kitchen and bathroom located. Then a door to the living room and in the living room there were two sofas and one electric heater. From this room there were two doors one to another bigger living room where the main heater located and television with one another sofa. The big living room has a view of the yard. The other door opened to another narrow corridor where there were three bedrooms. One was for sleeping and they had their double bed there and small bed for their daughter. The other bed rooms were not used and they were empty. Their house was quite

big and comfortable. Karim told me that they got sofas and curtain from one NGO. All rooms were covered with carpet their house was not cold even there were one electric heater in the kitchen. The kitchen has a window that we could see outside.

This family was recognized as having official refugee status by UNHCR less than two years ago. They still need to wait for the resettlement and they were living in Ceza like all other families for temporary time.

Kazem and Goli

The second family which I met through Karim was Kazem and Goli's family. They were also recognized by UNHCR as refugees. Kazem is 30 years old man with his wife Goli who is 27 years old. They have one son and a younger daughter. When I met them for the first time Goli was pregnant and she gave a birth to another son during my last week of the fieldwork. Back in Afghanistan, Kazem was Mujahedin fighter. When he came to Iran he became a stonemason, he told me that job was hard but his economy condition in Iran was very good and the job he had was good. His wife was a very silent woman. Her father's family were imams and they studied at Baghdad many years ago. During the Iran-Iraq war Goli's family immigrated to Iran and then two of her uncles obtained Iranian citizenship but not her father. When Goli was a small child the family came back to Afghanistan. Again, because of the economic conditions and the ongoing conflict there the family migrated to Iran once more - Goli was 13 years old at that time. When they moved again, they stayed in one of the major city of Iran - Isfahan. Goli got married when she was 19 years old with arranged marriage, Kazem was in Iran at that time and some friends introduced him with Goli's father. After the marriage her parents for the second time went back to Afghanistan. During my time with her, she was complaining a lot about

Iran and how much she hates Iranians. This family were also Hazara and they are from urban background. Kazem's family were engaged in politics as he explained me, his sister had been killed in an attack which was arranged because of their jihadist political views.

Like most of the other families they used to live in Van before being sent to Ceza city. Again, like other families they came to Turkey with help of smugglers. They had been living in Turkey for just over two years however, Kazem was perhaps one of the only men who preferred to go back to Afghanistan if the situation changed rather than resettle for good. As I will describe in more detail in the gender relation chapter this was the significant factor in their life. Goli on the other hand liked to go to another country and she was trying to learn English, Karim told me that before she became pregnant she was one of his good students in the English class. Kazem had learnt neither English nor Turkish, he was working in a factory in Ceza city but unfortunately while I was there he lost his job. I explained this story further in six.

Their house was just next to Karim's house very close but quite different. It was an old house with very small yard. There were no trees in the yard and they used to keep the main door of their house open. Their house was very cold all the time, but Goli told that she felt warm and she connects her feeling with being pregnant.

In fact it was very visible that Kazem is not working or is not interested in spending any money for his house. They had only one ling bulb which they used to share between rooms – depending where they were sitting. Their house has two rooms one smaller and another one bigger. In the bigger room they put a stove and it was the only warm room of their house. A big picture of Mecca was on a wall and under that a small television; there were sofas around the room. In

the side of the living room there was a curtain which separated rooms. On the other side of the curtain their beds were located. They put four beds just next to each other in that room. So they used that room for eating food, watching television and also sleeping. They called that room house (*Hane*), for example when I was with Goli in the kitchen her husband asked us to come and sit in the house. Their kitchen was very cold and there was no heater there. They had small washing place in the kitchen and one camp stove for preparing meals. There were no cabinet and anything else in their kitchen. One small fridge for keeping food and very thin carpet were also located in the kitchen.

This family also have the status of conventional refugee. They are considering Turkey as a temporary place, but as it is mentioned earlier, for the husband Turkey is a temporary place because he wants to go back to Afghanistan whereas for Goli, she dreams to go somewhere in the west where she can have comfortable life.

Zahra's family

There was a family with 28 years old wife and 4 years old daughter. I couldn't meet her husband as he was the one who had a job and was working during day. Both she and her husband were born in Iran and obtained high school diploma in Iran. She had never seen Afghanistan in her life but her husband was in Afghanistan before marriage for several years. Zahra used to weave and sew in Iran, and then sell her handcrafts to shops in Tehran where she was living with her family both before and after her marriage. Zahra did not go to university but she really wanted. She emphasized how good a student she was in school; however her father did not let her to go to university. Later, when her younger sister finished her high school Zahra tried very hard and convinced her father to give permission to her younger sister to go to university.

Her husband was her far relative and they both wanted to marry. After their marriage they were living in Iran for about 5 years and their daughter was born there, then they moved to Turkey. She did not want to speak about reason of their migration but she talked a lot about racism in Iran.

They came to Turkey with the help of smugglers one and a half years ago and it was more than ten months ago that they have been sent to Ceza city. In Van and Ceza Zahra did not work. She is staying at home all day and takes care of her child. Their house was in the same neighbourhood as other Afghan families. It is located in one new apartment in a first floor. Next to the entrance door there is a bathroom and then there is a small but nice kitchen. In their kitchen there is a carpet, table with four chairs and electric heater which makes it warm. When Zahra was alone she put the laptop on the kitchen table and watched television channels via Internet. There is a long living room with sofas and carpets. A big heater and a television are also located there. Their house has one bed room next to the kitchen. On each floor of that apartment there are two flats and Zahra's neighbour was also an Afghan whom I will introduce in the next part.

As they were recognised as conventional refugees by the UNHCR, they were looking forward for the country accepting them for permanent resettlement. Zahra told me that her husband had learnt Turkish in Van and that she knows the language enough for basic dialogue with her Turkish neighbours.

Mohamad and Mojde

The third family which I met with help of Karim was Mojde and her husband Mohamad. They were very young and had four children. Mohamad was 25 years old and Mojde was 24. Mohamad told me that he is illiterate and he was born in Afghanistan where he grew up. Before coming to Turkey, they were moving very often back and forth between Iran and Afghanistan. Mojde's family

immigrated to Iran when she was a child and when she was 13 years old, Mohamad who is her paternal cousin came from Afghanistan to marry her. Their first child was born in Iran and then they were deported to Afghanistan where they lived in Kabul for about four years. In Kabul Mojde gave birth to another child – their first son. After that they migrated again to Iran because, as they said, there was no job in Afghanistan. When they came to Iran that time, their second daughter was born (third child). During that time in Iran Mohamad had a very serious accident. He was working as a construction worker and the building collapsed. After that he had serious health problems and spent time recovering for two years. After that they immigrated to Turkey. It was Mohamad, Mojde with three children and Mohamad's mother who immigrated together to Turkey. They also did not tell me why they immigrate but sometimes they spoke about Mohamad's problems with hospitals and sometimes Mohamad spoke about his children who could not go to school if they stayed in Iran.

First they moved to Van where they had another child – a son. Mohamad told me that three months after arriving to Van, his mother got very ill. She was in intensive care for 40 days and they spent all of their savings to pay hospital bills and hire interpreters. Because they did not speak Turkish the interpreter was a must in order to help them understand doctors and vice versa. After a few weeks in hospital the mother unfortunately died. After living in Van for a while, just like most of other Afghan asylum seekers they were sent to Ceza city. This family was one of the only families in Ceza city who were not Hazara. Though their ethnic group is relatively close to Hazara, they called themselves as Harati or people from Harat (a province of Afghanistan). Their religious sect is Shi'a just like Hazer.

Mohamad does not have a job in Ceza city, he told that he could find job once but the job owner demand to work hard and fast, but because of the previous

accident he could not cope with that. He used to work in a restaurant but owner of the restaurant dismissed him because he needed someone who can work better. Before migration to Ceza he used to work with a tailor. He told me that he knows how to make dress but in the Ceza he could not find any related job. Once he tried to sit in the city square and polish people's shoes. But police asked him to not sit there anymore. All in all he is jobless for about one year and they are living with help of Turkish government.

Their house is again in the same neighbourhood as other families, by walking it is 10 minutes far from Karim and Kazem's house. It is very small and dark basement of a two floors house. Next to the entrance there are few stairs and then another door which is opening to one small living room. In the living room there are three doors. One to a kitchen which has a window to outside and it is not as dark as other rooms. Another door is to the bathroom and the last one is to one small room where they put their computer and two sofas. However, the living room was the place which they also use for sleeping. Their television was in the living room and they use the living room for eating meals as well. But the other room with sofa was only for guests and also for their daughter to study. The other children were still very young and their oldest daughter is the only one who goes to school.

This family's refugee case was rejected by the UNHCR and at the time of my fieldwork they were at the stage of waiting for the result of their appeal. That was the reason why it was difficult to build trust with them because they felt they are in a very unstable situation and they were very cautious about giving me information.

Sanaz and Ghasem

The other family which I contacted was relative of Mohamad. Sanaz was the elder sister of Mohamad. She was mother of two children - one son and daughter. Her husband Ghasem was the only Pashtun (one of the ethnic group in Afghanistan) and other families sometimes were gossiping about them because she and her husband were from different ethnic and religious sect which was very unusual. She was also pregnant at the time of my fieldwork. As their case was rejected by the UNHCR and they were very much suspicious about any strangers who came to their house. They appealed against the rejection and were also waiting for result of the appeal. Unfortunately I could not get very close to them because they did not trust any strangers and the fact that I came from Ankara – where UNHCR has its office made it even more difficult. Later I heard some gossip that they thought I was a spy from the UNHCR who had come to visit their family to find the truth about them in order to assess their case.

At my last trip to Ceza, Sanaz gave birth to another son. Also some weeks after I finished my field work I heard that the result of their appeal came and they were recognized as refugees. Thus they are also waiting for resettlement now.

Sanaz and Ghasem's house is next to Mohamad house. Karim told me that after Mohamad came to Turkey, when his mother got ill they asked his sister (Sanaz) to come and join them. But again I do not know the reason of their migration, as I mentioned before it was not possible to come to this question especially for families whose cases were rejected by the UNHCR. Ghasem was working from time to time when he could find a job. He is worker and he is doing physical jobs and Sanaz is a house wife.

Their house is a bit bigger than Mohamad's house. There is one living room with television and one sofa just next to the entrance door. It is a ground floor of two

floors house. There is no yard and the house is quite old. Kitchen and bathroom were next to each other and there are two bed rooms. One is for Sanaz and Ghasem and the other one for children.

Ahmad and his 'lost' wife

I did not have a chance to get very close to Ahmad and his family; however the rumours about them were in all the houses, and on the last week of my field work I made an in-depth interview with him which was very useful for shaping my research. He is a Hazara Afghan from an urban background, and he and his wife had two sons. I did not see either his wife or his children but as other people told me, his wife had had relations with another Afghan man in Ceza city and all people who told me this gossip sworn that they saw her several times with that man in a park or on a street. After a while, she and her husband had a fight and she went to the UNHCR office in Ankara with her children and asked for help. People said that now she is living in a women shelter near Ankara but no one is sure and no one knows where exactly she is.

Later, Ahmad went to the UNHCR office to find his wife but they did not let him inside and or answer his questions (according to him). Ahmad told that he also complained to the court but the court voted in favour of his wife. Both Ahmad and his wife were waiting for result of an appeal to UNHCR; however, their applications had now been made separately.

I did not enter Ahamad's house, other women told me as a female I should not go to his house alone. The interview had been conducted in the yard of Karim's house. Ahmad also did not tell me the reason why he emigrated from Afghanistan.

Somaye and Naghi

Somaye is a 17 years old mother and she escaped from Afghanistan with her husband, Naghi, and her brother-in law. They had a plan to go directly to Europe but in Istanbul police caught them and they were held in a camp for about 6 months. There she gave birth to her son.

This family is the only family who had never been living in Iran before coming to Turkey. They only pass through Iran by bus. They were from villages in Helmand, a province in the south west of Afghanistan. She told me about her family before marriage that her father was a gendarme in the national army and every three months he was in one mission. Her mother was also a housewife. There were three children and now she does not have news of how her family are doing.

I could not see her husband since he was working when I went to her house. She told me that she is living with her husband and her brother in law. As it has been mentioned earlier they were living just next to Zahra's house. So their house has similar structure. However they did not have any sofa and electric heater. This family are waiting for their case result from the UNHCR. Thus at the time of my field work they were asylum seekers.

Shohre and Reza

Shohre was a poet and she had two daughters and one son and her husband. Reza had lost part of one of his legs at the beginning of the Soviet war in Afghanistan because he stepped on a mine.

She told me about her arranged marriage and her disappointment after she met her husband in her wedding. He was 12 years older than her and besides his leg was injured. Shohre studied till elementary school but then there was time in

Afghanistan when women could not go to school. But as her aunts were teacher they taught her till high school. She also participated in some first aid courses in Afghanistan. But she introduced herself to the UNHCR as an illiterate I explained her reason in the last chapter. In Iran she used to work in people's house as a domestic worker and her husband did not work because of his leg. He is illiterate and he told me that he could not go to school because his family did not let him. They both were from city background.

Shohre told me that they immigrate to Iran and later to Turkey because they were looking for better life for their children. Unfortunately their case was rejected by the UNHCR for the second time and they were thinking of going back Iran or take another risk and move once more to another new country with smugglers.

4.3 Shadow of smugglers on forced migrants' life

As it is mentioned in the bibliography of families, all of those families came to Turkey with smugglers. In this part I want to explain the impact of smugglers on families' everyday life. After informal talks with the women and men from different families, it was evident that in their migration, the smugglers have an important role which has an impact on their life. They completely obey the smuggler and pay attention and value to his advices. The refugees told me how the smugglers tell them what to say during the UNHCR interview and how to present themselves in order to be allowed to go to the USA or the 'Promised Land'.

To cross the border between Iran and Turkey in this way is expensive and the smugglers ensure that the money is paid in full by separating the men from the women and children. Half of the payment is made in advance in Iran then the smugglers bring the migrants to the border then they separate men from women

and children. First they bring men and then the women and children who are kept in a different place until the other half of the money is transferred to smugglers' account. One of my respondents explained this situation:

In one of the houses on the way the smugglers told us that the women and men will be separated'. We will take the men first and then women because it is not possible together, since we trusted this smuggler we agreed. We walked for about 9 hours like animals; we didn't know where we are going until we arrived in Van in Turkey. But we didn't know where our children and wives were. After money was transferred in Iran to the smugglers they let us go to the other house where they had kept our women (Informal talk with Karim, 09.03.2011)

When Karim spoke about the smuggler he compared him to God and told me on the dangerous way to Turkey the smuggler is your God.

We saw hell when we came from Iran to Turkey. The smuggler is your God in this way, whatever he says you have to obey. Even if your wife is pregnant you should just listen to him [..], I will never forget one young man who went to sit in one car without asking the smuggler, the smuggler took two stones, threw one at his ankle the other at his back. He was badly hurt and even his close friend or relative couldn't help him because they were afraid of the smuggler (Interview with Karim, 09.03.2011)

When Karim was talking to me about the smugglers, his wife mentioned that some of the women told her how smugglers harassed them on the way;

Most of the women said that the smugglers touched them in a sexual way, the women complained and told the smuggler that they shouldn't do that to us, we are like your sister or mother, the smuggler replied sit, sit don't speak [...] for example the women were in front of the car and men at the back, and the smuggler was touching them. (Interview with Zohre 09.03.2011)

Many of the families I spoke with expressed their regret about obeying the smugglers without thinking. Particularly about employment and education, it seems that all the smugglers advised the migrants to say they were illiterate and had never worked before. They say them this is the way to be accepted by the UNHCR and if they say they are educated, the questions in the interview will become very difficult and they would not be able to answer.

A woman (Shohre) in one of the families whose case was rejected by the UNHCR seriously regretted lying to UNHCR regarding her education. She had studied till secondary school in Afghanistan but then came the time when girls were not allowed to go to school anymore. However, two of her aunts were teachers and they taught her at home. Later she married but remained very interested in continuing her education. Even though she had four children when on two occasions the Iranian Crescent carried out workshops and a short course in the city where she lived, she participated and got certificates. She told me that in Afghanistan she did not work because she lived in a province where situation was not good for women to work outside the home. However, she was trained to be a nurse; she knew the Latin names of medicines and how to do injections.

However, having been told by the smuggler that if she had mentioned her education the officials would ask difficult questions and her opportunity of getting refugee status would decrease. So she told the UNHCR that she and her

husband were both illiterate; which is actually true about her husband but not about her. She also said that her children were illiterate; this was perhaps because the UNHCR only interviews children older than seventeen.

This family felt that they were very close to being deported to Iran or Afghanistan. They had lived in Turkey for about 3 years and were waiting for good news from the UN. The mother had hoped that she could find a job based on her education but this had not been possible due to the way she had represented herself to the UNHCR. Also, their elder son had not gone to school for three years however, the other three children attended school and had learned Turkish.

The impact of smugglers on these people's lives begins long before they actually made the journey across the border to Turkey. As some of the men told me their life in Iran was difficult. Then the rumours spread among Afghan families that *"if you go to Turkey, the Turkish government will give you house and car, and every month you will have salary without working"* (interview with Karim, 09.03.2011).

Karim explained the rumour and the reality:

The smugglers created the rumour that if you go to Turkey, Turkish government and UNHCR will give you a house pay your rent and your expenses then after three months they will send you to the best countries like Australia. I know so many people, who came to Turkey, without any money, they even had to borrow the money to pay the smugglers. Then when they arrived in Turkey they understood it's that it was not at all how they had been made to believe. It was all lies and now they are sleeping in parks. (Interview with Karim, 09.03.2011)

After more than two years of living in Turkey the smuggler was not considered as important and valuable as he was at the beginning of their migration. Some people still appreciate the smartness of their smuggler but most of them state that “smugglers always lie”. Thus, for most of the migrants, the smugglers were no longer a super human who knows everything and all the ways to do things. Nowadays, they still need smuggler to send photos and letters to Iran and to bring them items which they like such as Iranian rice or tea from Iran. I saw most of the things in their houses.

In fact the ‘rumour’ about free housing, a car and a monthly allowance although exaggerated, had some truth in it. In reality, all families in the city where I conducted my field-work have health insurance and schooling is free for their children. Furthermore, the families who have refugee status receive a small allowance every month. However, not everyone is given refugee status from the UNHCR. But even those whose case is rejected still have the health insurance and their children have free education. They also receive some other help from the city council until they resident permit is valid however they do not have right to work.

The point here is that some families decided to leave Iran not only because of the hardship life back in Iran or Afghanistan but also because of the positive information about the benefits they would receive in Turkey promoted by the smugglers network in Iran. It was interesting that after reaching UNHCR and thus being free from smugglers, the power relation slowly changed and UNHCR replaced the smugglers in importance. For the refugees, they began to recognise that the UNHCR is a very strong international organisation that can make decisions about their life and can provide them with the ‘best life’ in the resettlement country.

During my first week in the field, everyone was speaking about the UNHCR website. When I asked them the reason for this, they told me that one night before New Year on the Farsi section of the website, all the people who been granted 'extended mandate refugee' had their status changed to 'refugee'. Everyone was very happy and my informant told me that his Afghan friends in Van were having a party to celebrate this change. They all thought that it was a gift from UNHCR for the New Year. However, one week later the previous status of extended mandate was reinstated. They asked me and an American friend if we knew why the UNHCR changed its mind. For me it was obvious that the problem lay with the website. But when I told them, they did not want to listen and they asked me how it is possible that this mistake could happen. This is the example of their concept of the UNHCR they think it is a highly efficient organisation where there is no possibility of human error or a computing mistake.

This chapter began with ethnographic description of Ceza city followed by introduction of the families which took part in this research. By demonstrating biographical information and families' history I aimed to construct the framework of the research analyses. At last, I showed how smugglers played a part in families' new life. As it has been mentioned smugglers promised to families a better life in the West. They described Turkey as a transit country to the 'comfortable life' in the Europe or USA. Next chapter is dealing with life under the concepts of temporality and therefore liminality.

CHAPTER V

“WE LIVE LIKE SEA FOAM”¹⁸ - LIFE IN LIMBO

The title of this chapter came from my informal talk with Zohre in one of the first days of the field work. In the late afternoon we were cooking dinner together and she was telling me about her life from the time that they migrated from Iran to Turkey and the hardships that they experienced. Then when it came to Turkey Zohre told me:

Our life here is difficult, in a sense, we can't buy anything for our house and we don't know for how long we are staying here. Maybe we go now maybe never; we live like sea foam. [...] The only pleasure for me is Zahra (her daughter) (23.03.2011)

Zohre during her talk used metaphor that their life in Turkey is like sea foam. Her reason was the fact that they have no idea for how long they should stay here, maybe one month, maybe forever. As sea foam is created by agitation of water, Zohre metaphor described their life which is creation of unstable or not calm situation. Besides that, sea foam is a condition that can be transferred between pure water to rocks. Therefore Zohre's metaphor of her life appears very interesting and suitable to be title of this chapter. As this chapter is going to

¹⁸ Informal talk with Zohre

describe life in liminality, the way in which these families are between and betwixt of two lives.

In this chapter the context of current research will be described. I shall begin explaining the path that those families came through, and some reasons that “it places (or displaces) them in a location that cannot be defined or grasped. The notion that refugees are trapped between times and space” (Saeidi¹⁹) is described in the last part of this chapter when I will explain their life in limbo, and based on families’ narrative I will explain how they were forced to come to Turkey, and how, here in Turkey, their life was transferred to the liminality, after they came out of the previous stage of ‘separation’.

As I described previously, families that I made my research about were tiding from several political and geographical places. I am going to explain the actual and mythical intersections of these four sites. Furthermore there is a transnational perspective that engaged these forced migrants with their country of birth and host countries, “which results in the transfer of money, good and the circulation of ideas between more than two countries” (Mazzucato, 2004, p.131 (cited in Muller 2008) That is why it is necessary to follow their geographical way and condition that they passed through in order to have insight of their social life.

As Braakman describes refugees are “population groups which link more than one country through physical and mental processes” (Braakman and Schlenkhoff 2007). The people, who I am writing about, have memories, (or in cases where they have not seen Afghanistan) cling to myths about their homeland. Some feelings also bond them, whether by fondness or resentment, towards Iran. Short

¹⁹ Saeidi Shirin, email correspondence, June 2011

description of what or where country of origin and transit country will be given in the following in order to clear the path these families walk through.

5.1 Country of Origin

As this research is about Afghan forced migrants, we may assume that all of them came from Afghanistan; though the citizenship and belonging were more complicated in my field site.

Afghan forced migrants in Turkey are coming here either by first or second movement, according to interview with Thomas Faustini Head of Office of UNHCR's Van Field Office, (20 December 2010, Ankara). By first movement it means they came directly from Afghanistan, and second movement means they or their parents had immigrated to Iran and they were living there for some years. Families, whom participate in this research, had experienced both movements as it is also explained in the beginning of this chapter. Except Somaye and her husband, all other families had lived in Iran before coming to Turkey and some even had never seen Afghanistan.

Out of 15 adults that I visited during my field work, three women and one man told me that they were born in Iran and they never had been to or visited Afghanistan. I only saw one family who said they came directly to Turkey from Afghanistan without having lived in Iran.

However, none of them have Iranian citizenship, and some told me that they do not have any official document about their Afghan citizenship. As we can see it was difficult to categorise them to one country as their country of origin. It is particularly more difficult when it comes to the people who were born and grew up in Iran and their knowledge about Afghanistan and Afghan culture was very limited.

For instance when Zohre was speaking about her childhood in Iran she points to her ethnic background and how she learnt it from others:

When I was in Iran I didn't know what ethnic groups are in Afghanistan and I didn't know even what my ethnic group was. One day when I was coming back from school in the street a boy shouted at me 'Hazara, Hazara' and then some boys laughed. I thought it is a bad word and I came home and start crying, my mom asked me what is up? and I told her a boy said a bad word to me, he called me Hazara, my mother laughed at me and told me it was not a bad word my daughter, we are Hazara. I was confused then my mother explained me more about our relative and our background (Informal talk with Zohre).

Therefore country of origin for some of them can be considered as being Iran though not officially because of Iranian rules (which is described in the following part) on citizenship. From the UN view they are Afghan and they are considered as Afghan citizens regardless of their place of birth during the process of assisting their case and later for resettlement.

5.1.1 Afghanistan

Regardless of where they were born and where they were growing up, all are suffering and are in a diasporic situation due to the same reasons and history of contemporary Afghanistan. Or better to say history of ongoing war for more than 20 years in Afghanistan which has started by the invasion of the Soviet Union to Afghanistan. "The conflict which became increasingly violent created hundreds of thousands of refugees each year: of 12 million Afghans, 3 million soon had migrated to Pakistan and 2 million to Iran, making as the largest refugee population of modern times" (Dorransoro, 2005, p. 53).

Also related to the Soviet attack to Afghanistan on 1978 Ferris wrote in her book, *Beyond Borders* “ The Afghan refugees are the world’s largest refugee population, with about 3.5 million living in camps in Pakistan and another 2 million in Iran. In addition an estimated 2 million Afghan are internally displaced” (Ferris 1998b, p.174). It means almost half of the pre-war population of Afghanistan has been displaced since 1978. Most of those populations in fact fled after 1979, the time of Soviet invasion. According to Ferris “one of the factors that pushed the population out of the country was the repressive anti-Islamic policies led to armed uprisings throughout the country”. (Ferris, 1998, p.183)

“The war in Afghanistan was described as a 'Hobbesian' situation, a special case where the war of all against all fails in reality to provide a foothold for political analysis” (Dorrnsoro, 2005, p.72); which is in fact very sad for Afghan people and great deal of suffering for them.

And finally, after over nine years of war and invasion of Russia in April 1988, the United Nations facilitated an agreement providing for the withdrawal of the Soviet army. Soviet army forces began their withdrawal in May 1988 and completed the action by February 1989. However, still after two decades of the agreement and the Soviet troop withdrawal, broad numbers of refugees remain in exile, which is of course not only because of violence remaining after war but also because of unstable economy and social condition. Besides, after the Soviet period in Afghanistan, for a very long time there was [is] continuing fighting between the freedom fighters. Perhaps, as Ferris also mentioned in his book, “the existence of millions of mines make resettlement of agricultural communities very difficult” (Ferris, 1998a, p.27). Thereby the condition was still very hard for many years after the 1988 UN agreement. During the 80s and 90s, almost half of the Afghan refugees were children and little more than half of the

populations of adults were women, since most of the men had been killed or remained behind to continue their defence. “In the early 1980s Afghanistan's population was estimated at 20 million. And since the early 1980s, between 6 and 7 million refugees have settled in Iran and Pakistan and a few hundred thousand in other parts of the region, in the West and in Australia” (Rostami-Povey 2007, p.80)

For years different forces and groups, such as Mujahidin, were fighting against the Soviet- supported Afghan government and after the fall of the government the fight continues between groups for controlling the country and of course for power in Kabul and other cities. The civil war inside of the country make the situation very far from stable peace and much difficult for the returner refugees, as many of them forced to leave the country for another time after returning.

The conflicts and civil war in Afghanistan continued in the country until 9/11, which brought another disaster and another turning point for Afghan refugees and returnees. However, as Dorronsoro argues, “patching up the country by means of short-term ethnic alliances and a new division of the spoils will only perpetuate the schisms in society”(Dorronsoro 2005, p.305). He believes, on a very sound factual and analytical basis, that the Afghan civil war is set to continue and perhaps worsen over time, despite Western intervention since 9/11.

In conclusion of this part many of Afghans are in diaspora because of the consequences of war on their everyday life. I was told by one of my respondents:

We came here because of war, but people think we are here since we didn't have bread to eat. But in fact we are here only because of war in our country. (Informal talk with Kazem)

They are leaving their home because they can't support themselves or their families at home, because of war or persecution, because they want a better life for their children. (Ferris, 1998a) Most of the families mentioned education for their children as one of the main reasons for migration. Problems of unemployment is another reason; Mohamad and Mojde's family as I mentioned before after some years of living in Iran went back to Afghanistan, they told me you can live in Afghanistan as long as you have your save money from Iran or Pakistan or if you have someone who can send you money, because there is no job in Afghanistan. Though his wife and his sister who lived in Kabul before their migration told me that they could find a job these days in Kabul, but there is no job for men. Sanaz explained that particularly in Kabul and some other big cities there are lots of international organizations where you can find a job as a woman, then she laughed and added "*specially if you put some make up on*" (Informal talk with Mojde). But she also added that she did not work because she was busy with her children and in her view if her husband has money or a job there is no reason for her to work.

Besides that particularly after 9/11 ethnic conflict increased in Afghanistan (see Strand, Suhrke Astri, and Berg Harpviken 2004) and as Charles B. Keely stated a nation-state tends to produce forced migration for three reasons: "it contains more than one nation; the populace disagrees about the structure of the state or economy, or the state implodes due to the lack of resources"(Keely 1996, p.152); as there are more than at least three different ethnic groups in Afghanistan and none of them are majority this is one of the reasons for on-going debates and conflicts in Afghanistan. Besides the structure of the country had changed so many times and each ethnic, political and religious groups are fighting for different political structures. All these conflicts made the situation very unstable for Afghan citizens.

5.1.2 Iran

As a consequence millions of people left their country and from them the majorities followed to Pakistan and Iran. As families I am writing about all came from Iran, here I am willing to describe situation in Iran for Afghan refugees. But we should know that it is not possible to generalize Iranian policy toward Afghan refugees since Iran was hosting Afghan refugees over 20 years. Therefore, different roles and regulations have been applied on Afghan refugees in line with the international relations of Iran and the political situation in Afghanistan. During the first flow of Afghan refugees to Iran, the Iranian government took official responsibility of all refugees and gave only a marginal role to foreign NGOs, international organizations and UNHCR, refugees in Iran were not required to settle in camps, they could live wherever they found a job. Nonetheless illegal migrants including Afghans were kept in camps and do not have permission to go out to the cities (Strand et al. 2004).

During 80s and beginning of 90s refugees in Iran had access to more facilities such as free education just like Iranian citizens and health insurance. However, by increasing the number of refugees adding to the hard condition of Iran just after Iran-Iraq war the life for Afghan refugees became harder and harder. Before that, important factor for coming to Iran was similar culture, including same religion and very close language (Dari-Farsi), besides the facilities that Iran's government let them use, such as cheap energy (electricity, gas and water in Iran for all houses is included as a subsidy). However the situation slowly changed for them and life in Iran became more difficult. Because as it is mentioned there were little international help for the Iranian government and also there were other conflicts in Iran such as economic problems consequences of war. Those factors impacted on life of all residents of Iran. Besides those reasons which described

in above the international help for refugees in Iran was the least in comparison to other countries.

“Iran hosted more than 2 million Afghan refugees, and about 500,000 Iraqis as a consequence of the Iran-Iraq war. For a time [during 80s and beginning 90s], Iran hosted the largest refugee population -about 4.16 million- of any country in the world; with very limited international help due to the policy of the USA towards Iran” (Ferris 1993, p.43). From 1982-1990, “UNHCR spent \$406.5 million on 3.3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan while it spent \$81.8 million for 2.35 million refugees in Iran during the same time period” (Ferris 1993, p.52).

In other words “for every dollar spent on Afghan refugees in Iran 3.54 dollars was spent on Afghan refugees in Pakistan. During 90s for every dollar spent on a refugee in Iran, \$ 7.60 was spent for a refugee on the Turkish border. “Iran meanwhile was spending \$10 million a day to sustain the refugees” (Ferris 1993, p.197). The limited international help for refugees in Iran put huge pressure on Iran’s economic system and on the other hand on refugees. Afghan refugees as the biggest population of refugees in Iran were under the most economic pressure and accordingly the economic condition created a particular social situation between Iranian and Afghan refugees. The feeling of racism and hatred grew in time and became an important reason for Afghan people to leave the country.

Once when I was in Kazem’s house, they were speaking about racism in Iran and then Goli said: “*There [in Iran] they took the money from United Nation but they never give us any of that money. They only left us alone, but here they give us money just like other countries in the world.*” (Informal talk with Goli)

It means now that they can get money every month from UNHCR they start to think so what happened for our money in Iran, and why Iran government took our money; though, according to status UNHCR in Turkey have more budget and different regulations for refugees (Ferris 1993).

Unfortunately the racism towards Afghan refugees is even encouraged by the laws that Iranian government maintain; Accordingly Iranian women who marry Afghan men lose their Iranian citizenship (Strand et al. 2004). This law shows the conflict situation between Iran and Afghan refugees producing and reproducing in micro and macro levels and in nation and state level.

In literature, we can see traces of racism to Afghan refugees in Iran. Rostami-Povey in her book “Afghan Women” expressed that [Afghan women in Iran and Pakistan] face racism, prejudice and many special, economic and cultural constraints. “Despite historical and cultural ties between the Afghan Shi'a and Iranian and Afghan Sunnis and Pakistanis, Afghans have experienced racism in both of these countries, more in Iran than in Pakistan” (Rostami-Povey 2007). She considered the racist behaviour of host country of Iran as the result of increasing of refugees populations. According to her, Afghan refugees were included on number of social facilities such as health and education and it's increased the level of racism against them. Additionally, she argues the role of media for creating the wrong image of Afghans and considering them as the reason of unemployment and crimes.

Furthermore United Nations in Iran is working with small budget for refugees, as mentioned before, which makes it less efficient toward refugee policy and any integration program for refugees and also host society. While according to Nilofar Pazira's research (Pazira 2003) in Pakistan, for instance, UN played significant change among Afghan refugees. In fact, based on my field work, I

consider racism in Iran as one of the very important factors for decision of leaving Iran. For instance Karim shared with me his experience when his vermiform appendix got pain and he went to hospital. He needed surgery but no doctors were willing to help him because he was Afghan. The second day in that hospital one young intern came to him and asked him to not waste his time in the hospital because no one will help him here, the intern suggested him to go to one private hospital and pay there so they would help him. Also Goli complained a lot about Iranian people's behaviour with her. She said in the bakeries they did not give her bread when it was her turn and makes her to stay in queue for longer time. She told Iranian women complain why Afghan eat that much bread. Families complained a lot about that kind of behaviour which they have experienced in Iran.

But besides that, particularly after the fall of Taliban, Iran's main policy was to send Afghan refugees back to their country. Therefore children did not have permission to study anymore and also there was no health insurance for them. Besides new law forbids the employment of Afghan workers, all those regulations made it more difficult to stay in Iran (For more information see Ebadi 2008).

All in all, these families with no or little educational background and economic difficulties were moved with hoping of better life to Turkey. They came to Turkey, where they can get health insurance, children can go to school and there is some financial help to refugees and asylum seekers.

Until this point I explained the situation of Afghanistan and factors that encourage these people from their homeland to the neighbouring country of Iran. Then I described the situation in Iran and reasons why families are forced to leave Iran and some of the positive aspects of migrating to Turkey for Afghan

families. In the following sections I am going to describe and analyze the situation in which Afghan forced migrants are living and how UNHCR, smugglers and Turkish government play a role in their everyday life.

5.2 Asylum regulations in Turkey

In Turkey's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention there is a reservation that excludes Non-Europeans from being recognized as refugees (Frelick 1997). In 1962, Turkey ratified the 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees and in 1968 the 1967 UNHR protocol (UNHCR 2010). However as mentioned above, Turkey maintains the geographical limitation pursuant to Article 1B of the 1951 convention (for more information see Tarimci 2005). As a result the application of the 1951 Convention only includes 'persons who have become refugees as a result of events occurring in Europe'. In this context, Turkey defines Europe as the countries that are members of the Council of Europe, including Russia and the ex- Soviet states west of the Urals (UNHCR 2011). Since Turkey did not sign the amendment to the 1951 refugee convention that extended the original concern to refugees coming from all countries thus is not obliged to apply the convention to refugees from outside Europe.

Turkey is a member of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Executive Committee and as the majority of asylum seekers originate from non-European countries, Turkey has created a system for granting non-Europeans temporary asylum which runs parallel to UNHCR procedures. "Turkey's temporary asylum regime is regulated by the 1994 Asylum Regulation, as amended in 1999, and the 2006 Implementation Directive."(UNHCR 2011) This means that officially Turkey is only a transition country for non-European refugees (for more information see Koser Akcapar 2006; Manap-Kirmizigul, 2008; Toksabay 2010).

Thus, because of Turkey's geographic reservation to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, excluding non-Europeans from its obligations to refugees, the new regulations take a somewhat convoluted approach to defining the terms 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker.' Normally, an asylum seeker is considered to be a person claiming to be a refugee whose status has not yet been determined by an adjudicator. However, according to the Turkish regulations, the distinguishing feature between a refugee and an asylum seeker is whether or not the person in question is of European origin (for more information see Kirisci 1991). Therefore it is complex situation for labelling migrants as refugees, asylum-seekers, illegal migrants and so on. Particularly the situation is more complicated for Afghans who do not share border with Turkey. Below is the table which shows the number of undocumented Afghans who were arrested by Turkish police due to illegal border crossing.

Table 5.1: Afghans Arrested by the Turkish Police (Danis 2005, 85)

Year	Number
1995	24
1996	68
1997	81
1998	921
1999	2476
2000	8764
2001	9701
2002	1927
2003	2178
2004	1112

Given this context, in Turkey, the UNHCR plays a critical role in the protection of needs of all non-European asylum-seekers however, as explained above the terms 'refugee' and 'asylum seekers' are interpreted differently by the UNHCR and the Turkish government. Since in the Turkish context the term 'refugee'

cannot be used for non-European citizens; thus, the Turkish government “uses the term ‘Asylum seekers’ for all other foreigners who left their country because they feared persecution. Therefore, scholars use the term ‘foreigner’ or ‘claimant’ to indicate a person who would normally meet the definition of ‘asylum seeker’ and “reserve the term ‘asylum seeker’ to conform to its technical meaning, pertaining to European citizens, in the Turkish regulations” (Frelick 1997, p. 6).

However, according to UNHCR, a person who approaches a UN office and registers his or herself as requiring protection is considered as asylum seeker. After assessing whether the claim of the person can be matched to one of the five defined grounds for persecution, he or she would be recognized as a refugee. Thus, according to Haddad “it is actually easier to define who is not a refugee” (2008, p. 27).

During the process of evaluating the claim of an asylum seeker the person is required to stay in one of the satellite cities determined by the *Ministry of Interior* of Turkey. Life in these satellite cities for asylum-seekers in Turkey is challenging and fraught with difficulty. For instance, they have to earn a living to sustain themselves (and their family) however, it is nearly impossible for them to work legally since, they require a residence permit. According to the Helsinki Citizens Assembly in 2009 this was 306.30 TL every six months (288.15 TL for minors 15-18 years old) plus 135 TL to cover the cost of the residence permit booklet. Thus, it can be seen that the cost is high, for example the annual amount for a refugee family with two children can be as much as 3,000 TL. Furthermore, a refugee who stays in Turkey four years without paying residence fees will not be issued an exit permit to leave the country unless the person pays for the

residence permit in arrears at a cost of 4,000 TL plus interest²⁰. Covering the cost of this permit is a major problem for many asylum seekers who left their countries with little money and possessions. The second obstacle to finding employment is that asylum seekers have often left their country in hurry and therefore most of the time they do not have the documentation to prove their education and training. This makes it difficult to find work appropriate to their skills and experience. In addition, lacking the ability to communicate in Turkish plus other issues such as suffering from the trauma of the escaping from their home country add to the difficulty of finding a way to earn a living.

Traditionally there are three durable solutions for refugees that are applied by UNHCR. First the voluntary return which means that the UNHCR would help refugees that are willing to go back to their country to return and re-establish new life. Second to integrate refugees into the host country, and the third option is to resettle them in another county.

During and after the Gulf war, Turkey's location meant that it received a large population of refugees (for more information see Kolukirik & Hüseyin Aygül 2009). Prior to Turkey opening its borders for refugees the government and UNHCR made an agreement with various resettlement countries (see also Levitan et al. 2009). Before that time resettlement was not the common strategy for Turkey in dealing with refugees. However, since then it has become common practice and the preferred solution. (UNHCR, interpreter workshop)²¹

According to the UNHCR, Ankara for a non-European refugee in Turkey from the time their status is recognized by UNHCR they have to wait for 10 to 24

²⁰ Helsinki Citizens Assembly <http://www.hyd.org.tr/?pid=770>

²¹ October 2010, Ankara, Turkey

months²² to be resettled in another country. Being from neighbouring countries Iranian and Iraqi refugees have more opportunity to be resettled in other countries. (UNHCR, interpreter workshop) However, the final decision concerning resettlement remains with the receiving states. However, in terms to the UNHCR, resettlement is not a “right” for refugees, therefore the situation for non-European refugees in Turkey is quite complicated.

In real terms as Ferris comments in her book the “terrible reality is that no country wants refugees” (Ferris 1998, p. 92). “As the world becomes global village with a universal corporate culture and a communication system that crosses national borders, governments are competing with one another to find new ways of keeping refugees out”(Ferris 1998, p.94). This is particularly true for refugees from Afghanistan, who out of all the nationalities, wait the longest in Turkey for resettlement. According to my experience in the UNHCR, when an Afghan citizen is recognized as a refugee they are told that “unfortunately countries are not interested in Afghan citizens so you should be very patient till we find a suitable country for you” (UNHCR workshop: 2010). During my research I tried to discover why resettlement countries are not interested in accepting refugees from Afghanistan and the head of Public Information in UNHCR explained that countries like USA are claiming that North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) army is in Afghanistan and they are trying to stabilize the situation there, therefore they expect Afghan refugees to return to their country. When I gave this explanation to Karim, he replied: “*We escaped from Afghanistan because of the USA, we couldn't go back home because of the USA and once more we cannot be resettled to another country because of the USA*” (Informal talk with Karim)

²² <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e48e0fa7f.html>

In the following section I will briefly describe the history back about Turkey's relationship with Afghan refugees from the 1980's. I consider this as important background information on this subject, and I will continue to the current situation of Afghan refugees in Turkey.

5.2.1 First Afghan (selected) refugees in Turkey

In 1979, Turkish government decided to accept for resettlement some of the Afghans who had sought for asylum in Pakistan. This is probably the beginning of the history of Afghan refugees in Turkey. "According to Wheeler "in March 1982, a new law - No.2641 – was passed by the Turkish authorities to lay down rules and procedures for the reception and resettlement of the refugees selected to come to Turkey" (Wheeler, A.C.R 1983, p.6). That procedure required that the Turkish government establish an inter-ministerial commission, at national level and also parallel provincial-level commissions in the provinces where it was planned to locate their refugees.

Therefore, in April 1982, Turkish government sent a national commission to Pakistan for the purpose of inviting applications for resettlement in Turkey from those Afghan refugees who were members of the Turkic-language minority group. The criterion was language, which is an important factor for integration into Turkish society. According to Wheeler, approximately 4,350 people applied and all were accepted (Wheeler, A.C.R 1983). After few months, with international help air transport was organized to bring those people to Turkey. Over the next 12 months, close relatives joined the initial group and the total number of refugees grew to 4,500. The commission committee in Pakistan undertook a survey to estimate education and other training needs of selected groups in order to establish training activities and schooling. This group first resettled on the East and southern provinces of Turkey, however they had right of free movement after some years (For more information see (Danis 2005).

Although that group entered Turkey legally as they were invited by the Turkish government to resettle, future attempts by Afghan citizens to enter Turkey as asylum seekers were rejected. If Afghan refugees tried to cross the borders illegally, they were deported to Iran or Afghanistan. According to my interview with the head of PI (18 May 2011, Ankara) in UNHCR till 2007 the usual practice of the Turkish police was to send back Afghans and considered their migration as illegal. These Afghan refugees did not have the right to approach the UNHCR in Turkey. Metin Corabatir (Interview on 18 May 2011, Ankara), the spoke person of Public Information in UNHCR Turkey, mentioned that *“there was a case of an Afghan man who had been born in Iran and had grown up there, being deported to Afghanistan and finding himself in Kabul airport”*. The Turkish government however, legitimized this practice by referring to the borders and neighbouring countries. That means citizens of countries who have a border with Turkey have opportunity to seek asylum and stay in Turkey legally until their case is assessed by the UNHCR. After a period of time the UNHCR and the Turkish government made an agreement in 2007 to give Afghan citizens the right to apply for asylum in Turkey.

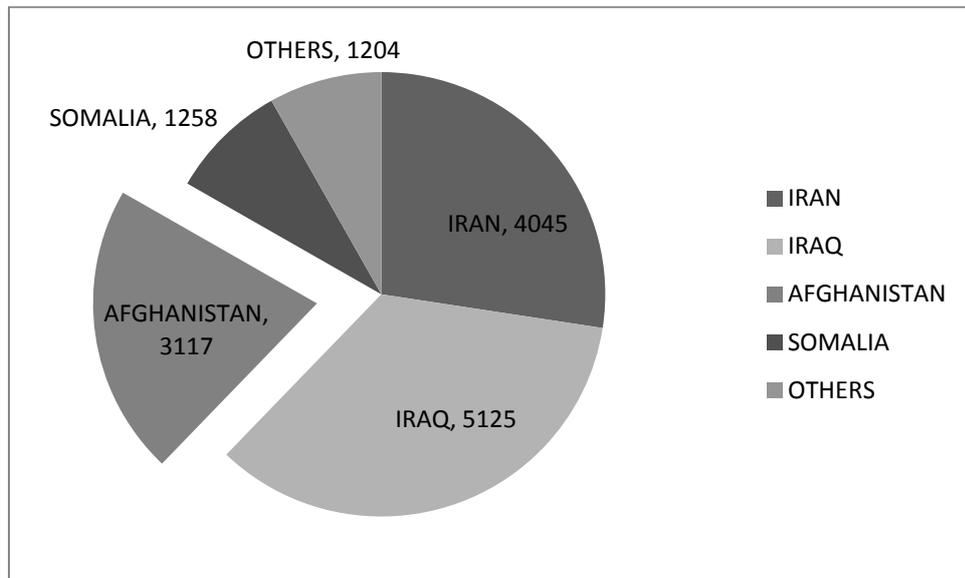


Figure 5.1: Nationalities of People of Concern to UNHCR Turkey (UNHCR handbook, 2010)

5.2.2 Afghan refugees in Turkey

As we can see in the figure, Afghan forced migrants are the third biggest population among forced migrants in Turkey. In an interview (18 May 2011, Ankara) the Head of Public Information for the UNHCR told me that Turkey has had two policies for Afghan asylum seekers since 2007. The first way for them to seek asylum is if the person was awarded refugee status by the UNHCR office in Iran then after they enter Turkey they can go to the Ministry of the Interior in Turkey and submit certain forms requesting that the Turkish government gives them protection and allows them to stay in Turkey for a period of five years. After that if they still feel that they would continue to be persecuted in their country of origin they can apply for another period of stay (Also mentioned in the website of UNHCR, Ankara office).

The second way is for people who have not registered their case in the UNHCR of Iran or another country. They can approach UNHCR in Turkey and apply for

asylum. In this situation, the UNHCR first registers them and gives them a document which they should present to the security police and apply for residence permit. Then the Turkish police for foreigners will direct them to one of the 30 satellite cities selected by the Ministry of the Interior and located in various provinces (Levitan 2009). Once settled in one of the satellite cities according to Turkish law the refugees should apply for six monthly residence permits as detailed above. The fee for the permit is exactly the same as foreigners who come to Turkey for work.

However, the head of Public Information of UNHCR during my interview (18 May 2011, Ankara) explained that recently the UN and Turkish government made changes to the fees for the residence permits and if the asylum seekers claim that they cannot afford the fee the Turkish police can make an exception for them.

During my field work when I was in one of the refugees' house at the end of May, two police officers came to their house and looked around their house to check whether the family was able to pay for residence fee. They visited all houses and reported on each household. For some families they gave discounts, for example exempting the older children of the residents however, others were told by the police that they should pay the full fees. However, according to UNHCR website, asylum seekers can send letters to UN and ask for being exempt from residence fees.

For those who have applied to the UNHCR in Turkey their case is usually assessed within 4 to 6 weeks in normal cases. After that if they are recognized as a refugee and receive a certificate confirming that fact. In certain cases they can stay in Turkey until another country accepts them for the resettlement, as explained above. The other possibility is that the UNHCR can recognize them

under definition of ‘extended mandate refugees’. In this case there is no possibility of resettlement to the other country however, they are permitted to stay in Turkey until such time as the situation in Afghanistan has sufficiently improved for the refugees to return and live safely. Also, sometimes the UNHCR rejects the application for refugee status then the applicant has time to appeal against the decision. If the person does not appeal they are required to leave Turkey.

In order to enter Turkey citizens from Afghanistan need to apply for visa. All the asylum seekers whom I met in Turkey in UNHCR or in the city of Ceza were smuggled into the country. One reason for this is that most of the people do not have the official documents that would enable them to apply for a passport and visa. In particular, most Afghans born in Iran do not have national identity cards since obtaining Iranian citizenship is very difficult for them. As a consequence, they, as undocumented migrants, cannot apply for visa to Turkey.

5.3 Betwixt and Between

All non-European refugees in Turkey and in particular, Afghan refugees have to wait a long time for permanent settlement. They never know what will happen and they are always waiting for a phone call to say them ‘you will be resettled’, or ‘you can go’. This situation has wide range of effects on their everyday life and on their mental health and morale and as a consequence has an impact on gender relations which I am going in detail in this part.

For the refugees in Turkey the waiting for the chance being resettled in a permanent country creates a feeling which Turner (1967) denotes as “betwixt and between”. Moreover, he expands on this describing the transitional being as “particularly polluting, since they are neither one thing nor another; or maybe

both; or neither here nor there; or may even be nowhere (in term of any recognized cultural topography), and are at the very least 'betwixt and between' all the recognized fixed points in the space-time of cultural classification" (Malkki 1995, p.7)

If we consider the migration of Afghan refugees as one long process which started in Afghanistan or Iran and now is continuing in Turkey and the process or the transition being completed one day in the USA then perhaps we can see this process as a rite of the passage. As Van Gennep defined 'rite de passage' as a rite "which accompanies every change of place, state, social position and age" (Gennep et al. 1961, p.216).

As I described earlier, the challenging conditions of forced migration impact on the social position of men, because of their loss of their traditional power role as the head of the family. In particular this is brought about by the lack of a job and thus not being able to support for their families. Furthermore, in many cases the breadwinner is forced to be dependent on handouts from charity organizations. Here, I am mentioning this situation again to emphasizes the change in place and state and social position of forced migrants in transit that can be considered to be undergoing a rite of the passage.

Van Gennep (1961) has shown that all rites of transition are marked by three phases; first, separation that in my argument starts from the time they leave their homeland and their relative behind at the same time they have to deal with the smugglers in order to complete the phase of separation. Second is the marginal or liminal stage which is the specific social and psychological stage for refugees in transit. Some scholars such as Malkii, Douglas and Hampshire (Holt 2011, p.83) compare the refugees' life in the liminal stage particularly when they are

living in camps. The last stage is aggregation which is not the argument of this research.

“The first phase of separation comprises symbolic behaviour signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure or a set of cultural conditions” (Mahdi 1987, p.126). According to my field work these families passed the first stage before being transferred to the Ceza city. “During the intervening liminal period the state of the ritual subject (the ‘passenger’) is ambiguous; in the context of refugees in Turkey we can see the ambiguity in their status which is refugee for UNHCR but asylum seeker for Turkish government; “He passes through a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state” (Turner 1995, p.94).

Mahdi et al (1987) stress that liminal persona need to complete submission to the term of the liminal passage in order to attain the next life for a person in liminality and come out of liminality (Mahdi 1987); which matches many of the practices of forced migrants in their everyday life in Ceza city. For instance, some were trying to learn English rather than Turkish as they considered Turkey as a temporary place. This factor impacts on their ability to find a job because as long as they do not have a command of Turkish it is very difficult or even impossible to find a job even unskilled manual work. My informant spoke about this issue:

Here there is class to learn to read and write in Turkish from the government. They told me if there is a group of 10 people they would send a teacher to one of the schools in your neighbourhood. The class will be during the afternoon and they will be for free. I told everyone about it but they only say no we

don't need to learn Turkish because we are not going to stay here. (Informal talk with Karim)

Kazem told me that he had a job in a factory and his employer was satisfied from quality of his job. Before the Persian New-year (No-Roz) he told his boss that he would not be at work for a couple of days however he could not express himself clearly and the boss did not understand what he was saying. After the New Year, when he went back to work to find that they had dismissed him for unauthorized absences. Obviously the main reason for this situation was language problem.

Besides, some of them have no motivation to improve their lives, for example buying furniture or other items for their house; again this is because they consider their house in Turkey as a temporary place. They believe that one day they will go to another country by plane or smuggler and in both cases “*we cannot take anything except a small amount of luggage with us. So why should we work?*” (informal talk with Ahmad). My informant told me that “*there is a man who only sleeps and watches TV, when I asked him why you don't work? He replied 'take it easy, when we go overseas I will work a lot'.* (Interview with Karim, 09.03.2011)

In addition, as long as they are not working they cannot enlarge their social network and as a consequence, they become more and more isolated and this lengthens the liminal period. Being isolated and excluded from society is also mentioned on literature refugees in Turkey see for example Manap-Kirmizigul (2008, pp.118–121). As we can see, the situation is a vicious circle where everything is causing and resulting next stage.

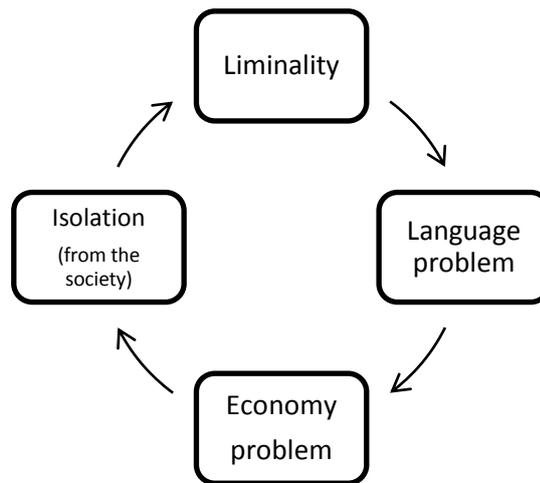


Figure 5.2 Circle of Liminality- vicious circle ²³

Nadje Al-Ali (2002) observes similar conditions in her work about Bosnian refugees in UK. We can see similar condition that I call liminality, in which Bosnian refugees have problem with socialization, finding job and learning English and they are very much dependent on financial and other assistance from organizations such as the government, UNHCR and NGOs.

In some ethnographic research conducted among refugees resettled to countries such as the USA, the close relationship of refugees' community is reported. However, regarding the liminal period of Afghan refugees in Turkey, there was much tension and many conflicts between families. Women had no friends that they could spend time with. There were about two or three women who were friends that were against two or three other families. There was a lot of gossip in each house about the inhabitants of the neighbouring houses.

²³ Author Maryam Ozlatimoghaddam

During my field work in Turkey, Zohre told me that she did not have a friend here or anyone who can take care of her child for an hour if she wants to go out. Then she told me about the last time she met with other Afghan women, when she went to one religious gathering. She and one Tajik woman started arguing since the Tajik woman was old, the other women asked Zohre to be respectful and do not continue. She told me:

but I don't care about her age anymore because I don't need any friends here, sooner or later all of us will go to the USA and there no one will see anyone else because I know in USA people are very busy and besides it is a big country we may even go to another city. So why should I be friends with them when we are only here temporarily. (Informal talk with Zohre)

This situation is very opposite to what Kibria (1990) reports about Vietnamese immigrants in USA. She describes many interactions between families and particular women; they take care of each other children and make exchanges for food and other material things.

In fact I found the situation of the Afghan refugees in Ceza city to be very similar to those refugees in camps as described in the literature. Families considered their life to be like those in prison; Mohamad for instance described his life in this way:

Life is very tiring here; we don't have permission to go out of city. Every week we should sign at police station [to show their present in the city they have to sign a paper in Police station]. Well, at least here is better than Van, our wives don't need to sign. In Van, the men had to sign three times a week and the women had to sign two times per week [...] I feel like prisoners,

we don't have permission to go out, and we can't visit our relatives. So what is the difference between us and prisoners? Here every one says that this city is a city for punishment...
(Interview with Mohamad, 26.03.2011)

In other anthropological field studies of the Vietnamese in refugee camps in the Philippines, Hong Kong and Japan, Knudsen (Chan & Loveridge 1987a, p.170) characterizes the refugees' camp existence as "meaningless, uncertain, waste of time, boring and passivizing". Feelings of passivity and uncertainty about the future, while leading to a constant shift between hope and frustration, underline a mental condition Knudsen calls "the limbo state" in which one feels forgotten and undesired by the world, almost to the point of losing control of one's own life (Chan & Loveridge 1987b).

The refugees that I interviewed shifted between hope and despair. At the very beginning asylum seekers had big dreams and high hopes for their future. Most of them came to Turkey and just to register with UNHCR. They had practiced their story for UN and enjoyed discovering new things in the new social and geographical environment. Based on the smugglers stories about resettlement they were hopeful furthermore, taking into account, the large amount of money they had paid to the smugglers and the very difficult journey they had endured encouraged them to be hopeful for the near future.

The stage after the interview with the UNHCR the waiting period for the result can be as long as 4 to 6 months. Of course, there are cases which are assessed sooner but others may take much longer. Then there are different groups, first the conventional refugees who satisfied the UNHCR's for refugee status. This group started their new way of life which is looking forward to their resettlement.

The group of extended mandate refugees whose hope is much less –have no chance of resettling to the permanent country. But still, they can stay here in Turkey and hope that one day situation in their country becomes more stable or maybe they can again try going illegally to Greece or Europe and start a new file at UNHCR with a new name and a new story.

A further group consists of those whose case was rejected after the first interview but still they have time to fill their appeal form and wait for another year and another chance. However, there are also families whose case was rejected at the appeal stage and for them, life is very unstable. They have little hope and no idea about what will happen next.

As I mentioned, during my fieldwork I spoke with families with different status at UNHCR, but unfortunately even families who were recognized as a conventional refugees two years ago have not yet been resettled. Therefore, their hope has dwindled and their lives were not very different than the other families. Feelings of hopelessness and being forgotten were noticeable in every house I visited. Sometimes they were angry about smugglers who promised that if they obey them, they would be resettled soon. Sometimes annoyed with the UNHCR who they said had never replied their letters and their phone calls (according to them), and sometimes with Iran and the Iranian government that put them to this situation.

However, I cannot say they regretted coming to Turkey. What makes them upset or angry was that their expectation of resettlement has not been fulfilled. When the refugees speak about Turkey and Turkish people, all the families expressed their appreciation of the kindness of Turkish people. During interviews when the question was asked about what will you miss once you leave Turkey, all of my respondents except one woman, said they would miss the nice people of Turkey.

The one exception said she would miss the sound of Azaan (Islamic call to prayer) if they go to USA. They repeatedly compare Iranian and Turkish people and conclude that maybe they (Turkish people) neither know anything about Afghanistan or Afghan life but they say at least they (Turkish people) don't hate us.

The state of being in transit in Turkey and liminal life which has been described in this chapter can be a factor for explaining gender relations. Being in limbo as I explained has its impacts on psycho of individual. In the next chapter I will explain the consequences on gender relations of being in transit.

CHAPTER VI

GENDER RELATIONS IN THE LIMINAL LIFE

The main concepts that are going to be reviewed in this chapter are ‘gender relations’ among families in transit or/and in ‘liminal phases’. Therefore there are two general issues that shape this part. In the previous chapter I have explained about liminality and how families see themselves in the temporary place for temporary time. In the present section, first of all, I would like to discuss some approaches of gender relations followed by showing how is gender relation presented in their limbo life. Finally I will introduce some patterns of changes of gender relations.

“Recent research on migration has more focused on women than on gender” (Schrover et al. 2010, p.9). However in this analysis my approach to gender relations and migrations is closer to the ideas of femininity and masculinity which affect migration and integration. Al-Ali emphasized that gender relations should not be equated with women; instead they should include the power relations between men and women as well as underlying notions of femininity and masculinity (Bryceson and Vuorela 2003). Besides, in this argument of changes in gender relations I tried to look at the context and history of where people are living in time and sphere; and also at the intersection of all other social sources which can give or take power from people:

Gender relations are power relations in their own right but recent feminist work has called for attention to the ways in which gender intersects with other relationships of power like class and ethnicity and has developed the concept of intersectionality to emphasize the interaction. By including in the analysis an increasing number of categories of inclusion and exclusion, such as nationality, sexual orientation, ability/ disability, etcetera, the concept has become occasion too unwieldy to use. Gender, class and ethnicity (or races) are however “generally accepted as dimensions of durable social inequality. (Schrover et al. 2010, 2)

6.1 Gender relations and liminality

Here in order to describe the situation and the concepts which gender relations interact with, the discussion once again goes back to Turner’s concepts of liminality and liminal persona. Afghan forced migrants in Ceza city, as it has been discussed in the previous chapter, found themselves in a transit and temporary place; and I have explained that the fact of being in transit discouraged them to learn language thus making it difficult to find jobs. Below I would like to describe the patterns of change in gender relations according to the scenarios when men can and cannot find jobs.

6.1.1 Waiting in liminality

A man cannot find a job and he is spending most of his time at home, in this situation the money comes from NGOs. Thus Turkish government and UNHCR with those help change the status of men to a dependent person and break their traditional role as the main breadwinner to “being dependent on the income” (cited in Bryceson and Vuorela 2003, 67). This is a ‘source of stress’ which

comes with liminality. In Ceza city there were a group of Afghan men who gathered two times a week at nights, once for praying *Komail* on Thursday night and another time in one of the houses (most of the time in Ahmad's house who was alone) for drinking alcohol, smoking and watching pornography. Those practices can be considered as their ritual to release their sources of stress. Sarah Mahler (1995) argues about sources of stress and fear of being deported from a country among undocumented migrants in USA and I found similar feeling among some of the Afghan forced migrants in Ceza city. Those feelings of fear and stress or in other words being in liminality, make it also difficult for me, as a stranger, to get closer to, at least for the beginning of this research as it was discussed in the introduction.

However it should be taken in account that although "migrations are formed by large groups of people and tend to be patterned each migrant has an individualized experience" (Mahler 1995, 2). Here the state of liminality and stress which is a consequence of living in limbo has impact on every aspect of their every-day life including gender relations. Wives of the men, who have gathering at night for drinking, spoke about domestic violence and tensions at home. Szczepanikova based on her ethnography research on refugees in camps made an argument on violence:

When women see that the men resist change and are even wasting the family budget on entertainment or individual pleasures such as cigarettes and alcohol, they object to this unequal share of the burden (Marije Braakman and Angela Schlenkhoff 2007)

Therefore, the increase of domestic violence in migrant families could also be explained by being in transit and how men try to release their sources of stress. The occurrence of "domestic violence grow among forced migrants in exile has been documented" (Szczepanikova 2005, 131). Martine argues that the violence

particularly increases in refugee camps “where the enforced idleness, boredom, and despair constitute breeding grounds for such violence” (Martin 1992/2004, 51 cited in Szczepanikova 2005). As I have mentioned before the psychological condition of refugees’ life in Ceza city was very similar to refugees’ camp.

On the other side, in some families women are doing their household duties just like when they were in Iran or Van. As Somayeh states: “*No changes in house holding just more things to do here*” (Informal talk with Somayeh, 17.05.2011). I have been told by women that their household duties increased here because first of all most of them, except Sanaz and Mojde who are relatives, did not have any relative here to help them. They have mentioned that in Iran or Afghanistan they were mostly living with their extended families or at least close to them, so there was always somebody to come and help when they were sick, for example.

Moreover, the women told me that here, in Turkey, they prefer to bake bread and cook more at home, because it is expensive to buy but in Iran it was cheap and they have never baked bread there in Iran. In addition in Ceza city and in Van as well, gas is an expensive source of energy so even some Turkish families prefer to use coal for heating their houses. In all of Afghan houses that I have visited there were special stove that worked with coal; and it was women who filled the coal made the fire and took the ash out of the stove. In Iran it is hardly possible to find a place where people use anything else but gas for heating their houses.

The families also mentioned that being a housewife in Iran was easier. Besides, women were busy with their household duties and with looking after their children, since all the families have small children. However the fact that women were so busy with their domestic work and some men did not have jobs and were mostly at home did not make change in the household division. This contradicts the work of Szczepanikova, where she describes the situation when some men,

who could not find job in the refugees' camp, changed their perspectives and tried to adjust themselves to the new situation by looking after children or doing other household jobs, which are considered to be women duties. (Braakman and Schlenkhoff 2007)

During my fieldwork I could not observe this adjustment of men. During the time I spent in refugees' houses, I have never seen a man to come to kitchen or to look after children. They were either having their own gatherings or for the times that they were at home, they were making themselves busy with watching television (News channels) or they were busy with computers. Among families computers and Internet are considered to be the men area but they share it with women sometimes. For example once I went to Somayeh's house with Karim; she was alone and watching a movie with a laptop in her kitchen. Karim was sitting in the living room and I went to kitchen to speak with Somayeh. She brought the laptop for Karim and told him "*you may like to use this while we are speaking*". Also, almost all of men have Facebook accounts but as I could see, sometimes wives have access to the same Facebook pages and sometimes they enter Yahoo chat with their husbands account. Among these families the adjustment of women to the new situation was more visible than that of men. Besides, it was a contradiction that women were baking bread because it was cheaper than buying in their idea but men on the other hand were spending money on alcohol and cigarettes. Thus it is probably men who decide on when and where to spend money or perhaps women wanted to save money for their life but men were not interested in that.

However women also felt themselves in transit, perhaps with less sources of stress because of being busy. Nevertheless, as it is mentioned in chapter six, women did not have any social network neither among Afghan families nor with Turkish families. This was again because of being in transit and because of the

ignorance towards learning language. The fact that women did not have any social network prevented them from entering the labour market, even when there could be a job opportunity because they did not have a ‘friend’ who could take care of their children. Zohre, for instance, told me that at one hairdresser’s they told her she could start working there and they would teach her how to do hair dressing. She said she would love to and her husband told her it was good especially because they would give her a certificate at the end. Karim read somewhere in Internet that having such a certificate could be useful for permanent migration. However the problem was that they did not have anyone who could take care of their small daughter, and she was told in the beauty salon that she could not bring her child there. Her husband was working as well so he could not look after child during days.

In fact there was a feeling of competitiveness between families; they did not want to help each other in most of the cases because of the hard competitiveness of embassies, since they only want a little number of refugees for resettlement. For example Sanaz told me Zohre was looking for someone to take care of her child but: *“why should we take care of Zohre’s child? Why should we help her to go to USA? And then we stay here alone! She would never remember us once she went to USA”* (informal talk with Sanaz).

Here we can see the path of international agencies and their decision on the detail of their everyday life. Families know that at the end there will be an interview in embassy for refugees and even conventional refugees can get rejected for resettlement. And it makes them to feel like being in a competition; they do not want to help Zohre, for example, because they do not want her to get any advantage over them.

Here I also want to explain UN and some other international organizations' role in changes in gender relations. As I have mentioned before, families are dependent on the money from those organizations. I do not know whether this money encourage them not to work or they really cannot work, but it was clear that in both cases, being dependent plays a special role in gender relations.

Regarding Enloe (1989), in her work she illustrates how, while decision-making and economic power belong primarily to men, “international relations and politics are played out on women’s bodies in various ways such as propagating particular conceptions of femininity” (Braakman and Schlenkhoff 2007). And Turner (2004) shows that changes induced by UNHCR and NGO programmes to empower refugee women in Tanzanian refugee camps “have been interpreted as social and moral decay within the dominant groups of refugees” (cited in Szczepanikova 2005, page289). Particularly, male residents of the camp aimed to combat these changes by stressing on gender ideologies belonging to women’s subordinate role in families and communities. Thus, despite of the “implementation of equalizing gender policies, the hierarchical relations between the genders sustaining subordination of women have not been challenged” (Turner 2004 cited in Szczepanikova 2005, 287)

However, the change that UNHCR and NGOs are making in the lives of these families does not have anything to play directly with women (which means no special course or workshops for women and no job), whereas it is about status of men and financial issue. Nonetheless, the changes on the status of men were vivid on gender relations and women’s status.

“Emigration is a process experienced differently by women and men” (Pedraza 1991); some men in transit or limbo situation could not find job or as it is mentioned in the previous chapter some did not want to work. However the state

of being unemployed does not mean that families do not have money as it has been mentioned. First of all, some families have their savings from their work in Iran as they told me; in addition some of them are receiving money from their international line from Iran or from their relatives in Europe. For instance I have been told by Sanaz that since she is expecting a baby her mother sometimes sends her money from Iran. Besides, for some goods, particularly electronic objects, such as digital cameras or laptops the families ask their friends or relatives to send them from abroad. For instance, Karim asked me to bring a camera for him that his friend bought in Iran.

Therefore here we have a situation in which men are not working and women are still continuing their everyday duties same as before migration or even more, and all those duties considered their house labour and women duties at home, at the same time some men who are not working lose their prestige and their power at home. Women clearly know that UN helps all the refugees regardless of their sex and marital status. These changes in the order of duties on the one side and financial help of organizations such as UN and other NGOs on the other side makes the relations complicated and in some cases has brought some empowerment for women whereas in other families the situation has brought more oppression and domestic violence. Similarly Nilofar Pazira works concludes that UN played a significant role in the change among Afghan families in Nasir Bagh refugee camp. (Pazira 2003)

It contradicts with some other feminist and migration theories where they focus on the working women and on how the financial sources of women can bring equality and empowerment. Since in the present study I do not mean women who are working or women who lost their jobs, I speak about the third factor, which is being in liminality and financial help from organisation, which is intersecting in power relations inside families.

Thereby as it is argued, on the one hand the help and support of UNHCR and other organizations sometimes increase domestic violence inside families. This happens when they increase the sources of stress and make the limbo life of refugees longer; however on the other hand, women know that those organizations are supporting all refugees regardless of their gender and even that there is special support for single women or women in risk.

At this point I shall mention what Portes (1998 and Vertovec 1999 cited in Bryceson and Vuorela 2002); called 'transnational links', and it refers to a regular long-distance cross border activity, in order to argue another pattern of change. In Ceza city I have heard of some stories related to love marriages and love stories which women could handle with the help of their transnational links and transnational organizations such as UNHCR:

Zohre told me that there was a family in Van whose son was in love with a daughter of another Afghan asylum family. The family of the boy was recognized as refugees by UNHCR and later they have resettled in Finland. However the girl's family's case was rejected by the UNHCR. The boy in Finland made an inquiry and the migration department of Finland told him that if she came there on her own they could accept her. This meant they would not give her entry visa or any other help, but in case Afghan family knew any good and reliable smuggler they could try their chance.

As Zohre told me, the girl started the journey to Finland on her own and she arrived there. Now they are living together, Zohre showed me some pictures of them in the Facebook. During my field work I have heard some other love stories of this kind, which happened mostly between Iran and Turkey. One of examples could be when a boy's family came to Turkey and the girl came there to get asylum because of the boy or vice versa.

However all of those stories referred to the time when all those families were living in Van; thereby I could not see or interview any of those cases. But what is visible in this pattern is the role of international organization and their particular programme for women. Another story that I have mentioned shortly in the previous chapter is about Ahmad and his wife. Ahmad's case in UNHCR was rejected and he told me that he saw himself in an absolute temporary place where every day and every hour it can happen that police deports him from Turkey. His wife, whom I could not meet as it was mentioned before, had an affair with another Afghan man in Ceza city, and Ahmad told me that one night he had a fight with his wife and the next morning she left Ceza city with her two sons. He tried to find her, but UNHCR and the Turkish court vote in favour of his wife. Some people said now she was living in Ankara in the women shelter but no one was sure where exactly she was.

As a conclusion of this part, the stories showed the intersection of some important factors in gender and power relations. For instance in Ahmad story from one side Ahmad's file in UNHCR was rejected and thus he and his family were living in temporary position (liminality), with lots of sources for stress. From another side it shows the power which UNHCR can give to women when they need it. What is more, now his wife can try once again and apply as a single women who is in risk to the UNHCR (with status that can give her more chance of acceptance and resettlement), to save her children and her own life.

6.1.2 Continuous liminality

The other pattern here is the situation when the man in transit is dreaming of going back to his home town rather than resettlement. Here Pessar (1999) discusses the situation of men who cannot find any job and attempt to return home quickly and frequently to maintain status there that may be destabilised by migration (Pessar, 1999 cited in Transnational (Counter) Topographies). As it

was mentioned in the previous chapter Kazem's dream was to go back to Afghanistan when the political party he belonged to got stronger. He was not dreaming of resettlement in contrast to most of other families. He wanted to go back to Afghanistan where he was a strong fighter instead of being a man who could not find a job and who was dependent on 'western organization money'. The dream and hope of 'getting home' created its own impact on power relations. He was insisting on his wife to speak Dari-Farsi, for example when we were speaking he sometimes corrected Goli or asked her to not use a word because it was an Iranian version of speaking.

His demand to have more children was not separate of his long term plan of going back to Afghanistan. Goli, Kazem's wife, told me when she learned that she was pregnant with her third child she got very sad and the doctor told her that she could have abortion but her husband did not let her to do that.

During my fieldwork several times I heard about Goli and how much her husband beat her and how angry he was. Goli did not like to speak about this with me until the very last days of my field work. One day she started speaking about her husband and she showed me bruises on her arms. It was very sad to see a pregnant woman who was beaten by her husband. However she was not so angry or sad about her husband, at least she did not show it to me. She was rather angry towards her family situation. She was legitimizing Kazem and she told: "*he is very nervous, our life is very difficult and he cannot find a job, the money which came from charity organizations made him even more nervous. He felt like beggar*" (informal talk with Goli)

I was told another story about Kazem and Goli by Karim:

Some nights ago security polices called me and said they are in our street and would like to visit our house. They came here, with some

boxes of biscuit and some other dry food. They came to visit us and help. After some minutes of sitting here they said now show us some other families. I first brought them to Kazem's house. You know it is very close to here. We went there and it seems Kazem had quarrel with his wife, when we arrived he was so shocked and scared he thought police came because his wife called or something like that. Even though I explained him they came only to visit you and for helping he was very nervous. Police also asked me why he is so nervous. What is going on? And I didn't know what to reply (Informal talk with Karim)

All in all, in Kazem's family the state of being in liminality, sources of stress and also the hope of going back to the place that they were separated from (Afghanistan or Iran) created another pattern of gender relations (with violence) in their family.

In Kibria research on Vietnamese immigrant women concluded that the effects of migration on gender relations must be understood as highly uneven and shirting in quality, often resulting in gains for women in certain spheres and losses in others (Kibria 1990). She represented some changes in gender relations which were related to the economic situation of men and social sources of refugee women. Vietnamese female refugees keep the traditional gender relations as long as their men have economical resources, even if they know that in future men will re-gain those resources they stick to the traditional role. Also according to this research, women particularly stick to their tradition in the aspect of behaving with new generation. This argument was visible among my respondent when it comes to the attitude towards their children, particularly to their daughters. I could see the authority that was given to the son of families

with mother against the sister. Although their children were very young the unequal relationship between brothers and sisters in some families was visible.

In Kazem's family, his son and his daughter went to the same school. They were in different classes, because his son was one year older than his daughter, but the school time was same. I noticed that everyday Goli (their mother) went there in the afternoon to pick her daughter from school, when I asked her if the children were in the same school and why not they came home together, her mother told me "*my son doesn't like to bring her home because he doesn't like to walk with her*". She also spoke to her 8 year old son with high respect, using 'mister' for calling him but no similar words were used to address her daughter. Another example showed how much the son was favoured over the daughter during meals. Once during a lunch a boy was being served a meal on his own plate while the girl was sharing a plate with her mother (there were enough plates in their flat for each of them). The girl pointed out 'mom, there is not enough food for you' which angered mother who was shouting at the girl and threatening that she would throw her out of the home if she spoke more.

Referring to Mahler and Pesser's argument about the social context of gender relations I would like to make a brief comparison of Afghan refugees in Iran in accordance with Rostami-Povei's and Pazira's works. Rostami-Povey has argued for the "Changes of gender relations in the context of Islamic culture". According to her findings based on research in Iran and Pakistan, women could progress a lot for gaining basic rights such as education or working outside. In her view one important reason of accepting change with Afghan refugees family especially women, is the political systems of Iran and Pakistan, which are Islamic government. Therefore Afghans can accept changes as far as Iranian, and Pakistanis' women have right. They don't see the situation against their own culture or traditions; they can easily challenge their family for going to school, as

they can see other religious Iranian and Pakistanis families let their daughters study. Rostami- Povei argues that “[Afghan women in Iran and Pakistan] have more opportunities to struggle for their gender rights within the domestic sphere and the ethnic community [...] in the UK and the USA, this task is much harder for them. Many, perhaps most, of the life narratives of Afghans in the UK and USA represent the tensions between notions of ‘tradition’ and modernity in the context of their identities, especially gender identity” (page 110-111). In the other part of her book, she argues the other reason that Afghan women could get relatively more freedom in Iran and Pakistan are the economic needs or force, since life in exile is expensive and it is difficult to live with only one breadwinner.

It is true that it can be more difficult for Afghan women in the western countries to challenge their family for obtaining their right. Marije Braakman and Angela Schlenkhoff in their work “Between two worlds; feeling of belonging while in exile, and the question of returning” also mentioned this issue that when Afghan women try to gain the rights other female class-mates and friends have, it caused them certain difficulties; due to the resistance of their families to the western’s culture. It was documented that in Iran and Pakistan there is no resistance towards the host culture because as Pazira explained in her work Afghan people see their history very tied with Iran and Pakistan history. Different ethnics see themselves closer to Iran than Pakistan or vice versa. Hazara people, for instance, consider Iranian culture as the one close to their culture because of the religious sect; both Hazara and majority of Iranian are Shie- Muslim. Pashto people see themselves as more similar to Pakistani culture and when it comes to the forced migration we can see the pattern Pazira described on the flow of the refugees. Majority of Afghan refugees in Iran are from Hazara ethnic background and in Pakistan the majority are Pashto. According to those

religious similarities there is less resistance to the host culture in Iran and Pakistan than in the west and as Pazira pointed there is rather appreciation towards the cultures than resistance.

In addition it is important to mention about the religion and the state of change among men. Rostami-Povey (2007) states that Afghan men, particularly previous generations, are more patriarchal than Afghan men in Iran and Pakistan:

Within the Islamic context, Afghan men in Iran and Pakistan are more open to new ideas. On the one hand they are under the pressure of material circumstances and, on the other hand, women are constantly struggling for change [...] as a result it is easier for Afghan women in Iran and Pakistan to cross the gender line within Islamic culture than for Afghan women in the UK and the USA (Rostami-Povey 2007, 117)

Regarding to this, Zahra told me that *“you should not compare men like my husband who was born and grew up in Iran with Afghan men. They are very open-minded and respectful to their wives, they have different culture”*. (Interview with Zahra 18.05.2011)

However my argument here is that it may be true that in Iran and Pakistan it is easier for women to challenge their families, based on Islam and Islamic rules, which exist in those two countries. However, the discourses which are arguing within families there in Iran and Pakistan are different from those in the USA and UK or Europe. While in Iran and Pakistan women are fighting for very different rights: in terms of education they demand as much as just to enable them to read and write; in the west the discourses are about different issues, for instance “In Marije Braakman and Angela Schlenkhoff works one of their informant in London, Zuhra, while explaining her feeling toward host country

mentioned: “*Girls, on the other hand, have always behaved better and do better at education and finding a good job as well as family and friends and religion and culture*” (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991, 16); She mentioned this while explaining the situation of a good Afghan girl in exile.

6.1.3 Beyond liminality

Here I would like to talk about the forced migrants who are helping themselves to come out of limbo circle. Karim was one the refugees with educational background and the knowledge of English language helped him to know more about the condition he was in. He was aware of the resettlement regulations; he also knew about the debate that Turkey might change its roles and become a resettlement country for non-European refugees as well. His knowledge encouraged him to start learning Turkish language and working. At the same time he was also registered at some first aid classes. He told me that if he had to stay in Turkey there would not be any problem for him, but he does not like the condition of not knowing whether he would stay there forever or just for some years. Nonetheless, he did not want to waste his time waiting. His jobs helped him to enlarge his social network in Ceza city. He had some Turkish friends from the place where he was working as a tea man. Besides, he was teaching at an English institute during the weekends. Moreover, since his Turkish was good enough he was working with police as a part time interpreter for Afghan and Iranian refugees (from Farsi to Turkish) and for other nationalities (from English to Turkish). He told me about his good relations with the Turkish police and other Turkish co-workers. For instance, in the office where he used to work as a tea man his boss wanted him to work on weekends without extra payment. He told me:

This week when I went there, he (the boss) told me why didn't you come on weekend and I told him I had classes on weekend. He

replied if I wanted to work like that I should not come any more. I went downstairs, I had some close friends there, they asked me what happened and I explained them. On that floor there were 40 or 50 people working. They called my boss and said if Karim went they wouldn't drink tea any more. Then he called me, I went to him and he said he also liked me, but... I told him "but what"? Who is working for free that I should do? (Informal talk with Karim)

From my point of view the fact that Karim learnt the language helped him a lot to integrate. Here I want to explain how the public space impact on private sphere in gender relations perspective. Also I aim at demonstrating the importance of looking at public sphere as one of the factors on gender relations.

As I mentioned above Karim was trying to continue his life in Turkey as if Turkey was the long term place of living. He and his family were conventional refugees and they were hoping for resettling. However, his assumption, based on what he read in the Internet and so on, was that it would not happen in the few years, and from this perspective he was trying to come out of the liminal stage.

Karim explained me how he changed during migration and about the transnational process of his life. Mahler (1999, p. 712) notes, 'transnational processes may produce new spaces, but this does not mean that actors within these spaces are set completely loose from their social moorings geographical scare and social location'. However for Karim, as he explained in the paragraph above, the changes of society and spaces made change on his way of thinking:

"You know, society is very important, when I was in Afghanistan I was thinking very differently because the atmosphere there is very different. I don't know how to say you, for example when I was there I never could accept my sister put jeans trousers, because the

atmosphere over there forced you to think like that. If your sister or your wife puts jeans, everyone looks at you and expects you to do something. Then we came to Iran and I changed a bit. I became bit open-minded. Still when I was in Iran I didn't like any stranger to see my sister or my wife's hair! Well then we came here, I understood nothing would happen if a woman did not cover her hair. (Informal talk with Karim)

The changes on Karim's way of thinking were very crucial on his gender relations. His wife and also Zahra, whose husband was working hard like Karim, told me that they feel they reached a better life here in Turkey. Zahra believes that in Turkey her husband changed a lot and became like an *ideal husband* she was dreaming about. "Importantly, migrant men and women actively negotiated pressures and navigated between opportunities and restraints" (Schrover et al. 2010). Here if we place women at the centre of private sphere and link that with public and private, we can see how gender relations can change when the public sphere is changing. (Rostami-Povei 2007)

Women whose husbands worked felt that they had better relationships and they spoke about emancipation which they could gain here. Zohre for instance told me she got whatever she wished in her life here in Turkey. Then I asked her what she meant and she replied:

You know when we came here Karim's behaviour became better. You know, for example here I can freely go out and do my shopping, I only say him night before and then I go out alone. He won't say me anything and let me go. But when we were in Iran, he

was bit strict to me, if I went to Tajrish²⁴ he kept calling me and asking me 'come on come back soon, what are you doing there, come home'. But you know better than me about Iran atmosphere. Always they shoot Or in Qom it was not possible that you passed a narrow alley without being touched in sexual way. So he had a right to be worried, but here it doesn't matter if you have hejab (veil) or not, no one says you a word when you go to the city centre. I have noticed men are looking at me in the same way as at other women who don't put their scarf on. (Informal talk with Zohre)

Zohre explained her gaining the emancipation as an outcome of place and sphere where they were living. It can also be interpreted under the theory of feminist geographer explanation on gender relations:

Any 'gains' in gender equality tend to be uneven and hard to fight for, often entailing conflict and confrontation, and may well be impermanent. This ambivalence about the gendered effects of transnationalism [...] forced researchers to especially be carefully at the complex ways in which geographies at various scales are intertwined, in mutually supportive and sometimes contradictory ways. (Pratt and Yeoh 2003)

Sarah Mahlar (2001) demonstrates the impact of gender on migration with her case study with Salvadoran refugees and migrants in Long Island (USA). Sarah Mahlar and Pessar (2001) introduced a model of 'gendered geographies of power' in order to effectively study gender across the transnational space. "Pratt and

²⁴ Tajrish is a neighborhood in north of Tehran which is popular for its Bazaar

Yeoh's (2003) work confirms their sense that transnational actions can reaffirm asymmetrical gender relations" (Nolin 2006, p. 35).

Zohre's words and explanation of her situation were very similar to what her husband believed and expressed. These two explanations from a wife and a husband might show the fact that women were quite passive in their gender relations and emancipation for them came when husband decided to change. In any case this was the pattern I could see on gender relations among Afghan forced migrants in Ceza city.

In fact as it was explained above most of the women did not have any activity in the public, such as working or participating in classes. For instance when women were speaking about price of something they still used Toman, Iranian currency (if price of something was 5 Turkish Lira they said 5 Toman). But I did not hear any man using Toman instead of Turkish Lira which I think shows the fact that women spend their time mostly at home.

6.2 Women and Liminality

As for the women and work in liminal life, there are some contradictions between my fieldwork and the corresponding literature. This contradiction can be explained by the special situation for non European refugees in Turkey which is labelled as transit country. In the literature it mostly has been assumed that there are more opportunities for women after their migration; and as Pessar (1999) also discusses there is an assumption that normally there are less opportunities for women in their countries of origin.

However, according to what Afghan women say, there are more opportunities of work in Afghanistan for them. For instance Mojde and Sanaz explained me, as it was mentioned in the previous chapter, nowadays there are job opportunities for

women in Kabul and some other big cities where international organizations prefer to employ women rather than men. I was told by women that they did not want to work and they wanted their husband to do the duty of breadwinner. In summary currently there are more job opportunities for women than for men in Afghanistan at least in the cities where my respondents come from. It, however, did not encourage them to work or to try gaining economic power.

Mojde, after explaining situation of Kabul and jobs for women, replied on my question 'didn't you like to work?': "*As far as I have my man, there is no *hajat* (wish/need) of me to work*". (Interview with Mojde 17.05.2011)

Such their approach to working is different from those mentioned in the literature on women and migration. For instance Al-Ali (2002), Franz (2003) and Meertens (2004) argued that in the new conditions of exile migrant women often become the main providers for the family; they adjust better to the structure of a labour market (both formal and informal) in the receiving country and they are usually more willing to accept any kind of job offered in order to meet their family's need (Szczepanikova 2005) & e.g. Buijs, 1993).

Here again we can interpret the situation of Afghan forced migrants women based on their life in a limbo, and the impact of the monthly financial help from organizations. Mohamad has shared with me that their neighbour told them that if they needed money his wife could work in the hotels in the city centre. He explained me that in the hotels Turkish women are working in kitchens and they do not allow a man enter the kitchens therefore only his wife may have chance to work there. Then he told me "*we don't need money that much, now our children are small and it is better if my wife stays at home*" (Informal talk with Mohamad). It does not mean their economic condition was very good, however they were not in extreme poverty and hunger thanks to Turkish government and

other organizations. In other words, in Ceza city, families do not feel the need to adjust themselves to the labour market. This fact made men and women more isolated in the society since they do not work, it is not very possible to meet Turkish families or to enlarge their social network. This condition put them again in the vicious circle of liminality. Life of Afghan women in transit country is very different from the one that scholars described in Iran. As it is mentioned chapter five forced migrants in Iran, first of all, are not in a waiting situation, as in Turkey which is a transit country for them. In addition, as scholars (Arpita Basu Roy 2000; Hoodfar 2004; Pazira 2003; Strand et al. 2004) showed in Iran, the state has introduced new family model implying a number of children; emphasizing on small and healthy family (Hoodfar 2004). Also “Iranian landlords are extremely reluctant to rent to large extended families or families with many children” (Hoodfar 2004, p.152). These circumstances adding with Iranian state who could not support two million Afghan refugees anymore, made women to “develop their abilities to manoeuvre in the public arena and perform tasks traditionally considered exclusive to men” (Hoodfar 2004, p.163).

Similarly Pazira (Pazira 2003) and Arpita Basu Roy (Arpita Basu Roy 2000) argued that refugee women in Iran and Pakistan do work at people’s house as domestic workers or do some work at home if they can combine it with their household duties, such as making carpet or working as tailor, or making some hand craft. However, women in my field did not do any economic work at home, which can as well be referred to the “refugee cultural background” (Arpita Basu Roy 2000). Later in other part Pazira discusses how Afghan women in Iran are changing about number of children or at least delaying with giving a birth, she relates this change with the fact that women are entering Iranian houses and families, they have contact with Iranians at work and in other aspects of their life.

However, the communication between Afghan and Turkish women was very little, if not absent at all. This can refer to the problem of language as well, though we should not forget the economic conditions of Afghan refugees in Iran which has been described in the previous chapter. Referring to ethnographic works on Afghan refugees in Iran it used to be not enough for Afghan families if only man was working, thus, in most of cases women had to work along with their husbands because there was no financial help for refugees.

In addition, another reason for women in the Ceza city not to work outside refers to their various responsibilities at home, at the one hand it is taking care of their children, at the other hand house holding which has become more difficult here than it used to be in Iran at least as they expressed it; almost all of the families which I visited during my field-work had young children, among nine families that I visited, five of them had new-born babies since they came to Turkey. This condition is similar to 80s when the first Afghan selected refugees came to Turkey. Wheeler (Wheeler, A.C.R 1983) while explaining the working or training situation of Afghan women who came to Turkey during 80s; mentioned that mostly women were not attending training course, with the excuse of child caring.

Once while women were speaking about contraception and having children, Zohre said she and her husband use coitus interruptus, then Sanaz said:

But coitus interruptus make men to get older. When I was in Iran I used to use IUD but I am so thin and it was not good for me, then one day I felt very bad I went to doctor and the doctor was a very kind lady she told me you are so thin and you shouldn't use IUD. In fact you should ask your husband to use condom. When I told to my husband he didn't accept (here she laughed) then I told him there is

no way, first he was not using and he also applied coitus interruptus but now he is using condom (Informal talk with Zohre, Mojde and Sanaz)

The example above shows the power relations in terms of birth control, which were more or less women who should take care of this issue.

To prevent the assumption that might be assumed, for Afghan women and work, from my field experience I would like to add that before going to Ceza city, in Turkey I had a chance of speaking with some Afghan women who were working in informal economy, though as it was mentioned before in Ceza city there were no women working out. But, it has to be noted that the reversal of economic roles between spouses does not necessarily lead to a reversal in power relations or a change in the division of household labour in their gender relations (e.g. Erel 2002; Al-Ali 2002; Matsuoka and Sorenson 1999).

As a matter of fact, the gender relations in the families were very much with patriarchal rules. During my field work I experienced the same situations several times when I was speaking with a woman, during our informal talk, their husbands asked them to come out to another room, and when the woman was back to the room, she kept being silent. Or, even more often, when I asked a woman some questions in the presence of husbands, men would say " *I will tell you instead of her*" or "*let me explain you what she is trying to say*" or "*women are not aware because this is men who deal with everything*" or "*I will tell you instead of all women*".

As we can see from the explanation, life in a limbo make a direct impacted on the decision of work for women as well as for men. The fact that families were not in extreme economic needs, kept women out of a labour market, though there were opportunities for them to work. This is in contrary to literature on women

and work in exile. As mentioned before, the difference which was explained in this part can be understood in the context of life in liminality; which brings a different framework than life in the resettlement country. Their liminal lives in Ceza city keep families away from any effort on integration to the culture. Learning language, making friends and social relation with the host society and finding a job assumed to be meaningless, “*because we are here for temporary time*” (informal talk with Ahmad).

To sum up in this chapter different patterns of changes in families of Afghan forced migrants have been demonstrated. The changes were explained in the light of liminality and how men and women react to their stage of being in transit. Eventually there were some different patterns which were not very separate from each other and sometimes intersect. Accordingly one pattern was when men do not want to do anything else than waiting and staying in the liminal phase. The sources of stress and the reaction of family to this scenario sometimes brought operation for women. However, the contradict situation shows here when same condition in the other families encourage women to rise for her right.

The other patterns was in line with the dreaming of going back home and how it encouraged the migrants for staying more isolate prolonging their liminal phase. The last pattern referred to forced migrants who are trying to get out of the circle of language and job problems and its consequences of isolations and sources of stress. Those male forced migrants who learnt the language and could find job, had the chance of enlarging their social network as well. The other side of this story was their wives who talked about their gain of emancipation. In the other part of this chapter I explained life of women in liminality. I tried to compare Afghan forced migrants’ life in Iran and Turkey to show the importance of state of being in the ‘transit county’ on their decision of working and households duties.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

“I would like the people who read your work not to think of Afghan people as having low culture and I would like to tell them that if Afghan women were in a good situation they could become very successful.”²⁵

The focus of this fieldwork was on gender relations in the families of forced migrants from Afghanistan in their transit life. In this respect I tried to discover the impact of forced migration on gender relations and to understand how gender relations are constructed during the process of resettlement. The important finding of this research was the similarity between all the Afghan forced migrants of this research in Turkey in terms of the stage of liminality, betwixt and between two places. They had been separated from their homes and were waiting in Turkey for resettlement. Thus another factor that intersects on gender relations and forced migrants' life is state of being in transit and liminal life.

Accordingly, I conducted my field work in a satellite city in one of the Eastern provinces of Turkey and my research basically focused on four families. In addition to those four families I conducted in-depth interviews with individuals

²⁵ (Interview with Shohre 18.05.2011)

of other households, families and experts and I also used grounded theory as my methodology. My respondents were all forced migrants however, not all were recognized by UNHCR as refugees, not only did they have different official status they had different stories and different lives. Thus, I tried to see the differences and avoid generalizations about their stories because though all of them were living in the same society for now, they had travelled different roads and their experiences were different.

However, one important context that all families shared was the fact that they were all waiting and hoping for resettlement. It is a critical aspect in their everyday-life which can be seen as affecting everything in their life including gender relations. There were also various impacts of ‘place of departures’, ‘transit time and space’, and the settlement or the ‘fantasy of settlement’ on gender relations. Therefore, as argued by Sarah Mahler and Patricia Pessar gender relations “cannot be considered in isolation from other key social identities and constructs, intersecting closely with class ethnicity/ nationality and age” (Pessar & Mahler 2003, p.23). Accordingly in this research, I tried firstly to describe and explore the context in which forced and undocumented migrants live. As mentioned above, it is not possible to understand gender relations separately from other social context. Thus the path that those families had travelled was described in detail with the context of their liminal life in a transit.

It was also important to understand the current situation in Afghanistan which was closely related to my research questions on gender relations. As I explained, some women told me about the work opportunities for women in Kabul, nonetheless the family did migrate from there because there was no job for their men. In addition, the fact that all the families, with the exception of one couple, had been living in Iran before coming to Turkey, encouraged me to find out more about Iran’s policy towards Afghan refugees. It is important to know why they

left Iran and why they made this decision for leaving Iran. I discovered that one of the important reasons was the feeling of being marginalized and the racism of the host society against them.

For the Afghan migrants living in Iran for years, was also an important factor to explore the context of gender relations. Some respondents explained the changes of gender relations which started from their arrival in Iran. The social and political situation in Iran was explained in different ways by Afghan women and men. Some of the forced migrant women considered that the patriarchal society of Iran and the lack of social security explained their husband's behaviour and why their husbands had been stricter in Iran than in Turkey. Those women who gradually found more freedom in Turkey related their situation to Turkish society, where there is no or minimal street harassment and there is a more trustable situation so their husbands let them go out alone.

However, other women complained about the difficulties in Turkey. They complained about the frustrating situation in which their men cannot find job and/or do not want to find work because they think they are here for a temporary time. These women connect their gender relations very much to the environment and the social and political situations in which they live.

From my point of view, the gender relations were more complicated and contradictory. There were lots of other factors which were interacted, intersected and impacted on gender relations. First of all, as mentioned above, the families were in a waiting condition and liminal life, the difference was that not all of them were waiting for the same 'event'; because they had different official status in Turkey. Some were conventional refugees; this group was waiting for resettlement. The other group who were recognized as extended mandate refugees were also waiting, because they would live in Turkey temporarily and

they would be expected to return to Afghanistan when the situation improves. Besides those two groups, the families whose cases were rejected by UNHCR were also waiting and saw themselves in the temporary condition. Some of them were thinking of going to a neighbouring country to try again to obtain refugee status and others appealed against the decision of UNHCR and were waiting for the result of the appeal. To summarize, from this perspective all families were waiting, though for different things and all considered Turkey as a place of temporary residence. Therefore, the definition of liminal persona is an important concept to analyze gender relations in Afghan forced migrants' families.

Accordingly, in this research I have introduced different patterns of changes in gender relations, which are based on liminality and staying or trying to come out from a limbo condition. The other important point playing role in gender relations are sources of stress which are closely related to being in liminality.

Furthermore, I found the role of international organizations, including UNHCR, not only to be very critical on post-migration gender relations and the patterns of changes but also sometimes contradicting. As Geraldine Pratt and Brenda Yeoh comment "the effects of transnationalism on gender relations are contradictory and complex" (Pratt & Yeoh 2003, p.14). Even though I did not find any particular plan from international organization to support Afghan women but the financial support to the family was imperative. Conventional refugees receive a monthly allowance from the UNHCR and other forced migrants also get some financial help from other organizations including the Turkish government. Therefore, this financial support causes some changes in regard to duties with the family. Thus the women complained that housework was more difficult in Turkey and some of the men did nothing and spent the whole day at home. The men had not adjusted to the new situation and were not sharing household tasks. Some of the women complained about violence at home.

The other pattern that I introduced in this research refers to the men who are trying to come out of the liminal circle. Though all the families are waiting and were in the temporary situations; some were trying to learn Turkish and find a job. Although the men who had a job did not receive financial help from organizations however, they had enlarged their social network and they had a better understanding of the society in which they lived, therefore there was more trust between the couples and the wives of working men spoke about emancipation which they could gain in Turkey.

In this respect we can see that issues about women and gender relations in exile especially, when it comes to forced migrants are very complex and contradictory (see also Schrover, Marlou; Yeo, Eileen:2010 and Mahler). In this context, this research shows the many different social and political factors that are shaping and re-shaping the issue of gender relations. Also, in this research we can see that it is not only forced migration which impacts on gender relations but rather the intersection of the social and political consequences of forced migration. In addition, the time and space in which forced migrants live and the context of their liminal life are also important aspects affecting gender relations.

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APPENDIX - TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

- Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü
- Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü
- Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü
- Enformatik Enstitüsü
- Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

YAZARIN

Soyadı : OZLATİMOGHADDAM
Adı : MARYAM
Bölümü : SOSYOLOJİ

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) :

“WE LIVE LIKE SEA FOAM”: EXPERIENCES OF LIMINALITY AMONG
AFGAN MIGRANTS IN CEZA CITY-TURKEY

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: