The Resigned, The Restless and the Resilient

Risk Perceptions among Afghan Migrants in Turkey

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to account for diversity in the migratory decisions of Afghan migrants who have recently arrived in Turkey. It proposes that social theories on risk provide a framework that rectifies a theoretical gap in the migration literature with respect to intra-group heterogeneity in the decision-making processes of migrants.

The thesis adopts Rosa's (1998: 28) definition of risk as: 'a situation or event where something of human value (including humans themselves) has been put at stake and where the outcome is uncertain.' I argue that variation in what migrants view as being 'at stake' and in how they evaluate the associated uncertainties— in other words, how migrants perceive risk— accounts for the diversity in the migration decisions of similarly situated migrants. Risk is therefore an analytical tool for understanding decision-making in its subjective and socio-cultural context. The thesis offers a typology as an analytical device for categorising the ways in which informants managed the risks associated with migration decisions. I identify three modes of managing risk, defined as *resigned*, *restless* and *resilient*, on the basis of migrants' engagements with their social environment, their efforts at advocating for themselves and others, and their ability to gather and disseminate information.

The thesis also explores subsidiary themes concerning migrants' legal consciousness with regard to irregular immigration status, and the process of embodying the physical and emotional consequences of migration. Most of the ethnographic fieldwork for this project was conducted in the cities of Istanbul, Van, Kayseri and Sivas from February 2011 until December 2012.

For my parents Mehmet and Alison Kaytaz

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Map of the Field Sites

List of Abbreviations

ASAM Association for Solidarity with Migrants and Refugees

HCA Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Refugee Advocacy and Support Program

IKGV Human Resources Development Foundation

IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation

IIMP Istanbul Inter-Parish Migrants' Program

IO International Organisation

IOM International Organisation for Migration

MOI Ministry of Interior

Mazlumder Organisation for Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People

NGO Non-governmental organisation

RSD Refugee status determination

TIHV Turkish Human Rights Foundation

SYDV Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation

UAM Unaccompanied minor

UNHCR United Nations High Commission for Refugees

VAKAD Van Women's Association

Note on Exchange Rates

The exchange rate between the British Pound (GBP) and the Turkish Lira (TL) in August 2011 was 1 GBP = 2.78 TL.

Glossary

cevapsızlık (‘the state of the absence of an answer’ in Turkish) the predicament of waiting for a decision from UNHCR regarding refugee status or resettlement

dernek (‘association’ in Turkish) ethnic associations in Istanbul that support Afghans

dushman (‘enemy’ in Farsi and Dari, *düşman* in Turkish) Afghan asylum seekers referred to anyone they were feuding with or being threatened by, including family members or armed elements, as *dushman*

estinaf (‘appeal’ in Farsi, *istinaf* in Turkish) rejection of the asylum application by UNCHR

hırsız (‘thief’ in Turkish) bandits on the Turkish Iranian border

ikamet (‘residence’ in Turkish) residence permit

insan hakları (‘human rights’ in Turkish) the name asylum-seekers gave to NGOs in Van

kaboul (‘acceptance’ in Farsi, *kabul* in Turkish) recognition of refugee status by UNHCR

kaçak (‘illegal’ or ‘smuggled’ in Turkish) used to refer to irregular immigration status and clandestine travel

kargah (‘workshop’ in Dari) small textile or leather workshops in the basements of apartment blocks where Afghans work in Istanbul

mujahideen Muslim Afghan fighters who fought against the pro-Soviet regime in Afghanistan in the late 1970s and 1980s

namous (honour in Farsi and Dari, *namus* in Turkish) women's honour

özel kabul ('special recognition' in Turkish) refugee status UNHCR granted to Afghans who could not be returned to Afghanistan owing to generalised insecurity under its extended mandate

satellite cities cities the Turkish state orders asylum-seekers and refugees to reside in

sigorta ('insurance' in Turkish) Often used in reference to work permit

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research Question

The question this thesis seeks to answer is how to account for diversity in migratory decisions among Afghan migrants who have recently arrived in Turkey. The theoretical gap this thesis addresses pertains to intra-group heterogeneity in the decision-making processes of migrants. The majority of existing research on this topic focuses on understanding broad migration trends within a single group of migrants and examines factors such as networks and wealth as determinants of migration decisions. It does not address how migrants with similar opportunities and facing similar constraints make different decisions.

This thesis proposes that social theories on risk provide a framework that rectifies this bias. Risk is used as a conceptual tool in medical anthropology to account for heterogeneity of within-group decisions. The literature on risk has demonstrated that decisions can best be explained in their social and subjective contexts. It has also served to explain the divergence between 'expert opinion' and 'lay person's' behaviour in the context of public health and environmental policies. This thesis will demonstrate that a similar approach is beneficial for understanding how migrants' behaviours contradict expectations of policymakers. A further advantage is that this framework shifts the focus from specific decisions such as leaving or country of destination—on which research has hitherto focused—to the decision-making process: to what migrants perceive to be their migratory options, how they create or constrain these options and how they manage the uncertainty and risks that these options are perceived to carry.

In this thesis, the term *migrant* is used to refer to Afghans of all legal statuses. Where necessary, distinction is made according to the legal status as irregular migrant, asylum-seeker and student. Afghan migrants may not all be born in Afghanistan but identify themselves as being Afghans. *Migratory decisions* cover a broad array of decisions relating to the migration system. At one level it refers to the choice of legal

status as asylum-seekers, irregular migrants, students and residence through Turkic ancestry. Most informants fell into the first two categories and some went through different statuses. On another level, *migratory decisions* refer to actions and inaction within each of these legal statuses: these are the subject of the thesis. In the case of asylum-seekers, these may concern strategies to get a different outcome in the asylum process or get financial aid. Students, for instance, can extend their status by delaying classes. Negotiations for accessing healthcare were significant The term *decision* denotes an choices made within the migration system and *decision-making process* refers to the evaluative process leading to decisions.

I refer to *bureaucratic paths* when discussing decisions or decision-making processes in relation to legal status for two reasons. Firstly, the term *bureaucratic paths* emphasises continuing negotiations within each legal status. As stated above these negotiations are central to the thesis. Secondly, my informants differed in their awareness of their legal position in Turkey and the significance they attributed to their legal status. Referring to bureaucratic paths instead of legal status avoids attributing false legal consciousness to my informants.

Risk has been defined differently in socio-cultural theories of risk. I discuss the merits and weaknesses of these definitions discuss below in section 1.2.1 and then in Chapter 3 in greater detail. For the purpose of this thesis, I adopt Rosa's (1998: 28) definition of risk: 'a situation or event where something of human value (including humans themselves) has been put at stake and where the outcome is uncertain.'

1.1.1 Background

This research question builds on research carried out for my MPhil thesis in Development Studies (2006) and my professional experience as legal advisor and project coordinator on detention for the Helsinki Citizens Assembly Refugee Advocacy and Support Program (HCA) in Istanbul from 2006 until 2008. For my MPhil thesis I interviewed Iranian asylum-seekers who had converted to Christianity in Iran or upon arrival, with a particular interest in understanding how their conversion to Christianity impacted their experience in Turkey and migratory decision. When I returned to Turkey in 2006, I found that many of the asylum-seekers

I had met had not left Turkey unless they had been re-settled to another country by UNHCR following their recognition as asylum-seekers. Instead of seeking other means to regularise their status or to leave Turkey irregularly, they continued re-applying for status to UNHCR. In the meantime, as I was conducting research for a report on detention conditions in Turkey, I met asylum-seekers who had been caught trying to flee Turkey.

I started thinking about the distinction of 'who stays and who goes'. I hypothesised that Iranian asylum-seekers who have little distance to travel and are used to a certain standard of living were reluctant to take on the challenges of onward irregular travel unless they had the financial support. The ease of learning Turkish and ethnic invisibility in Turkey meant that they were able to survive. In contrast, African migrants were ready to take on further irregular travel if the asylum system was not yielding the outcomes they wanted and because they faced greater discrimination in Turkey. Unlike the journey from Iran to Turkey, which was swift, easy and relatively cheap, the journey that many Africans undertook to come to Turkey had been long, expensive and dangerous. I was not able to arrive at similar generalisations regarding the decisions of Afghans.

The humanitarian space for Afghans in Iran and Pakistan was constricting for Afghans after the institution of the Karzai government. The revocation of refugee status and deportations—threatened and actual—in these two countries accelerated the displacement of Afghans to Turkey from 2007 onwards. During this period I met several Afghans—often young, single men with limited educational and financial resources—who were in a similar situation in Turkey but took different migratory decisions. One man whose case I worked on over several months particularly intrigued me. Born in Afghanistan in 1980, he moved to Pakistan with his family shortly after. He lived in a refugee camp. He lost his parents to illness and eventually became separated from his siblings. Unable to obtain an education, he survived on working in the leather industry in Quetta. He boarded a ship from Karachi headed to Greece. After a horrific journey he reached Turkey and was detained shortly after. I first spoke to him when he had been held in arbitrary detention in Edirne for 11 months. He was released two months later. The detention conditions were so bad as to

be deemed to constitute inhuman and degrading treatment under the European Convention of Human Rights in later court ruling.[1]

Working on his case made me aware of several characteristics of Afghan displacement that I later encountered and informed my doctoral project from an early stage. Firstly, this man was undocumented. He had never had any proof of having been born in Afghanistan or of having lived as a refugee in Pakistan. Secondly, he had been displaced for most of his life, and had very little recollection or knowledge of life in Afghanistan. Finally, his subsequent migratory decisions seemed irrational because of the level of danger to which he exposed himself. Soon after his release, he tried to return to Greece, knowing well the conditions that he could have to endure in detention and the risk of deportation. He was caught and detained in Istanbul. The police were alerted to the fact that he had put in an asylum application, so his deportation was stopped. When he was released a couple of months later, he attempted the journey to Greece yet again and succeeded this time. His decision to leave Turkey while taking so many risks made more sense when considered in its broader context. He had lost his parents and had no idea where any of his siblings or family members were. Without social connections, he felt that it was too dangerous to go to Afghanistan. His only social connections were two Pakistani men he had presumably met on the journey to Turkey and had been detained with. As they were travelling to Greece and seem to be better connected with smugglers, it made sense for him to stay with them.

In the meantime I spoke with other young Afghan men who had similarly been refugees in Iran or Pakistan or who had left Afghanistan because of the insecurity, but, in contrast, were in Turkey and pursuing their asylum applications. This also seemed a very costly strategy given all the challenges of the asylum system. The decision-making process was very slow and asylum applications for Afghans were frozen briefly. Asylum applications were commonly not heard for a couple of years. In the meantime, remaining in the asylum system required a very high residence permit fee, although there was no right of employment and very limited welfare and healthcare provisions.

[1] *Tehrani and Others v. Turkey*, Appl. Nos. 32940/08, 41626/08, 43616/08, European Court of Human Rights, 13 April 2010.

These contrasting attitudes towards the migration system seemed to suggest a different evaluation of the pros and cons of irregularity with onward movement versus staying in Turkey and applying for asylum. Therefore I decided to undertake research to better understand the diversity of decisions regarding migration within a group of migrants who are in a similar position within the same country, and to focus on Afghans who had recently arrived in Turkey.

1.2 Summary of the Argument

1.2.1 Using Risk as an Analytical Tool

As stated above, I use the following definition of risk for my thesis: 'A situation or event where something of human value (including humans themselves) has been put at stake and where the outcome is uncertain' (Rosa 1998: 28). Risk, however is defined differently in the social sciences than in scientific literature.

In the scientific literature risk is defined in reference to situations where the uncertainty is quantifiable as probabilities. The problems that social sciences seek to understand mostly do not entail a quantifiable uncertainty. Where the likelihood is quantified the focus of the research is on how probabilities are interpreted and acted upon. Therefore most definitions or risk for social sciences are different from those used in quantitative analyses of risk.

This then begs the question of why use the term risk, and not uncertainty, which is unquantifiable by definition. I have three answers to this question. Firstly, since the debates that inform this thesis have usually taken place with the use of the term 'risk', I have decided to build on this discussion by using the same term but with a specific definition. Secondly, research in the social sciences shows how probabilities are interpreted subjectively and within a broader social and cultural context. Provided that the causality that brings about a particular outcome and the likelihood of its occurrence is interpreted differently, risk is no different from uncertainty. The differentiation between risk and uncertainty is the product of a particular scientific discourse that functions within what Gigerenzer (2008) terms 'the illusion of certainty'. Finally, (as Boholm (2003) who uses the definition above also argues) this

definition emphasizes that something of human value is at stake. Uncertainty can refer to anything to do with the migration process, but this thesis is interested in *what is at stake* in the decision to migrate.

Uncertainty, however, is constituent element of risk. If there is no uncertainty about the outcome of *what is at stake*, that is if the outcome is known, this would not be *risk* but *fate* (Rosa 1998: 29). Therefore, I will refer to uncertainty throughout the thesis. I will demonstrate that how informants view *what is at stake* and their evaluation of uncertainty related to what they view as being at stake accounts for heterogeneity in decision-making processes.

There are two potential shortcomings to the use of the term 'risk' which I have tried to address in the primary research and writing of this thesis. Firstly, risk most commonly connotes danger. The specialist literature on risk is also prone to confounding the everyday use of the term with its more technical definitions. I therefore avoid using the word 'risk' in this thesis unless it specifically refers to the definition above. In addition, I do not use words such as 'risky' or idioms such as 'risk their lives'. Secondly, because of this conceptual confusion I did not, for instance, ask my informants what they viewed the risks to be in their decision-making processes. And none of my informants talked to me about 'risks'. I tried to understand what they thought was at stake in their decisions about migration, and what they were afraid of losing. Therefore interviews focused on the meaning of migration and the trade-off between costs and benefits of the different decisions. My usage of 'risk' could be challenged on the grounds that it is a superimposition of a concept absent from native discourse, and therefore is a potential misrepresentation of my informants' views. I maintain that the questions I asked my informants and the discussions that ensued lend themselves well to the terminology used in this thesis. My use of the term 'risk' is *etic,* therefore no different from the use of academic terminology such as such as religion, ritual or art. Applying a clear definition of risk to ethnographic material is one way in which this thesis seeks to be innovative. Risk is scarcely defined in the constructivist paradigm for the sake of avoiding a positivist stance on risk by defining what constitutes risk for the population (Rosa 1998). Defining risk as an analytical

concept however is not a positivist endeavour because it does not define what constitutes risk, but rather offers a framework for understanding how risk is perceived.

Since risk by definition refers to a situation that is of subjective value, it is important to understand what individuals think to be a risk. In the literature the subjective definition and evaluation of risk is referred to as risk perception. This thesis supports some of the central findings of academic research on risk. Firstly, risk perception is best understood in its broader socio-cultural context because individual risk perception is also shaped by cultural ideas and social conventions. Secondly, risk perception is subject to change over time by virtue of change in individual circumstances, shifts in society or through normal thought processes. Finally, what 'experts' on a particular issue, such as public health professionals or public safety experts, perceive as a risk may not correspond with what the 'lay person' sees to be a risk. This is due to the subjective and socio-culturally conditioned perception of risk by both the expert and the lay person.

This thesis is not only interested in what informants perceive as risks, but also in how they responded to these risks. The most common understanding of a response to risk is to be a 'risk-taker' or to be 'risk-averse'. The proclivity towards or avoidance of risk is termed risk acceptability. This thesis does not lend itself to the analysis of risk acceptability, because the definition of risk that this thesis adopts is based on non-quantifiable uncertainty. In cognitive sciences, risk acceptability may be measured by individuals' responses to hypothetical scenarios where risks are quantifiable. In social sciences, risk acceptability is usually studied in relation to issue areas where there are strong presumptive norms about safety and danger, such as public health (e.g. HIV AIDS) or environmental safety (e.g. nuclear energy). For the purpose of this thesis, and migration studies more broadly, attitudes towards irregularity in legal status and travel are arguably issue areas where the concept of risk acceptability may be applicable because of the public perceptions of the danger inherent in irregularity. The underlying assumption in migration border policy, for instance, is that increasing dangers of detention or physical harm *en route* deter migrants from irregular travel and entry. Similarly, it is assumed that limiting opportunities for legal migration will reduce irregular migration because irregularity is undesirable as it is 'risky'. In the

context of this thesis, however, I cannot establish as strong a presumptive norm that defines what constitutes 'risk' in the context of migration. The only point in this thesis where I consider risk acceptability is in relation to my informants' attitudes towards irregular legal status. I argue that irregularity is not in and of itself a risk for my informants because they do not consider not complying with immigration rules as a moral transgression, due to their previous experience of lack of state protection and their immigration histories.

Instead, the analytical focus of the thesis is on how informants manage risks they perceive in relation to their migration decisions. I will argue in the thesis that what informants perceive as risks in relation to migration process, depends on what informants want from the migration process. For some informants this principally concerned the care of family members, for others it represented an opportunity for betterment while for others still it was a means of attaining safety. In the analysis of the material I collected from my fieldwork I found that my informants fell into three different groups in the ways in which they managed these risks even though informants perceived risks differently. The typology I developed as a way of capturing and analysing these differences is the answer to my research question.

1.2.2 The Resigned, the Restless and the Resilient

The typology described in this section is an analytical device for categorising the ways in which informants managed the risks associated with their migration decisions. The typology is based on an initial grouping of informants into three categories, which I later termed: the resigned, the restless and the resilient. I also observed that there are three ways in which informants engaged with the migration process: by gathering information, through their social networks and by advocating for themselves or others important to them. I assigned the numbers "1", "2" and "3" to different types of responses within each of these modes of engagement to delineate differences within each mode. I then assigned a number or two numbers to each of the categories.

	Information -gathering	Sociality	Advocacy
Resigned	1	1-2	1
Restless	2	1-2	2-3
Resilient	2-3	3	3

Table 1: The typology for managing risk

Where,

Information-gathering:

1: No active information gathering

2: Gathering information

3: Generating and disseminating information

Sociality:

1: Isolation

2: Social engagement

3: Leader-like positioning

Advocacy:

1: Passive

2: Some action

3: Persistence and creativity

As can be seen from the table above, some informants who fell into the category of *restless*, for instance, could be socially isolated or more engaged, as were informants in the category of *resigned*. Their risk management behaviour is distinguished from the *resigned* in that they were more informed about the different aspects of their lives in Turkey and their future plans, and they were more proactive in pursuing these avenues or advocating for themselves. The outcome of the behaviour is not included in this typology. Therefore, informants who were, for instance, persistent in advocating but did not achieve the result they demanded, are therefore, not categorised differently from those who were successful. This is because this thesis is concerned with ways of managing risk.

The variation between the different modes of managing risk is accounted for not only by the degree of agency or initiative that informants demonstrated but the nature of the behaviour. Those whose behaviour is under category '3' for 'information gathering', for instance, are also those who seek out new information and disseminate it, or are regarded as an important source of information. Category '3' for 'sociality' refers to those informants who formed focal points in their communities, sometimes beyond a position that would be ascribed to them socially. Finally, category '3' 'advocacy' refers to informants who were not only persistent in their demands from authorities or others in positions of power such as employers or landlords, but also, at times, went about their efforts in an unusual way.

At the end of each of the ethnographic chapters I will illustrate my typology using three informant case studies, one for each type —resigned, restless and resilient — with reference to the material I discuss in the chapter. I will return to the discussion of the typology in the final chapter of the thesis.

1.3 Organisation of Chapters

In the remainder of *Chapter 1: Introduction*, I describe the ethnographic and policy context to the thesis. I first provide a background to migration context in Turkey by discussing some broader migration trends and the asylum and migration policy. I then situate Afghans in this context. Given the dearth of literature on Afghan migrants in Turkey, I conclude the chapter by focusing on some of the key findings in the literature on Afghan migration and diasporas more broadly.

I focus on ethical considerations throughout *Chapter 2: Methodology* as it applies to all stages of the research beginning with fieldwork and ending with the crafting of the text. The chapter describes in detail the methods I used, the reasons I used them and the challenges and advantages of these methods. I describe the four field sites. I provide a reflexive critique of the fieldwork, focusing on my involvement in the field as an activist, gender relations and conducting fieldwork at 'home'. The chapter ends with an overview of informants.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework: Migrant Decision-Making and Risk sets out the conceptual framework for this thesis. I elaborate on the arguments described briefly in the previous section. The chapter begins with a discussion of the literature on migrant decision-making in the migration literature. I argue here that so far the literature has several shortcomings for understanding within-group variation. Similarly, I argue that decision-making as conceptualised in anthropology and social theory, mainly in the structure/agency debate or the dichotomies such as emotion/reason, also neglect explaining intra-group variation. After discussing the main approaches to risk, I demonstrate that socio-cultural approaches to risk can be used to understand within-group diversity in decision-making. I discuss briefly some literature that focuses on within-group variation in migrant decision-making that has some parallels to my approach as a means of illustrating alternative ways of conceptualising diversity in decision-making. In the concluding discussion of references to risk in the migration literature, I demonstrate that risk has been under-researched and under-theorised in migration and provides an effective tool for understanding migrant-decision making.

In *Chapter 4: Afghan Journeys to Turkey: Narratives of Immobility, Travel and Transformation* I describe the conditions and nature of the journeys my informants undertook before coming to Turkey. I conceptualise the journey as narratives of long periods of immobility that are punctuated with shorter instances of travel. In this chapter, I begin to demonstrate the diversity of informants' attitudes to managing risks associated with migration through their constructions of narratives of the journey and the diversity of the ways in which they negotiate the challenges of irregular travel, which I argue have some transformative potential for their migration decisions when in Turkey. This chapter introduces some of the informants whose stories I return to throughout the thesis.

Chapter 5: Permits, Petitions and Pleas: Daily Negotiations with Gatekeepers forms the backbone of the thesis. Through their interactions with gatekeepers, such as the police, NGO and UNHCR staff, I demonstrate the diversity of the ways in which informants manage risks of migration — that is, what is at stake for them in the migration process. I illustrate the variation between the three different aspects of managing risk — advocacy, social relations and positioning and gathering and

generating information — with reference to my informants' daily negotiations with gatekeepers. I demonstrate that not only do informants make migration decisions, such choosing a legal status, based on different perceptions of risk, but that informants perceive risks similarly make different migration decisions because they evaluate the uncertainty associated with their goals differently. Informants who prioritise access to healthcare, for instance, may choose to live irregularly in Istanbul or apply for asylum, because they think that this is the best way of achieving their desired goal.

Chapter 6: Daily Life in Turkey: Social Life, Employment, Housing and Education illustrates how informants perceived and negotiated risk through the different aspects of their daily lives in Turkey. In their discussions of their lives in Turkey, informants made frequent comparisons with their lives as migrants in Iran or Pakistan. Thus, I demonstrate how past experience frames risk perception and informs present decisions.

Chapter 7: Migration Embodied: Health and Wellbeing in Decision connects decision-making to 'the body'. I illustrate the different levels through which migration is embodied: through accidents on journeys, through the difficulties of accessing healthcare as a result of not having legal status, and through the anxiety and uncertainty in awaiting legal status. This chapter is also about the embodiment of everyday violence suffered by migrants living lives without access to necessary basic rights. I demonstrate the different ways in which informants negotiated this embodiment in their migratory decisions.

In *Chapter 8: Conclusion* I summarise the main arguments and subsidiary themes of the thesis. I then reflect on the shortcomings and challenges of using risk as a theoretical model. Finally I discuss directions that this research can take in the future.

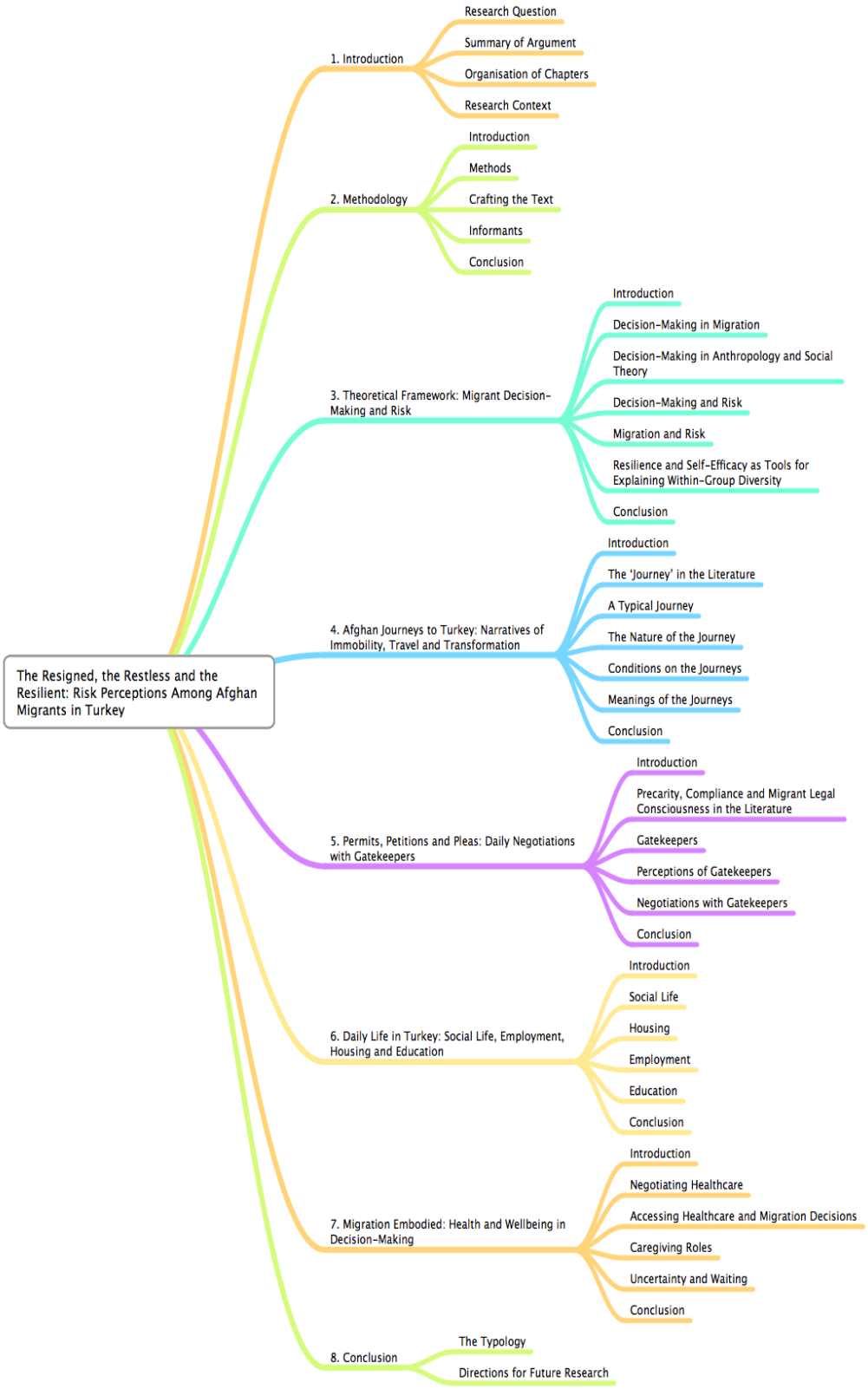

Figure 1: Chapter Outline

1.4 Research Context

This section of the introduction provides a background to the history of migration in Turkey, the policy environment and the literature on Afghan migration. There have been very few publications on Afghans in Turkey, almost none of them academic. In the following section I will situate Afghans in Turkey within the context of other migration trends in Turkey as well as the migration trends of Afghans globally. While the literature on Afghan migrants does shed light on the experience of Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan, where most of my informants lived, and in diasporic communities in the West, research on migrants sharing the profile of my informants is scarce. Their invisibility in the literature could be for the following reasons. Firstly, most of my informants do not have family connections abroad or do not have families who can support them, and so do not feature in the diaspora literature. The majority of my informants spent most of their lives or considerable amounts of time in Iran, but they were also very mobile, moving within Iran and between Afghanistan and Iran. The majority were not a part of the settled communities in cities like Mashad or Tehran in Iran, which are centres where Afghans are studied. Most of my informants were also unable to obtain education beyond basic primary school education. They therefore do not produce prose, poetry or online blogs.



Map 1: Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan

1.4.1 An Overview of Migration to Turkey

Turkey is a migrant-sending a country, a host country and is often referred to as a country of transit migration. I will first reflect on the migration trends to Turkey and then on Turkey's role as a country of transit migration.

In the 1980s, Turkey began receiving a steady influx of migrants from the Middle East, Europe and parts of Africa. The number of these migrants has been rising steadily since the 1990s (e.g. İçduygu 2000; 2003). İçduygu (2000) identifies seven main strands of migration into Turkey during these recent decades. The first category of mass arrivals was constituted of Iranians fleeing the Khomeini regime in the 1980s. The second group of arrivals came from Iraq between 1988 and 1991. Third, in 1989, Bulgarian Turkish asylum-seekers entered Turkey fleeing from the repressive regime in Bulgaria. Fourth, from the early 1980s, a steady but lesser flow of migrants from Asia and parts of Africa was documented. Fifth, Bosnian refugees, most of whom had family ties in Turkey arrived, in 1992. Sixth, Albanian refugees from Kosovo came in 1999. Most of migrants in the last two categories were either resettled or returned home with a very small proportion of them remaining in Turkey. Finally, with the breakdown of the Soviet Union, trader-tourists have been coming from former Soviet bloc countries.

In addition to these trends that İçduygu has outlined, there has been a steady flow of asylum-seekers and refugees arriving from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and various African countries over the past two decades. The largest group of asylum-seekers in Turkey are the approximately 1.6 million Syrian refugees.[2] According to the most recent UNHCR figures the next three largest groups of asylum-seekers and refugees are Iraqis (12,905), Afghans (8,357) and Iranians (6,701).[3] The latest UNHCR figures of registered Afghan asylum-seekers and refugees do not represent the real number of Afghans in Turkey since UNHCR has suspended registering Afghan asylum-seekers since 2013 and does not provide numbers for pre-registered Afghan asylum-seekers.

[2] The Syrian Regional Refugee Response Inter-Agency Information Sharing Portal puts the figure at 1,622,839 Syrian refugees in Turkey in 31 December 2014, available at: http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php [accessed 3 March 2015].

[3] The latest figures on asylum-seekers and refugees in Turkey by UNHCR Turkey in February 2015: http://www.unhcr.org.tr/uploads/root/snmstatistical_tables_new_format_tr(1).pdf [accessed 3 March 2015].

During my fieldwork Afghans comprised the largest group of asylum-seekers and refugees after Syrians and there is no reason to doubt that the numbers have been growing. UNHCR had estimated up to 50,000 Afghan asylum-seekers arriving in Turkey by 2015.[4]

As well as being a significant portion of the asylum seeking population in Turkey, Afghans also constitute a substantial population of irregular migrants. The figures I use here do not capture the flows of Syrian refugees or estimated increase in Afghan migrants, but are nevertheless useful for providing a context to Afghan migration in Turkey for the period of my fieldwork. The two main sources of irregular migration in Turkey are migrants from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), who may live and work irregularly in Turkey, and transit migrants who live in Turkey irregularly with the desire to travel to Europe (Kirişçi 2008: 2-3; 2009: 7-8). Refused asylum-seekers may also become irregular (Kirişçi 2008: 3; İçduygu 2011: 4). It would be safe to assume that potential Afghan asylum-seekers who are not admitted to the asylum procedure would also be included in this group. In 2012, Turkish police apprehended 42,415 irregular migrants.[5] The total number of irregular migrants apprehended in Turkey between 1995 and 2012 is above 900,000 (Ibid). The majority of these irregulars came from Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Moldova (İçduygu 2011: 5).[6] Frontex (2012: 157) reports irregular border crossings since 2008 ranging from between 40,000 and 57,000 migrants per annum. Of these irregular migrants, İçduygu (2011: 5) claims that nearly 58% were potential transit migrants, a figure which he arrives at by excluding irregular migrants from the Former Soviet Union and Europe.

Turkey as a Country of Transit Migration

Turkey has been commonly characterised as a country of transit migration due to the number of migrants who travel through to Turkey to the EU or are intercepted at Turkish borders. Migrants such as my informants are described as transit migrants by

[4] Bo Schack, then UNHCR Representative to Afghanistan pers. comm., April 2013, Brussels.
[5] Figures from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs webpage on irregular migration: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye_nin-yasadisi-gocle-mucadelesi-.tr.mfa [accessed 3 March 2015].
[6] It should be noted here that nationalities of the migrants are often self-declared and migrants may give other nationalities such as Burma to delay deportation proceedings.

policy makers and in the media because irregular migrants are thought to be *en route* to Europe while asylum-seekers are seen as seeking or awaiting resettlement to a third country. While there are some migrants who do come to Turkey with a view to leaving and do indeed leave, transit migration is not representative of the experience of the majority of my informants. Furthermore, the concept is politically constructed and several scholars dispute its analytical use. In this section I briefly discuss the problems associated with the concept as it applies to Turkey and to the predicament of my informants.

UN ECE (1993: 7) defines transit migration as 'migration in one country with the intention of seeking the possibility there to emigrate to another country as the country of final destination, by means that are partially, if not fully, illegal.' İçduygu (1995:127) defines transit migration as the type of migration where 'migrants come to a country of destination with the intention of going and staying in another country.' Papadopoulou (2004, 2005) argues that the intention to migrate onwards need not be present at the start of the journey and that migrants may decide to transit as a result of unforeseen circumstances, such as change in economic motivations.

It is with regard to its emphasis on intent that the concept is most problematic because it conflates macro-level migration trends with individual thought processes. Certain countries, such as Turkey, receive migrants because of their geopolitical positioning on a path between countries where people become displaced or choose to leave and countries that are perceived to be more desirable to inhabit. Intention-setting and, more broadly, decision-making, however are complex subjective and socio-economic and cultural processes. Defining transit migration in terms of intentions creates definitional questions concerning whether the term seeks to define migration trends or migrant decision-making processes. It is not clear when migration becomes transit migration or vice versa. Migrants who spend long periods a country and achieve a degree of integration, for instance, may still think of themselves as transitory even after long periods of time (e.g. Danış 2006, Düvell 2006: 16). If the defining characteristic of transit migration is intention to migrate, we could still think of such migrants as undergoing transit migration. Migrants may move in an out of the country of transit as part of a migration strategy or due to failed attempts at border crossing.

Schuster (2005: 766-7), for instance, found out that migrants in Italy may travel between Germany and Italy until they have obtained the legal status they desire in Italy. Even when migrants may arrive at a country with the intention of transiting through it, they may decide or be forced to settle there. Papadopoulou (2005, 2008), for instance, cites cases of Kurdish migrants who abandoned their intention of migrating onward because they were able achieve integration into the local community through mainly informal ties. The concept of transit migration thus also neglects the degree of uncertainty in migration processes. In addition, transit migration prioritises decisions relating to destination over the other migration related decisions that influence migratory trajectories.

The challenges underlying these definitional questions perhaps relate to the fact that transit migration has emerged as Euro-centric policy concept for describing certain trends in migration affecting Western European countries, rather than an analytical concept for understanding migration dynamics. Düvell (2006: 22), for instance, argues that the emergence of the discourse of transit migration in the 1990s 'seemed to have coincided with European efforts to negotiate specific return, deportation and readmission policies with all its non-EU neighbours.' He further argues that the concept is intertwined with irregular migration control. Countries of transit migration such as Turkey, Libya, Malta, Algeria, Greece or the Ukraine are all countries within the immediate internal or external boundaries of the EU. Most migrants transit through several countries in the political south before arriving at the countries in the West the literature focuses on. African countries such as Kenya or South Africa, where there are significant migrant flows, are usually described as 'regions of origin' rather than countries of transit (OXFAM 2005). Similarly the concept of transit migration has not been used for South and Central American countries as well as Mexico, which have similar migratory trends. The only reference that I found for transit migration in the literature in relation to the Americas is by Jacqueline Maria Hagan (2008), who uses the term interchangeably with 'journey'. In fact many of the problems that are associated with transit migration are similar to the oversights in literature on migrant journeys, which I will discuss in Chapter 4.

While migration dynamics in Turkey cannot be understood without reference to its geopolitical positioning as part of the route to the EU for large migrant sending countries, transit migration is not a useful analytical concept for understanding migrant decision-making. Referring to transit migrants is therefore, also problematic. İçduygu (2011: 5), for instance, shows that in their statistical data on irregular migration, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) refers to non-European irregular migrants as 'transit migrants' and European irregular migrants as 'irregular labour migrants'. This classification overlooks the employment of non-European irregular migrants. My informants who were regular, like many other irregular Afghan migrants I met, were working in Turkey under exploitative conditions. Some intended to raise money for the next leg of their journey, while others were considering staying in Turkey irregularly, if they could secure continuous employment and a regular income. Some informants came to Turkey with an intention of staying irregularly but members of their family or themselves were also exploring options of applying for asylum or travelling irregularly, or even return. Although these informants would be captured in statistical data as "transit migrants" their attitudes to migration are more varied.

The Turkish Asylum and Migration Legal Framework

1934
Law on Settlement (Legislation No.: 2510, 14 June 1934)

1950
Passport Law (Legislation No.: 5683, 15 July 1950)
Law on Sojourn and Movement of Aliens (Legislation No.: 5682, 15 July 1950)

1983
Regulation on the Foreigners' Guesthouses (Regulation No.: 18032, 29 April 1983)

1994
Regulation on the Procedures and Principles related to Population Movements and Aliens Arriving in Turkey either as Individuals or in Groups Wishing to Seek Asylum either from Turkey or Requesting Residence Permission in order to Seek Asylum From Another Country (Regulation No. 94/6169, 14 September 1994) amended in 1999 and 2006

2003
Law on Foreigner's Work Permits (Legislation No: 4817, 27 February 2003)

2006
Directive on the Regulation on the Procedures and Principles related to Population Movements and Aliens Arriving in Turkey either as Individuals or in Groups Wishing to Seek Asylum either from Turkey or Requesting Residence Permission in order to Seek Asylum From Another Country

Law on Settlement (No.: 5543, 19 September 2006)

2010
Circular on Refugees and Asylum-seekers (Circular No.: B.050.ÖKM.0000.11-12/631, 19 March 2010)

Circular on Combating Irregular Migration (Circular No: B.05.2010/2.ÖKM.0000.11-12/632, 19 March 2010)

Circular on Reception at Centres and Informing Foreigners who will Stay at the Centres (Circular No: B.05. EMGM.0.13.2375/(71696)-1788-2, 19 April 2010)

2013
The Law on Foreigners and International Protection (Legislation No.: 6458, 11 April 2013) came into force in April 2014

Figure 2: The Turkish Asylum and Migration Legal Framework

1.4.2 Turkish Asylum and Migration Policy

The Turkish asylum and migration policy is currently governed by the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (henceforth, the new law), which came into force in June 2014. The law is a major development for Turkey for several reasons. This law is the first Turkish law on asylum, which prior to the new law was regulated by a patchwork of different laws relating to passport, citizenship and foreign nationals in Turkey as well as a series of regulations and directives that amend these regulations. The law aims to comply with EU regulations on asylum and subsidiary protection. It also provides the legal basis for immigration detention in keeping with the relevant articles of the European Convention for Human Rights (ECHR). Immigration detention was arbitrary until the new law was enacted (Kaytaz 2013: 175). Furthermore, the new law also sets out the types and eligibility requirements for residence permits, including those for students.

Before proceeding to discuss Turkey's asylum and migration policy, it is important to note that UNHCR has, from the summer of 2013, suspended its registration of Afghan asylum-seekers. This means that while Afghans can 'pre-register' with UNHCR, their asylum claims are no longer taken and assessed. The current policy environment is therefore radically different from what it was when I was doing my fieldwork. In Chapter 5, I will outline the important gatekeepers and their roles in the asylum and migration system in Turkey. I will focus here on a set of key features of the asylum and migration policy in Turkey that shaped my informants' lives, starting with the asylum system.

A defining characteristic of the Turkish asylum system is that Turkey does not recognise non-Europeans as refugees.[7] While Turkey is a signatory to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees (henceforth, the Convention), it has not ratified the provision of the Convention's 1967 Protocol lifting the geographical limitation of the convention. The original definition for the status of refugee in the Convention only applied to refugees who were fleeing Europe for events that occurred before 1945. This is further complicated by the fact that a parallel procedure operates in

[7] Europeans are defined as citizens of the member states of the Council of Europe.

Turkey whereby both the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Turkey and the MOI conduct the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedure. In practice it is UNHCR that determines the asylum status, which the Turkish officials ratify. Therefore a person may be considered a refugee by the UNHCR but not the Turkish state. The new regime delineates four different categories of international protection: refugees, temporary refugees, conditional refugees and the recipients of subsidiary protection.[8] Under this typology non-European refugees are referred to as 'conditional refugees'. Prior to the new law, there was a distinction between 'temporary asylum applicants' and 'temporary asylum-seekers', the former referring to asylum-seekers and the latter to non-European refugees. Therefore there is much definitional confusion in the area. As I will discuss, the complex legal framework and the resulting terminology also leads to incorrect implementation of procedures by local authorities. The difficulty of adhering to accurate terminology in describing the legal status of my informants means that I have used the term 'asylum-seeker' for all my informants, unless I want to specify their status.

The fact that non-Europeans are not recognised as refugees and are part of a temporary asylum system means that there is no avenue through which they can settle in Turkey in the long term. Given the limited rights afforded to asylum-seekers, which significantly restrict their quality of life, and the absence of a legal avenue to becoming permanent residents in Turkey, it is not possible to speak of meaningful local integration. Therefore, as identified by UNHCR, resettlement is the only durable solution available to non-European refugees. Resettlement countries, however, prioritise refugees from neighbouring countries such as Iran and Iraq due to greater perceived risk of deportation.[9] Therefore, there are very few opportunities for

[8] The first category includes refugees from Europe, the second category refers to refugees coming from mass influx —currently Syrians —and the final category refers to those who cannot return to their countries of origin for reasons such as fleeing the death penalty. The term 'temporary asylum-seeker' does not feature in the law but is the term authorities use especially in reference to Syrian refugees in Turkey.

[9] In 2009, for instance, only 76 Afghan refugees were re-settled in comparison to 4183 Iraqi refugees and 1575 Iranian refugees. Although I was not able to get any exact figures on resettlement from UNHCR I was told by various gatekeepers that all Iranian and Iraqi refugees get resettled whereas approximately 100 Afghans get resettled a year out of approximately 3,000 recognised refugees from Afghanistan.

recognised Afghan refugees to be resettled. The lack of resettlement opportunities is a major source of stress for Afghan asylum-seekers.

At the time of my fieldwork, the asylum procedure was governed by a regulation enacted in November 1994, titled "The Regulation on the Procedures and the Principles Related to Mass Influx and Foreigners Arriving in Turkey either as Individuals or in Groups Wishing to Seek Asylum from a Third Country",[10] which was amended in 1999 and 2006. The Turkish government formally defined the asylum procedure, outlining the specific rights, benefits and obligations of temporary asylum applicants in the implementing directive issued in June 2006. The rights afforded to asylum-seekers, regardless of their status with the UNHCR, are very limited. Asylum-seekers have restricted access to healthcare, education and welfare. Significantly they cannot work legally. I will discuss the consequences and how informants manage the difficulties associated with this restrictive legal environment throughout my thesis.

The third important feature of the asylum system is the requirement for residence permits—*ikamet* in Turkish. Not only are asylum-seekers not allowed to work and may wait for years for RSD and the possibility of resettlement, asylum-seekers were required to pay for a residence permit for each member of the family. The *ikamet* costs around 300 TL[11] per person, including children.[12] Not paying the permits could result in being considered irregular and could result in delay or prevention in resettlement. Furthermore, a one-off fee of 135 TL is taken for the cost of administration and documents. Informants referred to this as *toprak parası,* which approximately translates as land money — an informant explained that this refers to the fees taken from asylum-seekers for stepping foot on Turkish soil. In 2009 the MoI issued a directive to clarify that asylum-seekers could apply for an exemption if they can convince the police that they cannot afford it.

The final characteristic of the asylum procedure is the system of 'satellite cities'. When asylum-seekers register with the UNHCR and the police, they are assigned to

[10] Regulation No. 94/6169, 14 September 1994.
[11] The exchange rate between the Turkish Lira and the British Pound in August 2011 was 1 GBP to 2.78 TL. Therefore, a residence permit would have cost 108 GBP during my fieldwork.
[12] 206,30 TL for adults and 288,15TL for children between the ages of 15-18.

live in one of several designated cities, which are referred to as satellite cities. This process serves several purposes. Firstly, it ensures that asylum-seekers do not reside in big cities with easier access to smugglers for westward travel such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Secondly, the system serves as a means of controlling asylum-seekers by requiring them to report to the foreigners' police weekly. Thirdly, asylum-seekers are assigned to cities according to their nationalities. This has some practical benefits for civil society and police for arranging translation services. Some NGOs act as implementing partners for UNHCR in satellite cities, liaising between asylum-seekers and UNHCR and providing some social services for asylum-seekers. I will discuss the features and life in the three satellite cities where I conducted research in the next chapter.

It is possible to obtain residency and citizenship in Turkey on the grounds of proving Turkish or Turkic ancestry.[13] This is of particular importance for Turkmen and Ozbek Afghans who may be able to use this law to obtain residency and citizenship in Turkey. It is rumoured that several thousand of Turkic Afghans who live in Istanbul are granted resident permits on these grounds. I was, however, unable to find any statistical records for residency and nationality acquisition on the basis of Turkic ancestry. When I enquired about this with state officials in Ankara, they said that they were not aware of the practice of issuing residence permits on a mass scale. The procedure my informants relayed to me may involve several irregularities. I therefore discuss the matter of obtaining residence permits and citizenship on the grounds of Turkic ancestry primarily in the context of migrant legal consciousness and ethnic associations in Chapter 5.

1.4.3 Afghans in Turkey

The first significant flow of Afghan migration to Turkey took place in 1982 and then in 1983, when the Turkish government airlifted almost over 4,000 and then 1,200 Afghan Turkmen refugees who were fleeing the Soviet Invasion (Danış et. al. 2006:

[13] The provisions on obtaining residency and citizenship based on Turkic ancestry are set out by the 1934 Law on Settlement (No.: 2510), which was superseded by the 2006 Law on Settlement (No.: 5543). The new law does not make any mention of acquiring residency on the basis of Turkic ancestry.

68, 69). These Afghans were settled in six cities including Van and Kayseri.[14] Given their Turkic heritage, they were able to obtain citizenship under the 1934 Residence Law (Kirişçi 1999: 115). As I will discuss further in the section on Istanbul in Chapter 2, these migrants also form the backbone of the Afghan community in Istanbul. The Afghans who are the subject of this thesis are those who have recently arrived as students, asylum-seekers or irregular migrants. My informants had interaction with the Turkic Afghan communities in Istanbul, but were not part of this community.

Turkey has been accepting Afghan university students since 1994. Four of my informants arrived as university students to Turkey and one was part of the first group of students to be settled. One of my informants, Arash, arrived in Turkey as one of the first Afghan students who came to university in Turkey. Until 2010 Afghan students could take a centralised test for the admission of foreign students to Turkish universities. Typically, they would take these exams at a location designated by the Turkish Embassy in Afghanistan. Once they gained a place they would learn Turkish for one year in Turkey and then be placed at their course. This centralised exam is open to all international students who want to study in Turkey. As of 2011 students have to apply for universities individually for admission. There are currently 2,333 Afghan university students in Turkey.[15] The large presence of Afghan students in Turkey may also be attributed to the presence of Turkish middle and high schools in Afghanistan, which are perceived to provide high quality education. Two of my informants went together to a Turkish high school.

The most recent flow of Afghan migrants to Turkey can be attributed to the changing policy towards Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan. In particular, since Iran and Pakistan threatened and began large-scale deportations in 2007 and 2008, the number of Afghan asylum-seekers and probably irregular migrants has been increasing in Turkey. In 2007 there were only 212 Afghan asylum-seekers and refugees in Turkey; by December 2009 there were 2,936 and by January 2014 the number had reached

[14] Afghans settled in Kayseri and Van were settled in rural areas. I tried to go to the village in Van, but was advised against it due to security reasons.
[15] E.g. the latest statistical figures from the Ministry of Education as cited in :
Hürriyet (2014) '48 Bin Yabancı Öğrencimiz Var', 17 November. Available at:
http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/egitim/27596461.asp [accessed 2 March 2015]

9,514.[16] As discussed previously, the current number of asylum-seekers is unknown because UNHCR has suspended the registration of Afghan asylum-seekers (Mougne 2010). It is difficult to estimate the fluctuations and approximate number of irregular migrants who have arrived as part of these flows.[17] UNHCR raised concern about the large number of Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs) living and going through Turkey as part of these flows (Mougne 2010).

There is a dearth of literature on Afghans in Turkey. The only academic research focusing on Afghan migrants is included in the research project on Iraqi, Iranian, Afghan and Maghrebi migrants in Istanbul (Danış, Taraghi and Pérouse 2006). The section of the research on Afghans, conducted by Cheri Taraghi, focuses on the Zeytinburnu district of Istanbul. As described earlier Zeytinburnu is predominantly populated by the Turkic Afghan community. Taraghi's interviewees include both Turkmen Afghans and more recently arrived Afghan asylum-seekers. Some of the Turkmen Afghans were with the Afghans who were settled in Turkey in 1982 and 1983, while others had arrived later on in the 1980s. The asylum-seekers had fled following the fall of Taliban in 2001 and applied for asylum in Turkey. Taraghi found that there was also a continuous flow of asylum-seekers, which dipped in the 1980s but has been increasing since the 1990s. These asylum-seekers typically became irregular after lodging their asylum application too late for consideration or a lengthy refusal. The only Afghans with permanent legal status were Turkmen Afghans who had arrived at the invitation of the Turkish state in 1982 and 1983.

Importantly for the purpose of this thesis, Zeytinburnu is portrayed as an 'embodiment of Afghan identity' as well 'the network of local advice, support and economic or material help' (Danış et. al. 2006: 72). It is the presence of these

[16] Statistics from the UNHCR Turkey office are available at: http://www.unhcr.org.tr/?page=12 [accessed 2 March, 2015].

[17] In İçduygu (2011:5)'s reference to statistics about irregular migrants caught by the Turkish police between 1995 and 2009, the number of Afghans is listed as 59,281. There is also an indication of the size of irregular flows of Afghan migrants through Turkey on the Eastern Mediterranean Route. Frontex (2014: 30) state that: 'Detections of Afghans sharply decreased to about 9,500 in 2013, down from 13,169 detections in 2012 and nearly 26,000 in 2010. In nearly all indicators, Afghans were at their lowest level since 2009, suggesting a pause in their movements to the EU in 2013.' These numbers, however, only indicate the number of Afghan migrants who were caught irregularly and so some individuals may be counted twice. It is very difficult to estimate the number of Afghan migrants living irregularly in Istanbul, since they include those who may occasionally have residence permits and asylum-seekers whose cases are closed or live in violation of the satellite city requirements.

networks that also attracted asylum-seekers and undocumented Afghans to Zeytinburnu. Paradoxically, Taraghi also found, however, that Afghan Turkmens with regular status were unaware of the presence and much less the challenges faced by recently arrived asylum-seekers and irregular migrants. These migrants conveyed the sense of uncertainty and threat they faced due to their legal status in Turkey. Furthermore, as these Afghans typically were not Turkmen, they faced additional language barriers. At the time Taraghi wrote the report the number of asylum-seekers and irregular migrants residing in Zeytinburnu was presumed to be in decline. I carried out part of my fieldwork in Zeytinburnu. Since the satellite city regulations were enforced much more strongly and the 10-day limit for applying for asylum was lifted, there are probably much fewer asylum-seekers in Zeytinburnu. In my research I found that Turkmen Afghans were also part of the economy for irregular migrants whether it be as employers or landlords. Furthermore ethnic associations seem to play a more prominent role in the lives of irregular migrants and asylum-seekers than that described by Taraghi. Finally, Zeytinburnu's significance for its sources of support and social networks for Afghan migrants has not declined.

Chronology of Key Political Developments in Afghanistan

Sovereignty after the 'Great Game'

1919 Britain and Afghanistan sign the Treaty of Rawalpindi which recognised Afghanistan's independence

1933 Zahir Shah becomes king

1963-73 Constitutional monarchy

1973 General Mohammad Daud seizes power and overthrows the king of Afghanistan, his cousin Zahir Shah and proclaims the Republic of Afghanistan

1978 General Mohammad Daud is overthrown and killed in a military coup. The pro-Soviet People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan comes to power. Thousands of political dissidents are killed in prison. Fighting with the US-backed *mujahideen* begins, thousands flee to Iran and Pakistan

Soviet Intervention

1979 Invasion by the Soviet Army, Babrak Karmal becomes the leader of Soviet-backed regime

1980 Fighting intensifies between the Soviet forces and the *mujahideen* backed by the US, Pakistan, China, Iran and Saudi Arabia

1986 Najibullah becomes the new leader of Afghanistan

1988 Afghan refugees number 3 million in Pakistan and 2 million in Iran

1989 Soviet troops withdraw, fighting continues

Civil War

1992 Najibullah's government is overthrown. The Islamic State of Afghanistan is established following the Peshawar Accord. *Hezb-i Islami,* an Islamist organization established in 1975 and led by Gulbuddin Hekmatiyar, is opposed to the accords. Fighting continues between the *mujahideen* and the *Hezb-i Islami*

Taliban Rule

1996 Taliban seizes control of Kabul, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is established.

1998 Earthquakes in Afghanistan kill thousands, US air missile strikes at suspected bases of Osama Bin Laden in retaliation for the bombings of US of embassies in Africa

1999 UN imposes air embargo and financial sanctions on Afghanistan

2000 New influx of tens of thousands of refugees into Pakistan and Iran

2001 US begins bombing of Afghanistan following the September 11 attacks

US-Led Invasion and the Karzai Government

2001 The Bonn Agreement establishes interim government and Hamid Karzai is sworn in as president

2003 The first *Loya Jirga* (Grand Council) elects Hamid Karzai, NATO takes control of security in Kabul

2004 The second *Loya Jirga* is held, Karzai is elected president

2006 NATO takes control of security across the whole of Afghanistan

2009 Karzai is elected for a second time amidst claims of corruption and security issues

2012 NATO members agree on exit strategy from Afghanistan by 2014 at the Chicago Summit

Figure 3: Chronology of Key Political Events

1.4.4 The Broader Context of Afghan Migration

The absence of literature on Afghan migrants in Turkey can be contrasted with the literature on Afghan migrants in other parts of the world, which has predominantly focused on Afghans in Iran and Pakistan paradoxically (e.g. Monsutti 2006; Novak 2007; Olszewska 2007; Kroenenfeld 2008; Zieck 2008) and the diaspora in the West in North America (e.g. Monsutti 2004; Erdal, M. B. and Oeppen, C. (2013); Khan 2013a, 2013b; Oeppen, 2013). In addition, there has been research on return migration (e.g. Stigter 2006; Saito 2007, 2009; Harpviken 2009) and deportation (Schuster and Majidi 2013, 2014). In this section I will highlight some of the key findings of this vast literature, to provide relevant context for this thesis.

There have been several refugee flows out of Afghanistan since the Communist Coup of 1978 'broadly paralleling the phases of conflict in that country' (Koser and Schmeidl 2009: 10), which include the Soviet invasion (1978-1989), the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996), the rule of the Taliban (1996-2001) and on-going insecurity and conflict since US-led military intervention into Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks (see The Chronology of Key Political Developments in Afghanistan). The number of Afghan refugees peaked to over 6 million refugees in 1990 (UNHCR 2012: 11). As of 2012, there were almost 2.6 million Afghan refugees, over 95% of them living in Iran or Pakistan (Ibid.). The scale of Afghan displacement is such that one in four refugees in the world in 2012 were from Afghanistan (Ibid.). After Iran and Pakistan, Germany is host to the largest number of Afghan refugees approximately 31,700 (Ibid.). In addition to the Afghans who have moved across international borders, there is also a large number Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (Harpviken 2009; Koser and Schmeidl 2009).

Violent conflict, political uncertainty and the refugee policies of neighbouring countries have created and shaped Afghan migration (Harpviken 2009: 8). Migration is a culturally and historically rooted livelihood strategy for managing these political upheavals. Green (2008) for instance claims the diasporic Pashtu communities of Afghans in India under Mughal rule were central to the establishment of the state of Afghanistan and formation of the 'Afghan' identity encompassing non-Pashtu

communities in Afghanistan. Stigter (2006: 117) points to the fact that there was migration from Afghanistan to Pakistan and Iran before the Communist coup in 1978 due, in part, to the lack of economic opportunities in Afghanistan. There was also migration through Iran to Middle Eastern countries as a result of growing wealth in the Middle East. Migration from Afghanistan to Pakistan and Iran took place in the context of social ties between border communities. There was also seasonal migration from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Stigter therefore argues that the larger scale displacement of 1978 transposed onto some already existing routes, networks and migration patterns. Monsutti's (2006; 2007; 2008) work among Afghan migrants in Iran illustrates the cultural significance of migration for Afghan migrants. He claims that migration to Iran for young Afghans of Hazara ethnicity is a rite of passage marking transition from childhood to adulthood (Monsutti 2007). Furthermore, it has been argued that the notion of *mohajarat*, an Islamic term for refugees, is frequently used by Afghan migrants with cultural and religious significance (e.g. Centlivres and Centlivres-Demont 1988; Harpviken 2009: 49-50; Saito 2009).

While Afghan migration is historically rooted and culturally significant, its continuity is also a product of recent characteristics of displacement. Olszewska and Adelkhah (2007), for instance, claim that Afghan migration to Iran is an 'irreversible reality' given the mutual economic dependency. In addition to various sources of insecurity in Afghanistan or neighbouring countries, factors such as debt to smugglers or family members, and negative feelings such as shame and guilt towards family in the event of 'failed' migration, perpetuate certain migration flows (e.g. Schuster and Majidi 2013, 2014).

Significantly for the purpose of this thesis, two aspects of Afghan migration are frequently mentioned in the literature: social networks and migration as a risk diversification strategy. Academic research has focused on the importance of social networks in Afghan migration (Monsutti 2004; 2006; Koser and Schemeidl 2009; Oeppen 2010). Harpviken (2009), for instance, looks at the role of social networks in decisions to leave and decisions to return in two villages outside of Herat. He differentiates between local and transnational networks. He argues, for instance, that local networks provide information about Afghanistan or the intended country of

destination, whereas transnational networks may provide more material assistance. In my research, I did not see strong evidence of networks as discussed in the literature. It is likely that my informants did not disclose the full extent of their transnational connections and material support to me — as Harpviken (2009: 171) acknowledges, it is very difficult to get informants to talk about remittances. Of those of my informants who have relatives abroad, very few claimed that these kin were of any assistance. In this thesis I will focus on how informants craft social relations and position themselves within communities.

Migration has been described as a 'risk diversification strategy' for families in Afghanistan who send one or more members of the family away to send remittances. Stigter (2006: 117), for instance, argues that Afghan 'families spread risks through diversification, migration, switching to low risk crops and spreading political affiliation'. Therefore, migration is a key livelihood strategy for Afghan families in 'the absence of a capable state and strong economy' (Ibid.). Similarly, the authors of report based on household data in rural Afghanistan found migration was a significant tool for risk diversification and management (Ghobadi, Koettle and Vakis 2005). They found that members of poorer families were more likely to migrate within Afghanistan while members of richer families were likely to migrate abroad. This variation is explained both in terms of costs associated with migration and the availability of social networks. Some of my informants and some informants' family members had left their families, in order to help support them. I will discuss the stories of these informants throughout the thesis.

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the process of accessing information in Turkey, describes the data collection methods I used and discusses the methodological and ethical challenges I faced in the field. In the first section of the chapter on methods, I provide a description of the field locations, the reasons they were chosen, a profile of the informants I met at these cities and how I carried out participant observation. I also describe the interviews. In the second section of the chapter, I reflect on the process of conducting fieldwork at 'home', gender relations in the field, how I sought to reconcile my different roles as a research student and an advocate, and issues surrounding food consumption. In the third section of this chapter I discuss how I analysed my data and turned into text. In particular, I reflect on the decisions I made regarding anonymising my informants at the risk of weakening my arguments. In the final section of this chapter I describe some of my key informants and identify those whose stories I use at the end of each ethnographic chapter to illustrate different 'types' of informant.

I upheld the requirements of Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) while conducting fieldwork. My ethical commitments as a researcher constitute a theme that runs throughout this chapter, which is structured so as to reflect the different stages of my research, starting from the selection of field sites and building research networks to the writing up of the thesis. Since my interpretation and application of ethical research norms was central organising principle in the collection and representation of my fieldwork material, I have chosen not to confine my discussion of research ethics under a separate heading.

2.2 Methods

I conducted fieldwork in the cities of Istanbul, Van, Kayseri and Sivas. Istanbul, and specifically the Zeytinburnu district, is host to different Afghan communities that comprise irregular migrants, businessmen, Afghans who have become Turkish citizens and students. It is also a hub for arranging irregular travel. Van, Kayseri and Sivas are so-called *satellite cities*, which are cities designated by the state for asylum-seekers to take up residence. Upon registering as asylum-seekers with the Foreigners' Police, asylum-seekers are told to live in a particular city. Typically nationalities are assigned to specific cities and asylum-seekers are not offered any choice in the process. If asylum-seekers leave their satellite city without the permission of the police, they will be detained and sent to their satellite city. This system exists to keep asylum-seekers out of big cities and potential hubs for smuggling. At the time of my fieldwork Van was the satellite city with the largest number of Afghan asylum-seekers, therefore I decided go to Van. As the numbers of Afghans grew they were sent to several different cities. Kayseri has a largely Iranian asylum seeking population with a very small Afghan population. Therefore, I decided that Kayseri would be an interesting contrast to Van. Sivas was a new satellite city hosting asylum-seekers for the first time. There were only Afghan asylum-seekers in Sivas, most of whom would have been transferred from other satellite cities. I felt, therefore, that Sivas would provide a contrast to the more established satellite cities with civil society and local awareness of asylum-seekers. Istanbul is not a satellite city, however there are some asylum-seekers who live there and Afghans may apply for asylum in Istanbul. Istanbul is also the centre for settled Afghan communities and irregular migrants.

I also visited the cities of Izmir and Ankara to meet with government officials and staff at non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations (IOs). I had originally considered having Izmir as a field site because it used to be a point of departure for migrants travelling by boat to Greece. While I was doing fieldwork in Istanbul I learnt that Afghans were leaving from Istanbul to go to Europe rather than using the Aegean— mainly because of the increased patrols on the sea. My visit to Izmir, in August 2011, confirmed this. In Izmir I met with staff at the office of Mülteci-Der, which is an NGO that works with refugees in the Aegean region. In

Ankara, in January 2012, I met with staff at the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to find out about their assisted voluntary return (AVR) program for the majority of Afghan migrants in detention. I also met with staff at the office that preceded the established Directory of Asylum and Migration Management, established in 2013. I sent several requests to United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Turkey for an official meeting, but I had no response from them.

My research was with adults, but my participant observation brought me into contact with children, especially at venues such as schools providing language classes for adults. As I had not sought permission from the CUREC to work with minors, I speak of my experiences with children only in the broadest terms and solely in terms of issues relating to the central questions of my thesis.[18]

I now turn to discuss my field sites, participant observation and interviews in greater detail.

[18]At the time in Istanbul there was a growing and visible population of Afghan unaccompanied minors (UAMs). There were researchers working with them who introduced me to the possibility of contacting these children. I did not take up these opportunities, which could have given a fuller picture of life in Istanbul. Unfortunately, I am not aware of publications that came out of this research, either.



Map 2: Field Sites

2.2.1 Field Sites

The discussion of each of my field sites begins by a description of the city and the reasons I chose it as a field site. I then describe the opportunities I had to conduct participation observation and provide an overview of the interviews I conducted. I discuss interviews in greater detail in the subsequent section.

Istanbul

	Families (Mixed)[19]	Single Men
Asylum-seeker	2	1
Student		3
Irregular Migrant	2	4

Table 2: Interviews in Istanbul according to immigration status and family structure

Istanbul is a hub for Afghan migrants. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Zeytinburnu district, particularly, is host to Turkic Afghan communities that have their origins in the communities that were settled in Turkey starting from 1982. Some of these Afghan migrants eventually got citizenship and settled in Istanbul in the Zeytinburnu district. I heard that the reasons they settled in Zeytinburnu was because they had access to cheaper housing through the local authorities. Zeytinburnu was also already host to Turkic communities from Central Asia fleeing various aggressions, such as China's annexing of Eastern Turkestan Republic in 1949.[20] These Afghans or Turks with Afghan heritage form the backbone of the Afghan community in Istanbul, which includes Afghans of different legal statuses, ethnicities and histories of migration. As discussed below, however, there is a dearth of research done on Afghans to get a fuller understanding of the characteristics of the Afghan population in Turkey. The popular image of Afghans in Istanbul relates to their involvement in the production and trade of leather goods. They also trade silverware

[19] I distinguish between families headed by a single woman and families where both male and female partner of the oldest generation was present. Both families in Istanbul consisted of two grandparents, their children, grandchildren and nephews.

[20] See for instance, the webpage of the Zeytinburnu municipality for the history of settlement to the district: http://www.zeytinburnu.com.tr/Sayfa/87/nufus-ve-profili/turkistan.aspx [accessed 3 March 2015], and the webpage of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the history of mass migration influxes to Turkey: http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/kitlesel-akinlar_409_558_559 [accessed 3 March 2015].

and other goods from Afghanistan. In the Grand Bazaar, which is a few bus stops away from Zeytinburnu, there is an Afghan street exclusively trading these products.

Zeytinburnu is a diverse neighbourhood. Zeytinburnu is home to migrants from Central Asian countries such as Ozbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan; Eastern European countries such as Moldova, and the Near East such as Iran and Azerbaijan. Furthermore, there are internal migrants of Kurdish ethnicity. Within the district there are different areas where there are areas that are inhabited by different nationalities. In the area where I met my informants, Afghan food was served in two restaurants, one of which was owned by migrants from East Turkestan. There were a few corner shops run Afghans that stocked some Afghan foods such as green tea, rice and spices. There was also a bakery.

I started working at the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Refugee Advocacy and Support Programme (HCA) in Istanbul in December 2010 as a legal advisor. I had worked with the HCA between May 2006 and August 2008 as a co-ordinator to their detention program and legal advisor. Therefore I decided that it would be a good place to return to in order to re-establish my contacts and gain an understanding about the legal and socio-economic issues faced by Afghan asylum-seekers. I worked there until May 2011. Furthermore, I volunteered to work on a project on the living conditions of migrants in Istanbul that the HCA was coordinating with the German NGO Pro-Asyl in February 2011. I came to an agreement with the director of the programme that I would be bound by the strict confidentiality agreement that applies to all staff and would not reveal any information about my research agenda. We agreed that I would be able to contact the Afghan clients I worked with after my contract with the HCA finished through another colleague. Similarly, I did not contact the interviewees I met through Pro-Asyl until after I finished working for the HCA. I met seven informants through my employment at the HCA. Through these informants and contacts I started making contacts in Istanbul and mapping the rest of my fieldwork.

I started my interviews in Istanbul in March 2011 and completed the final interview in December 2012. The diversity of my informants' legal status was the greatest in

Istanbul where I interviewed irregular migrants, students and asylum-seekers. I interviewed two families who had asylum cases with UNHCR but were not in compliance with the satellite city requirements. One of the families was resettled to the US shortly after I interviewed them. One of the irregular families returned to Afghanistan. The other family applied for asylum when detained but did not follow their application through. One of the men I met was on his way to Europe, and he later got refugee status in Europe and only stayed in Turkey for a period of a few days. Two of the men I interviewed worked irregularly. The single male asylum-seeker was an ex-minor, he had been recognised as a refugee as a minor and was awaiting resettlement. Three of the students I met in Istanbul were undergraduates and one was doing his masters' degree in Turkish universities with scholarships from the Turkish state through what was formerly a foreign student placement exam. I met them through NGO contacts.

The interviews in Istanbul were difficult to line up although I spent most of my time there. One of the major issues was that most of the men work at least six days a week and prefer to have Sundays to themselves, playing football if not working. If I missed the opportunity for an interview one Sunday then I would have to wait to see if they were available the following Sunday. A second issue was that I needed to be accompanied by a man to be invited to all-male households. Unlike in Van, where I met some single men in parks and teahouses, men in Istanbul did not want to be seen outside with me. At my informants' houses, I was surrounded by all their housemates or other family members, so there was no sense of privacy for interviewing. One of my informants lived with a man working for a smuggler, which also made it harder to have an open conversation. In addition, there were two instances in which I started interviews and abandoned them. The distances I travelled in Istanbul to meet informants were also vast. I often spent three to four hours daily on public transport between my centrally located house in Istanbul and Zeytinburnu. Given these distances and security concerns, my informants and other Afghan migrants did not come to the centre of Istanbul, where I could have met them in a more relaxed setting. I considered living in Zeytinburnu, but it would have been difficult to live in such a conservative neighbourhood as a single woman. I lost contact with potential

interviewees during times of irregular travel to Greece. Some informants changed their phone numbers frequently.

Van

	Families (Headed by women)	Families (Mixed)	Single Men
Asylum-seeker	3	19	8

Table 3: Interviews in Van according to immigration status and family structure

Van is the point of entry for migrants coming by land from countries east of Turkey, whether Iran, Afghanistan or further in South-East Asia. The province of Van borders Iran. When I first went to Van in 2007, and then again in 2008 for my work with the HCA, Van was primarily home to Iranian asylum-seekers and refugees. There were very few Afghans living there. Van has long been home to Iranian asylum-seekers. There has been a UNHCR field office at Van since the 1990s. Van is not a safe satellite city for Iranians because of its proximity to Iran. When I visited again in June 2011, the situation was reversed. There were around 200 Iranian asylum-seekers compared to approximately 2000 Afghan asylum-seekers in Van.

Van has a complex history in relation to conflict and displacement and has a tense political climate marked by the everyday presence of armed forces. A significant proportion of the local population were forcibly displaced as a result of internal conflict with the Turkish armed forces. Most refugee advocates I met also worked on related human rights issues and saw parallels between the predicament of Afghan refugees in Van and the socio-economic and political problems faced by the local population. In June 2011 there were national elections, which were preceded and followed by political tension and arrest. There were spontaneous protests and minor clashes on the streets, which I was able to avoid by staying out of certain parts of the

city. Van also has a high degree of economic inequality. On the one hand there is a class that is very wealthy, whose presence raises the cost of living. On the other hand there is evidence of extreme poverty.

I made two trips to Van in 2011, in June and then in September. I was unable to return as planned because two major earthquakes struck Van in November 2011. After the earthquake I lost contact with many informants. After the first earthquake rumours surfaced that the police wanted all Afghans to leave the city, so many left for different cities across Turkey. These rumours turned out to be unfounded, but the Afghans who left were given residency in other satellite cities. A few informants who had remained in Van told me that there were approximately 100 Afghan asylum-seekers still in Van in January 2011. It took me some months before I was able to renew contacts with some of my informants I met in Van. I have 30 interviews in Van in total.

- *June (5-28)*

I met with all the NGOs in Van that provide assistance for asylum-seekers and staff at the UNHCR including the representative. I carried out 26 interviews with asylum-seekers. I interviewed six single men and the interviews were with families, three of which were single female headed. I participated in English and Mathematics classes provided to Afghan asylum-seekers at the Turkish Education Volunteers Foundation throughout my stay, and joined private English classes for students enrolled into Turkish primary schools. These classes were useful places for meeting informants. I helped with the organisation of the Van International Refugee Day Celebration, where a majority of the attendees were Afghans. Other avenues of participant observation included spending time with Afghans in parks, their homes and also at the offices of NGOs, where I helped out from time to time.

- *September (9-12)*

I carried out 4 interviews, 2 with families and 2 with single men. In addition I re-interviewed contacts from NGOs, and some of the Afghan asylum-seeker families I had met earlier. I also went back to the English classes to re-connect with some of the students.

Kayseri

	Families (Headed by Women)	Families (Mixed)
Asylum-seeker	2	6

Table 4: Interviews in Kayseri according to immigration status and family structure

Kayseri is a large city in central Turkey with ancient roots. I went to Kayseri because, in contrast to Van, the few Afghan asylum-seekers were positioned in a city with a predominantly Iranian asylum seeking population. Through my work at the HCA I learnt that Iranian asylum-seekers with specific profiles in Kayseri receive targeted support from some NGOs or religious associations in the Baha'i or Christian faith. Therefore I wanted to know how the large presence of Iranian asylum-seekers who have different social and support networks would affect the decision-making processes of Afghan asylum-seekers in the city. I discuss my findings on the relations between Iranian and Afghan asylum-seekers in Chapter 6. In addition to Iranian asylum-seekers some Somali asylum-seekers were settled there following a high profile visit by high-level Turkish officials to Somaliland after I left the city.

The asylum-seekers had arrived in Kayseri fairly recently and some of them had lived in the cities of Van or Ağrı before that. The Kayseri Erciyes University hosts some foreign national students, including some Afghans. The head of the Afghan Refugee Association —a loose network of Afghan asylum-seekers and students in different cities in Turkey— was also living in Kayseri. I came across their statement of purpose in May and contacted him. He said that he would put me in touch with some of his representatives in different cities. I met him in Kayseri, and the representatives in Van and Istanbul. He introduced me to an asylum-seeker who helped me set up the majority of my interviews and also interpreted for me.

I conducted eight interviews with asylum-seeker families Kayseri between 21 and 24 August 2011. Two of the families were single female-headed families. At this time in Kayseri there were between 20-30 families and two or three single men from Afghanistan. I met with representatives of the two local NGOs that provide assistance to asylum-seekers. In addition, I participated in English classes given to asylum-

seekers and spent some time in the park with Iranian and Afghan asylum-seekers. I kept in touch with one of my informants and his wife for a longer period of time.

Sivas

	Families
Asylum-seeker	4
Regular	1

Table 5: Interviews in Sivas according to legal status and family status

Sivas is also a large city in the centre of Turkey and borders Kayseri. It was only a satellite city for Afghan asylum-seekers and had only been designated as such six months before my visit. The size of the asylum-seeker community was similar to Kayseri, there were about 30 families and a few single men. There was no NGO presence. I therefore thought Sivas would be an interesting contrast to Kayseri and Van. The Social Services and Child Protection Agency had a facility for Turkish children without families where they were also housing five Afghan unaccompanied minors. By coincidence the new Afghan police forces were being trained in the Sivas province, but there was no interaction between these trainees and the asylum-seekers as far as I know.

I initially set up a meeting with the representative of the Afghan Refugee Association who I had hoped would help me. He was out of the city when I was visiting, however, and introduced me via email to another Afghan asylum-seeker. It was through him that I did most of my interviews.

I was in Sivas between 24 and 28 August 2011. I interviewed four asylum-seeker families. In addition, I interviewed an Afghan businessman who had arrived in Turkey as a student had citizenship through marriage. I met with three unaccompanied minors to whom I was introduced by one of my informants and spoke to them. As I did not have permission to interview minors, I do not draw on these

conversations in this thesis. There was no NGO presence. I met with the Social Services officers attached to the Governorate to talk about the situation of the unaccompanied minors.

2.2.2 Interviews

In this section I will discuss how I conducted interviews, my ethical commitments as an interviewer, and the practical challenges that arose while organising and undertaking interviews. I often first met my informants through interviewing them, and used this for establishing further ties with them. Therefore I explained my ethical obligations as a researcher and what my informants can expect of me at the start of each interview. As discussed earlier, while working for the HCA I built up a network of contacts in Istanbul and in the satellite cities. NGO staff at Van were also influential in introducing me to some of informants who expanded my networks. I did not have a target number of interviews when I started my fieldwork. I was interested, instead, in capturing diverse migration experiences through interviews and using the interviews as opportunities to build rapport with informants.

Conducting Interviews

I started the interviews by introducing myself, my interpreter and giving the reason for asking for an interview— to complete my doctoral research. I briefly explained my research interests and what had brought me to these interests. I then moved on to detailing my ethical commitments, and those of my interpreter, such as keeping informants' names confidential and ensuring that they would not be identifiable. I illustrated these points through examples. I gave them my contact information and told them they could contact me anytime if they wanted to withdraw their consent. At this point, I also mentioned that the main output of the doctoral research would be of an academic nature. I insisted on making this point clear because while doing research masters' thesis I was confronted by a couple of my informants asserting that since my thesis had not been on the news therefore I had let them down. Although I had explained to them that I was a student, I concluded that I had not stated clearly enough that the only output that I could create at that time was only an academic

thesis. Therefore, I emphasised that while I would like my research eventually to contribute to publications that support the better treatment of refugees in Turkey, I do not have any journalistic ambitions and the primary output will be academic.

The type of interviews I conducted fell in between unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Bernard (2011) distinguishes between the two in a number of ways. He states that semi-structured interviews are scheduled and follow an ordered guide, which lists a range of topics that need to be covered in a particular order (Ibid.: 158). Unstructured interviewing, in contrast 'goes on all the time and just about anywhere' (Ibid.:156). While unstructured interviews follow a plan in the mind of the researcher, their purpose is 'to get people to open up and let them express themselves in their own terms, and at their own pace' (Ibid.:157). I conducted the interviews to allow for natural flow of conversation, which enabled me to establish better personal rapport with my informants. I used interviews as exploratory tools and as stepping-stones to creating relations with informants. Furthermore, while I prepared a guide with the list of the topics that I intended to address, I did not cover these topics in any particular order. What informants chose to talk about first was useful for understanding their immediate concerns. Frequently after—or even before—I had introduced myself, or my research topic, informants started talking to me about what they found to be the most pressing issue for them in Turkey. After we talked about this issue I led them through other topics. Interviews typically took between one or two hours, although some interviews were much longer, which is characteristic of unstructured interviews. Unless I had a commitment to be somewhere else, I let the interviews run as long as it felt natural. I did, however, ensure that I asked specific questions that I planned in advance before leaving the interview space. In some cases where informants were not particularly forthcoming and were not leading the conversation, interviews took on more of the qualities of a 'semi-structured' interview where I followed the order of my guide.

I covered the following topics in the interview:

- Basic Information: age, education, family situation, hometown, ethnicity
- Previous Migratory Experience: national and international migration, experience of border-crossings, experiences as migrants or refugees in other countries

- Life in Turkey:
    - Legal status (including UNHCR case status) and legal history
    - Access to basic rights: healthcare, education, aid, nutrition, employment, housing
    - Social relations: neighbours, landlords, employers and colleagues, people on the street, Afghans, other refugees or migrants
    - Relations with authorities: doctors, teachers, police, UNHCR, NGO staff
- Future plans: in the short and longer term, predicted outcome, hopes and aspirations

In conducting the interviews I pushed interviewees on explaining their decision-making processes and daily negotiations. With regard to future plans, for instance, I put forward different scenarios to prompt interviewees to explain their decision-making processes. I asked about alternatives to their current situation. If they had not applied for asylum, for example, I asked them why they had not and would they consider doing so in the future. I questioned informants who had followed different bureaucratic paths about why they had changed their minds. As I am interested in thought processes, I tried to get interviewees evaluate their lives, and to speak about their hopes and fears. One informant told me that 'he lay at bed night weighing all the bad things and good things about staying in Turkey in [his] head'. This kind of 'weighing up' of options were the kinds of conversations that I tried to bring about. Some interviewees spoke more explicitly about how they weighed different factors, such as finances or the dangers of irregular journeys, up in their minds and what circumstances would prompt them to change these evaluations. Sometimes informants reflected more openly on their migratory options in times of deeper hopelessness or possible change—such as with asylum status. When informants did not speak about their thought processes, I took it as an indicator of several factors: that they were not comfortable talking with me, they considered themselves to be stuck without any options or that they were not at a period in their lives where they were evaluating other migratory options. In order to understand the decision-making processes of my informants more clearly, I therefore tried to maintain contact after I interviewed them.

One migratory decision that was often less elaborated on related to the decision to leave or not to return to Afghanistan. Informants were often evasive or vague about their reasons for leaving Afghanistan. Given the potentially traumatic or emotionally charged nature of these questions, I never asked for a specific response and never pushed the issue. I arrived at the question by asking informants if they ever considered going (back) to Afghanistan in the future. The answer to this question was almost always 'no' because of the fear of *dushman* (enemies in Dari). The use of the word *dushman* often implies the existence of land disputes or conflict over *namous* (honour), which sometimes result in bloodshed. The reasons for the eruption of violence is often reduced to the Pashtun proverb '*zar, zan, zamin'* (women, gold, land) in the media and policy documents.[21] The factors that lead to such disputes are often compounded by ongoing insecurity, absence of effective justice mechanisms and years of displacement (e.g. CORI 2014). When my informants did confide in me their reasons for leaving Afghanistan, while they claimed to be fleeing *dushman* in what could be thought of as land disputes, the circumstances were often complex interplay of several factors such as powerful family members, conflict and potential or actual infringement of moral code. There may be several reasons for which my informants were reluctant to elaborate on the *dushman* or their reasons for not wanting to go to Afghanistan. These reasons could be complex, personal and sometimes involved sensitive information, which, if it became public knowledge, could potentially lead to prejudice from the community. The latter was a particular concern for women. Asylum-seekers who had spent longer times in Iran were weary of disclosing the time they spent in Iran because they thought that it would prejudice their asylum claim, as UNHCR was seen not to grant asylum to Afghans who come from Iran.[22] Therefore, I chose not to push the matter. But often prompted interviewees a couple of times.

[21] See for instance: UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2009), UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Afghanistan, July 2009, Rev., p. 39. available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/4a6477ef2.html [accessed 2 February 2015] or, Tom Coghlan's article for the Daily Telegraph 'Afghan blood feud ends after 30 years', June 2008, available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/2061531/Afghan-blood-feud-ends-after-30-years.html [accessed 2 February 2015]

[22] I will discuss this issue further in Chapter 4 on journeys and Chapter 5 on gatekeepers.

During the interviews, I encouraged my informants to explain the legal system as they experienced it in their own terms to better understand their 'legal consciousness' - although I was not familiar with this concept at the time. As discussed in the introduction, I initially conceived of migratory options mainly in terms of bureaucratic paths— as a choice between being irregular and seeking asylum. As I continued my fieldwork it became apparent that there were several other decisions that my informants made within each of these realms in relation to negotiations with the police, hospital staff and NGOs, for instance. These revealed how much of bureaucratic terms such as 'third country' or 'special recognition' had filtered down, and been interpreted in different ways.

I identified three main areas of vulnerability arising out of precarious legal status, mental health and age. During my fieldwork I was sensitive to distressing matters that arose during interviews. Many of my informants struggle with hopelessness and uncertainty, which frame their decision-making processes. When I sensed that something was particularly difficult for them to talk about, I did not push the matter. In my experience, one of the most distressing topics to talk about for asylum-seekers often relates to their reasons for leaving their countries of origin or previous residence. I asked informants whether they would consider going back to Iran or Afghanistan in the future, for instance, but did not ask them directly about why they left. Some wanted to share more than others. My training and experience in interviewing survivors of trauma and other mental health issues contributed to the way in which I approached my informants and phrased my questions and comments.

I did not compensate my informants for their time doing the interview but I strived to take food and drinks to every house I visited and insisted on paying for whatever we consumed outside. I arranged my meetings so as not to inconvenience my informants who were working. I always provided my informants with information about local NGOs and other ways of getting support for their problems. I have also promised them that I would send them the publications that would come of this thesis. Some of my informants were interested in how Afghan migrants have been studied in the West, so I provided them with articles that I had been studying. I helped my informants who

were teaching with language questions. I gave gifts to informants who were particularly helpful and supportive, such as interpreters, when I left. Some of my informants wanted me to speak on their behalf to NGOs, UNHCR or other authorities. I did not do this. I explained that I had no official role that would permit me to do so in the eyes of these organisations and that there was no advantage for them of me to do so. Instead I offered to help them find contact information and encouraged them to pursue these avenues themselves.

Working with Interpreters

I used Afghan interpreters, some of whom are also my key informants, for most of my interviews. I wanted to learn Dari or Farsi before going to the field. I was able to learn some basic conversational Farsi with vocabulary that was targeted on the topics I knew would arise. I had private lessons with some Iranian tutors in Oxford with whom I practiced questions that I would ask as well as the kind of answers that I would receive based on my previous work experience. When I went to Istanbul I was unable to find anyone who would be able to cater for my needs. The courses on offer, for instance, were targeted to teaching classical Farsi, which is not what my informants would speak. I could not find someone to tutor me in Dari either. Therefore I usually had an interpreter with me when I doing my interviews. I was nevertheless follow to the conversations to some degree.

I had six interpreters in total: three in Van and one for each other city. Two of my interpreters were female. Only one of my interpreters interpreted in Pashto, while the rest spoke Dari and Farsi. Three of my interpreters translated interviews into English and Turkish, while the remaining three translated the interviews into Turkish only. I consider all of these individuals to be my key informants. They also introduced me to some of my informants. They were also often individuals who were known by other Afghans or the NGOs to have good language skills. When I met them, they also interviewed me before offering their support. They asked me many questions about my past, myself, and my research project. In fact one of my interpreters in Van, Gulbahar, held off from being interviewed herself up until the last day or my visit in Van. Through her own experience, she felt that it was only then that she was convinced of my good stature as a researcher. She even let me interview her brother

before she gave an interview herself even though we spent a lot of time talking about different issues.

Through my previous experience of working with community interpreters, both trained or in the process of being trained, I was aware of some of the common issues that arise. I spoke with the interpreters before we did the interviews to go over what my research project is, the kind of questions that I will be asking and how I want to conduct the interviews. Firstly I ensured that the interpreters and the informants understood that what they said would be treated confidentially. Secondly, I asked my interpreters to explain to my informants that we may interrupt the informants if the informants spoke to fast or it became difficult for my interpreter to remember what was being said. If this happened it was purely to ensure that we could record everything they were telling us. I paid attention to this issue, because I know that the way in which interpreters or Legal Officers cut off asylum-seekers at UNHCR interviews, is something that asylums seekers find very frustrating. As they explain their stories with great emotion or try to communicate complicated facts, it can feel rude or insensitive to interrupt someone. However, when I felt it necessary—in situations where someone was saying something very emotional, for instance— I would sometimes let the conversation come to a natural end and then respectfully go over what was said. Thirdly, as I was able to understand some of the conversation and also spent time with my interpreters before they started interpreting for me, I was able to ensure that the tone of the interview was respectful and sensitive. Finally, it was usually informants who were older or who did not work who did not speak Turkish or English. As these informants tended to be in families, there was almost always one member of the family who would be able to follow what I was asking and its interpretation. This gave me some confidence that if there were problems, there would be an intervention.

I occasionally went accompanied by an interpreter to speak with informants who were fluent in Turkish or English. Typically I met these informants through my interpreters. My interpreters would stay for the whole or part of the interview sitting next to me. Even when I did not require an interpreter for their language skills, I sometimes needed their presence as an intermediary.

I found my informants very valuable sources of support. I asked them about logistical issues to do with transport or language difficulties I had. In cases where I was concerned that I may have offended informants or had any other cultural queries, I asked them about it. I was able to offer them different kinds of support such as help with language, or information about NGOs or government offices.

I was unable to offer my interpreters any financial support. I did not have funding for it and I was concerned about both the ethics and legality of employing someone. The only time that I did offer financial compensation was to an interpreter who had been unemployed and had been struggling to find enough food. I noticed that he was losing weight from his already tiny frame.[23] At the time I was very concerned for his wellbeing and would not accept any of my attempts to get him tea or food. At the same time I had the opportunity to work as an interpreter for a delegation from UNDP that was covering the impact of the national elections on women in Van. I was paid about 80 TL for two hours of interpretation. I then offered this sum to my informant asking him to interpret and find me new interviewees for the remaining ten days of my time in Van. He was very resistant to the idea. I said that this was this money was designated for an interpreter and that it was fair because it was a similar amount that would get paid for two weeks of employment in Van. He reluctantly accepted it. I observed that my interpreter was exceptionally talented with an impeccable command of Turkish despite his minimal education at primary school in Afghanistan and was a very well liked and respected member of the community despite only being 19 years old. He was known to some staff from the local NGOs because he helped his friends with interpretation as well as working for the police. I suggested to all my contacts that they should use him as an interpreter if possible. They were unable to offer him a job then. He got a temporary job as an interpreter for a visiting NGO. After the earthquake, however, he played a crucial role working for several organisations that visited the area helping the remaining refugees. As a result he received certificates from different NGOs. His ability to create networks of support and then to position himself as an important member of the Afghan community and civil society make him one of the informants who are ‘resilient’.

[23] Because of his visibility in the community, I chose not to use the pseudonym that I assigned him in the rest of my thesis.

Taking Notes

As recording devices made informants uncomfortable I decided not to use them. Since I was with an interpreter during most of my interviews, yet I understood some of the questions and answers, I was often able during the interviews to take detailed shorthand notes, which I studied and completed afterwards. I would sometimes go over the notes with my interpreters to make sure that I did not miss anything. I took my laptop to some interviews to take notes while my informants spoke. I did not like this method, however, because it meant that I lost eye contact with my informants and the conversation was always accompanied by typing noises. These interviews do have the advantage of being much more detailed. The fact that I was not able to use a recording device meant that I was not able to capture everything I was told. There are however other advantages of taking notes by hand. I find taking notes a more effective way of getting consent. Some of my informants, for instance, told me to stop taking notes when they talked about something they wanted to keep confidential. In my previous experience of interviewing I used recording devices and other methods of note taking, but I found that interviewees would look at the device or be distracted by it; it was rare for anyone to ask me to stop the tape. During the interviews for the present research, on two occasions informants asked me to read what I had written and then restate what they said from my notes, for instance. It also meant that since my informants were used to me taking notes, I would be able to carry my notebook everywhere and take notes in social situations apart from interviews. It became a joking matter for some of my informants that I had my notebook with me at all times. I tried using my recording device for my interviews with government officials, but only one gave consent.

2.3 Reflexive Critique

In this section I reflect on how different aspects of my identity influenced my fieldwork. I start the reflexive critique of my fieldwork by focusing on how my past work experience in the field of migration influenced my forming relationships with my informants. I then discuss how conducting anthropological fieldwork at 'home',

given that I am also Turkish, affected my fieldwork. Finally, I consider the role of gender relations in shaping the fieldwork.

2.3.1 Activism

One of the main challenges I faced on the field was in reconciling my role as a student researcher with my previous professional involvement in the field. My experience working for an NGO that was well known to asylum-seekers – though not always in a favourable light – played an important role in my fieldwork. Although I had stopped working for the HCA before I started my interviews I was sometimes introduced in various contexts to asylum-seekers as having worked there. Given my knowledge of the system many people wanted to talk to me about their experiences during interviews and the difficulties they encounter in their daily lives as asylum-seekers. As I discuss earlier and further in Chapter 5 , I supported my informants providing with public information such the roles and contact information for NGOs or other organisations in the field as well as descriptions of terms such as 'refugee' or 'special recognition'. I did not, however, act on their behalf in any capacity or do favours to my informants using professional or personal contacts.

It is important to recognise moral and ethical position of the researcher as part of the reflexive critique of any research methodology. I have been working with refugees and irregular migrants in Turkey intermittently since 2003. I am attracted to the field both through academic curiosity as well as a moral commitment to the betterment of the lives of migrants in Turkey. Turkey, and the various agencies involved, have fallen short of ensuring that asylum-seekers and irregular migrants access their basic political and socio-economic rights. When the issue arose, I made it clear to my informants that this was my informed view. I think it is the right of my informants to know my perspective on their predicament. Furthermore, talking about this openly led to interesting discussions with my informants stated that they admired the then-Prime Minister and that given the poverty in Turkey, it is rather the failing of the international community to take care of them and to resettle them in wealthier countries. I do not, however, have a research agenda to prove particular injustices such that Jacobsen and Landau (2003) warn would undermine a researcher's professional commitment.

My association with the HCA presented challenges to establishing my identity as an independent student researcher. I tried to make it clear that there was no exchange of information between HCA staff and myself about the lives of my informants who were their clients. This was particularly a challenge when staff from the HCA were visiting Van during the period I was conducting research. During this time some of my informants approached the HCA to become their clients. This happened in different ways: some of them were referred to by other NGOs, some of them had heard of HCA's arrival and approached them independently and a couple of them approached them on my advice. I do not know how many of my informants were accepted as HCA's clients, as some of them would not have qualified due to their case status. One of my informants who approached the HCA on my advice and with encouragement of his friends, later accused me of disclosing information about his asylum case to a member of HCA staff without his permission. He claimed that he had only told me his 'true story', and was therefore disappointed that I had betrayed his confidence. Furthermore, as he could not speak Turkish at that point, he spoke to an interpreter using my phone, which then threatened to compromise my integrity as a researcher in the broader community as well as my working relationship with this interpreter. Although I was certain that I had not, I checked with the member of staff whether she had thought that I had disclosed any such information. She reassured me that I had not and that she was only questioning my informant on the self-contradicting statements he made during their interviews. When she read the answers he had given to her questions, he claimed not to have said some of the things he had told her and blamed me. He later told me that he had been mistaken and we have since kept up our relationship. This was however one of the most challenging situations I confronted during my fieldwork.

2.3.2 Anthropology at Home

I am a Turkish citizen and have spent about half of my life in Turkey. As I lived at my parents' house for most of my fieldwork, I did anthropology at home literally and figuratively. There were of course several advantages to the situation. Being Turkish allowed me to conduct research without any visa restrictions, to navigate the logistical challenges easier and to be able to communicate with informants and other

interviewees. I was aware that I may be oblivious to important aspects of my surroundings in Turkey in a way that an anthropologist not familiar with Turkey would not. In other words, that I would suffer from so called 'home-blindness' (e.g. Eriksen 2001: 30).

In many regards, during my master's' research, professional experience or doctoral research I found that 'home-blindness' did not affect me as my interviewees or informants, as asylum-seekers, occupied an alienated and ambiguous position with regard to the broader Turkish society. Through my fieldwork I visited neighbourhoods of Istanbul and cities that I had never been to before. My research provided me with the opportunity to see sides of Turkish society that I would never have done otherwise. Therefore my field sites always seemed fresh and new.

One kind of 'home-blindness' that I was perhaps affected by was familiarity with certain kinds of narratives about seeking asylum and bureaucracy. When I went into the field, I already knew how the asylum system operated from the other side and expected to hear certain kinds of observations or descriptions of it. It was only when I was working through my field notes that I discovered that I had adopted much of the bureaucratic narrative. I immediately understood what my informants meant when they described Turkey as being 'the third country for Afghans', for instance, when they meant that they will not be re-settled to a third country. I asked whether they have their T.C., which is an abbreviation for the Republic of Turkey referring to one of their temporary I.D. cards. While this was an advantage in being able to communicate effectively, I later wonder whether I also missed an opportunity to probe some narratives further, and to have asked them to explain more fully what they understood by certain terminologies and legal statuses, instead of primarily trying to understand their reactions to them.

Despite the social and geographical separation between myself and most of my informants, my social and personal lives did merge to some degree with my life as a researcher. When I visit my family in Turkey I get in touch with my former colleagues and informants. In Istanbul I occasionally encounter informants when I am out socialising or running errands or informants visiting me get in touch with me. As

some of my informants have moved to different parts of the world, I have visited some and have invitations to visit others. However, the use of social media among my informants dispels the analogy of anthropologists as tourists who are 'are free to pick up and go' (Crick 1992:188) that was prevalent until recently. I use Facebook and Skype to keep in touch with my informants wherever I am in the world and my informants expect me to respond to their messages.

2.3.3 Gender

When starting my fieldwork I assumed that, as a woman, I would meet more women than men. The majority of my informants, however, were men. I met most of my single male informants who are not accompanied by family in the public, mainly at parks but also, occasionally, teahouses. When I went into family homes I was always accompanied by an interpreter. The only time I felt that being a woman was a major hindrance was in meeting irregular migrants in Istanbul. I visited two houses exclusively inhabited by men, entering the house accompanied by one of my key informants. Although I found the interactions very useful, both myself and my key informant felt uncomfortable. This was also partly due to the fact that the men all worked very long hours and only had a very few hours on a Sunday for a break. Some of the men preferred to go to play football. Therefore, unlike in the satellite cities, I did not have the possibility of any chance encounters or time to chat in the park. There was a lack of opportunities for consolidating our interactions. It may also be that as irregular migrants, these men were more concerned to preserve their identities than asylum-seekers, who are used to telling their stories to third parties they believe to be acting in their interest.

At a work in progress seminar I attended before embarking on my fieldwork, a participant suggested that men may be less forthcoming with their emotions than women. I did not find this to be the case. I witnessed informants being angry and sad and conveying their senses of hopelessness or joy on various different occasions. Some issues were harder to talk about with men. I heard that some had girlfriends, for instance, who were a significant part of their emotional and social lives. It was very rarely that an informant told me about their love interests in Turkey. On one occasion, I was speaking to some men in Istanbul who were teasing one of the men in Dari

about his active love life. I was there with a key informant and a female staff member from an international organisation who documenting the living conditions of irregular migrants in Turkey. My key informant told us what was going on and the woman asked them whether they had any girlfriends. The conversation went silent, and they made it clear that they did not want to talk about this, and my key informant warned us that it was not a good idea to press the question. I did not find that women were necessarily much more open about talking about their husbands, only single women spoke more openly about their relationships in the context of the protection issues it raised for them.

The women I spoke with were mostly younger than me and already married with families. I would sometimes be asked about my age and whether I was married or had children. I sometimes told people that my father wants me to finish my studies before I get married. Some informants said that this was good, because I would not be able to do the work I was doing if I were married. My informants often seemed surprised that I was not married. Although, I wonder how the fieldwork would have been shaped, and how my relationships with informants might have differed, had I been at a different stage of my life.

One of the ways in which it was difficult for me to speak with my female informants was when they were accompanied by male relatives. When I visited families for the first time, usually all the members of the family were present. In bigger families there would usually be an older male relative who would answer the majority, if not all of my questions. Women would also be serving food and tea and coming in and out of the kitchen. Therefore I tried to meet with women separately but I was not always able to do so. There were a few times when I was not able to follow up with female informants on whether their views diverged from the older men in the family. Sometimes younger sons in the family were similarly more silent.

2.4 Crafting the Text

In this section I will explain the decisions I took while writing up my findings regarding the balance of presenting sensitive information illustrative of my central arguments without causing any harm to informants. While the thesis is addressed to

an academic audience, I am aware that my findings may be read by a non-academic audience, such as policymakers, staff of the organisations that supported me and journalists. I promised my informants and anyone who gave me interviews that they would be able to read the thesis and subsequent publications if they wished. This is a particular concern since, contrary to my expectations, only few of my informants seemed to have left Turkey or their communities. In addition to discussing how I upheld my ethical commitments while producing the text, this section is also an introduction to my analytical strategy.

One of the central arguments of my thesis is that migration decisions can be best understood in the broader context of migrants' lives. Firstly, I argue that what appears to be a decision about legal status, for instance, may be a more complex decision about family or personal aspirations. Secondly, I demonstrate how the way in which some informants managed risks associated with one aspect of their lives can also be seen in the ways they acted in other spheres of their lives, and also how this was not the case for other informants. I can best illustrate such arguments with reference to entirety of my informants' lives. By doing so, however, I would render my informants identifiable to readers who may be familiar with the field. This was a particular problem for discussing those informants I characterise as 'resilient' because of the leader-like positions they occupy in their communities, which in turn, is a defining quality of being 'resilient'. In an attempt to render them less identifiable I selectively removed some information about my informants such as their cities of residence, legal status or their names. Some of these informants have worked with other researchers or NGOs. Collaborating with researchers is also a way of managing risks in migration process because it creates a wider social network and access to more information. I adopt three strategies for protecting my informants' identities. Firstly, I excluded from the thesis parts of conversations that would either make individuals identifiable or were disclosed to me in privacy. Secondly, in referring to some informants I omit some information such as their legal status, profession, family status or cities of residence. Finally, I write about my informants without using their pseudonyms. As a consequence, I cannot include some material that formed the basis the typology. Furthermore, the reader may come away with the impression of an incomplete description of informants, but this is intentional.

In addition to removing information that would render informants identifiable, I exclude information relating to irregular activities. I either provide minimal descriptions or do not mention some practices I witnessed. This was particularly an issue with regard to smuggling and irregular employment. I took these decisions so as not to draw the attention of state authorities to certain practices, which informants depend on for their survival. Irregularity, however, is a difficult issue to write about in the context of migrant decision-making, because of its implications of immorality and criminality. It is understood that irregularity is often a necessary outcome of being a refugee and that irregular travel is a consequence of the narrowing legal space in popular destination countries. It was a challenging balance to demonstrate informants' agency in their decisions that involved irregularity while also acknowledging that they had limited options and were 'predisposed to be cooperate' with the authorities (Costello and Kaytaz 2013b) or were willing to abide by the legal requirements placed on them as foreigners. Furthermore, I argue that my informants did view irregularity as a 'risk' in and of itself because they did not think of irregular immigration status as a moral legal transgression or as a costly decision. Such statements may be falsely interpreted to challenge the law-abidingness and moral character of my informants although it is an expression of their legal consciousness shaped by their particular experiences of migration and citizenship of a chronically fragile state.

In order to ensure continued consent I excluded some information my informants disclosed over time as our relationships continued and through interactions using social media. In designing my research I aimed to keep in touch with informants continuously to gain an insights into how their decision-making processes changed over time. As discussed earlier, interviews were often the starting point of my relationships with my informants rather than the conclusion of a longer period of acquaintance. I kept in touch with my informants in several ways: meeting in person, speaking on the phone and messaging with emails or on Facebook. As my relationships evolved with some of my informants, it became unclear as to whether they were speaking to me as a researcher or an acquaintance. This was especially so when I did not have my notebook with me or when we communicated via messages or phone. When my informants talked about difficult aspects of their lives, I thought that

bringing up the issue of consent, again, would be too insensitive. Therefore, for the most part, I use information on my informants' migration decisions only in the broadest terms. I omitted the details of conversations of personal nature. In short, when I had doubts and could not confirm consent with my informants regarding the use of particular information I considered this not having full consent.

A related sphere of unclear consent is information on Facebook, especially that which is accessible by the public— not only by their 'friends' on Facebook. Through Facebook connections I was able to keep a track of some of my informants and arrange meetings, as their phone numbers and addresses change so frequently. My informants also get in touch with me on Facebook. Informants' Facebook profiles gave me insights into their emotional lives, political opinions, personal tastes and social connections. It was particularly revealing about certain attitudes towards Turkish society and current affairs. During the anti-government protests in Istanbul in the summer of 2013, for instance, some of my informants were posting pro-government messages on their profiles including videos prepared by conservative clerics. I had assumed that as refugees they would be sympathetic towards protestors who were getting beaten up by the police, and was surprised to find that they supported the government. Although I was curious, I did not follow up with informants on these topics, however, because of the sensitive nature of political debate in Turkey and out of respect for their privacy. The only instance where I make explicit reference to information I got from a social media platform is in relation to the Linked-In profile of a young refugee.

A final consideration in crafting the text concerns the transcriptions and translation of interviews and conversations. Many of the interviews were conducted in languages that either the interpreters or the informants were not fluent in. Furthermore, I was not always able to write down full sentences. When using my informants' accounts in the thesis, I endeavoured to strike a balance between keeping clarity and maintaining the integrity of the meaning of their statements, which was sometimes ambiguous. Therefore, I made minimal grammatical changes to my original transcripts.

2.5 Informants

As I have discussed in the Methods section of this chapter, I interviewed several families where I spoke to more than one member of the family. Therefore I have 55 interviews but more than 55 informants. In some cases I kept in touch with more than one member of a family, and a couple of times with informants who were not. Below, I present the distribution of the interviews by city firstly according to their immigration status and secondly according to their gender and family status, by way of providing an overview of the demographic and legal spread of my informants.

	Asylum-seeker	Irregular	Student	Regular
Istanbul	3	6	3	
Sivas	4			1
Kayseri	8			
Van	30			

Table 6: Interviews according to the cities and immigration status

	Families (Headed by women)	Families (Mixed)	Single Men	Single Women
Istanbul		4	8	
Sivas		5		
Kayseri	2	6		
Van	3	19	8	

Table 7: Interviews according to cities and family structure

In addition to informants I interviewed, I also met with other Afghan migrants in Turkey. I occasionally refer to conversations I had with these individuals in the thesis.

It is conventional practice to identify the key informants or 'key associates' (Okely 2012: 142). For some informants 'key associate' is a suitable description because of

their assistance to my research by introducing me to other migrants, accompanying me to interviews and occasionally interpreting for me. I characterise nine informants as key associates or informants during my fieldwork. As they are more easily identified, and some have since worked with other researchers, however, I will not identify them by their pseudonyms. Furthermore, most of the informants with whom I had close contact with and who helped me with my research are informants that I characterise as being 'resilient'. As I have discussed earlier, this is probably not a coincidence as working with outsiders can lead to useful information and networks, which I argue is a way in which resilient informants manage risk.

When I started constructing the analytical typology of attitudes to managing risk, I was hoping that I could provide a list of informants for each category. Some of my informants do clearly fall into one category. My informants such as Fateh and Ali, whose journeys to and from Turkey are mentioned in Chapter 4 on Journeys are resilient. Furthermore, I return to Fateh and Ali to illustrate resilient attitudes in all the spheres of migrants' lives in Turkey throughout the thesis. Some informants, such as Ibrahim, however, have different attitudes towards managing risk in separate aspects of their lives. I will argue that Ibrahim is 'resigned' with regard to how he manages aspects of his life in Turkey such as finding employment or sending his children to school. His attitudes towards his asylum application, however, are however different where he is more proactive about pursuing his claim, obtaining information and advocating for himself and his family. Therefore informants may fit into different categories in different aspects of their lives. Another challenge of producing such a list is that I do not have information about all aspects of the lives of all my informants. I met some informants only once or twice and our conversations only covered limited aspects of their lives. Finally, and most importantly, creating such a list would imbue the typology with more permanence and fixity than it has in my conceptualisation of it. The typology is an analytical tool for explaining diversity in migration decisions during a snapshot in time rather than a system for labelling individuals. I will discuss the merits and shortcomings of the typology in greater detail in the final chapter of the thesis. I also will introduce informants that typify each of the three attitudes in the conclusion to each of the ethnographic chapters.

2.6 Conclusion

I have discussed all aspects of my research in this chapter, from the design of fieldwork to my decisions about how to represent my fieldwork data in my thesis. My ethical commitment to my informants was an overarching theme of the chapter. Before I could start recruiting informants for my research I terminated my employment at the HCA, which I had undertaken in order to gain background information on the situation of Afghan migrants and to rebuild my social networks. In conducting interviews I obtained informed consent and provided my informants with the possibility to withdraw their consent. While undertaking my fieldwork, I was careful to portray myself accurately as a student researcher rather than a professional in the field. In writing up my ethnographic material, I have sought to protect my informants' identities by using pseudonyms and not disclosing information that would render them identifiable without undermining the central arguments of the thesis.

In the final section of this chapter I discussed briefly the typology that I put forward as an explanation for the heterogeneous decision-making processes of my informants. I will return to the discussion of this typology throughout the thesis. The following chapter lays out the conceptual framework that underlies this typology.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework: Migrant Decision-Making and Risk

3.1 Introduction

The discussion of the theoretical framework for my thesis will begin with an outline of decision-making in the migration literature. Four gaps are identified in this literature for the purpose of this discussion. Firstly, the literature has been concerned with decisions regarding the initial decision to migrate and the choice of country of destination, rather than the succession of decisions made after leaving the country of origin. Secondly, it does not address heterogeneity of within-group decision-making. Thirdly, the migration literature fails to situate migration within a broader web of life decisions, of which migratory decisions form one part. Finally, the literature mostly only engages with risk in migration implicitly and from a positivist perspective. It therefore fails to recognise the socio-cultural and subjective construction of risk. This thesis argues that understanding risk and uncertainty within its subjective ad socio-cultural contexts would address the main shortcomings in the migration literature. Given the importance of locating migration decision-making within its broader context, the subsequent section analyses anthropological debates about decision-making.

The second section looks at how decision-making has been studied in anthropology. The relevant literature has been centred on two dichotomies: that of emotion versus reason and that of structure versus agency. The former seeks to understand the subjectivity and objectivity in human action and the latter seeks to understand the interplay between society and the individual. These dichotomies fail to offer satisfactory explanatory models for migration decisions, because they are too closely intertwined to constitute analytically distinct categories. Furthermore, theories on structure and agency do not focus on intra-group variation.

The third section addresses how socio-cultural approaches to risk provide a conceptual framework for this thesis. The section begins with the definition of risk

and discussion of socio-cultural approaches to it. Then, with examples from recent research, it is argued that risk is an analytical tool that provides a socially, culturally and subjectively grounded understanding of decision-making by transcending some of the shortcomings of the above dichotomies. Fourthly, the existing migration literature on risk and migration is discussed. The final section is an overview of literature on resilience and self-efficacy as tools for explaining intra-group diversity in the migration context.

3.2 Decision-Making in Migration Theory

Migration theory falls broadly into five categories: neoclassical models of migration, new economic models of migration, network theory, labour market theory and world systems theory (e.g. Castles 2009; Massey et al 1993, 1998). Economic theories are of particular interest for this thesis, as they seek to explain micro-level decision-making processes whereas labour market theory and world systems theories are explicitly concerned with macro-level forces, such as the labour market in shaping broader migration trends. Neoclassical models of migration explain migratory decisions as individual decisions based on a cost benefit analysis, which seeks to maximise gain and reduce risk (Stark 1984; Stark and Bloom 1985; Stark and Taylor 1991). The new economics of migration situates the decision-making process within the household or the broader community rather than solely with the individual. This approach brings attention to the social aspect of migratory decisions, but it is vague on questions such as whose interest within the household prevails in the decision-making process and among the constituent members of the household. This approach explains the decision to migrate, and the choice of destination based on a cost-benefit analysis similar to the neoclassical model of migration. Economic theories of migration were mostly influential in the 1950s and 1960s, but have continued to influence migration research (e.g. Deutsche Bank: 2003, De Jong 2000; Gubhaju and De Jong 2009). These analyses assume that decisions to migrate are taken in the best interest of the individual or household. What constitutes best interest is interpreted within the rationalist paradigm of the 1950s and 1960s that held profit maximisation and risk minimisation to be paramount in decision-making. These analyses do not elaborate on how interests are constructed within social and cultural norms and power relations,

and ignore 'risk-seeking' behaviour. Thus, although economic theories of migration are considered to be micro-level analyses, they explain migration as a response to macro-level economic forces. Consequently their analysis is narrowly focused on the economic gains and losses from an *etic* standpoint.

Migration network theory is concerned with the role of migrants' social networks in shaping the migration process. Migrant networks are defined broadly as 'sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through bonds of kinship, friendship and shared community origin' (Massey et al. 1993: 443). Migration networks are thought to inform migrant decision-making as an asset in reducing certain costs associated with migration (e.g. Massey et al 1993) and a factor in augmenting these costs (e.g. Düvell and Jordan 2002). Migration network theory situates migration decision-making processes within the social lives of migrants and recognises migrants' agency in the construction and use of social networks in navigating broader structural restrictions (e.g. Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Dahinden 2005). Dahinden (2005) argues that not all transnational networks are socially relevant to the migrants that participate in these networks and migrants may choose to activate or create them strategically. Collyer (2005), for instance, found that Algerian migrants chose to use social networks with weak ties, as defined by Gurak and Cases (1992), to migrate to the UK, instead of migrating to France where they had networks with strong ties through their family because of strict migration controls in France.

Migration networks have been used primarily to account for the 'path-dependency of migration' (Collyer 2005: 700). That is, they are deployed to explain the emergence geographical patterns of migration. Even when networks are useful for examining within-group diversity, such as in Collyer's (2005) research on Algerian migrants, the focus is on understanding broader trends in migration, rather than individuals' use of networks in shaping their own trajectories. The social relations the literature addresses are, therefore, only those that serve to construct a particular trajectory. Furthermore, migration networks have been found to offer only a partial analysis of the emergence of certain patterns. de Haas (2010: 1588), for instance, argues that focusing on networks alone in the analysis of internal migration dynamics ignores the 'indirect

feedback dynamics that operate through the impact of migration on the sending and receiving contexts, changing the initial conditions under which migration took place'. The 'migration industry' which includes ' clusters of travel agents, lawyers, bankers, labour recruiters, brokers, interpreters and housing agents, as well as human smugglers and traffickers, which have an interest in and tend to facilitate the continuation of migration' (Ibid.: 1590).

This thesis demonstrates that it is not only *how* networks are formed and the choice of which social relations to maintain that matter, but also *how migrants position themselves socially*. Manifesting leader-like qualities or being socially isolated, for instance, is an important way to manage risk. Focusing on networks ignores migrants' social relations with gatekeepers, such as police officers or staff at NGOs, who may not be included in migrants' networks. The thesis shows that these relations are an important aspect of how migrants managing risk and influence the social positioning of migrants within their community. Furthermore, the use of social media such as Facebook, a prominent feature of the social lives of Afghan migrants, makes it harder to define networks in this context.

The question driving migration theory is 'why international migration begins' (Massey, Arango et al. 1993:432). The migratory decisions that have been central to most of migration theory are the decision to leave and the choice of country of destination. Migratory decisions made *after* leaving the country of destination and arriving at a country of destination, almost always in the West, are for the most part neglected. De Jong (2000), for instance, in his work on the role of expectations, norms and gender in migration decision-making, only considers the 'stay decisions' and the 'move decisions'. Carling (2002) similarly bases his research on the decision to leave the country and the choice of country of destination. Furthermore, several migratory decisions may overlap in research creating a conceptual confusion as to the decision that is being analysed. Zimmermann (2010) writes about the initial decision of the Somalis she interviewed to leave their home country, their choice of UK as a country of destination and the decision to seek asylum. In cases where there is no journey transiting through other countries, such as Cape Verdean migration to Portugal (Carling 2002) or Senegalese migration to the Canary Islands (Hernandez-

Carratero 2008) the decision to migrate overlaps with perceptions of risk associated with options in the mode of transport or legal status upon arrival. Research on the use of social networks (e.g. Koser 1997; Collyer 2005) and the choice of country of destination (Koser and Pinkerton 2002; Thielemann 2003; Zetter, Griffiths et al. 2003) reflects the perspective of migrants in their country of final destination. This excludes from research the many migrants who set out to but do not make it to the country of final destination, and the reports are consequently biased towards 'successful' migrants. The migration process is a chain of decisions (Carling 2002). The strong sending/receiving country bias in research on migrant decision-making ignores the decisions made whilst *en route* or being in another country, which falls into the scope of this thesis.

Despite situating migratory processes within the broader social and geo-political context, migration theory fails to ground decision-making within the migrant's wider web of decisions and often ignores 'immobility' in the migration process. Migration decisions are not taken in isolation of other life decisions. Lock and Kaufert (1998), found that literature on reproductive decision-making processes tends to describe women as though consumed with reproduction. The same analogy can be drawn for theories on migration, which isolate migrants from the broader emotional, physical and cultural world that informs their decision-making processes. Migration scholars who work with ageing migrants, for instance, have shown the significance of life stages in the meaning given to migration (e.g. Gardner 2002, Oliver 2008). Economic theories of migration are narrowly focused on the economic gains of migration. Network theory has been credited for embedding migrant decision-making in social relations (e.g. Massey, Arango et al. 1993; Massey, Arango et al. 1998; Brettell 2000). It falls short, however, of offering an understanding of the social dynamics that create and sustain networks, in particular the role of cultural values that are 'carried with networks' (Dahinden 2005: 205). Thus it provides only a partial account of the cultural context of migrant decision-making. Furthermore, as this thesis argues, immobility is as much a migration decision as is mobility. However, migration research has accorded greater priority to mobile migrants or migrants who have settled in some sense. Although the question of 'involuntary immobility', addressed by Carling (2002), as it pertains to the immobility at the country of origin rather than

immobility in the migration process, thus it relates to the initial decision to migrate. The 'mobility turn' in migration studies further prioritised 'mobility' at the expense of reinforcing the division between mobility and immobility, while according the latter lesser analytical status (Franquesa 2011). This thesis shows that all decisions that migrants make, relating to mobility or immobility, can best be understood in the context of their everyday lives, the meaning they accord to migration and the changes that come about with the passage of time.

It has thus far been argued that, for the purpose of this thesis, migration theory has four main limitations. Migration theory has primarily been concerned with the initial decision to migrate and the choice of country of destination rather than focusing on the 'chain of decisions' that follows the decision to leave the country of origin. Secondly, the focus on explaining particular trends means that the experience of migrants who do not conform with broader trends fall outside the scope of research. Thus migration theory does not account for within-group diversity of decision-making but instead focuses on the explanation of certain trends or choices. Thirdly, migration theory, by focusing on 'migration', tends to divorce decision-making from accompanying life-decisions and neglects 'immobility' as a migratory decision. Finally, as illustrated above, migration theories that seek to explain decision-making often make reference to risk calculation and assume that migrants are risk averse in their decision-making processes. This literature does not take into account the subjective and socio-cultural constructions of risk by migrants, or seek to understand how migrants tolerate those factors identified as risks. This thesis demonstrates that risk perception, as understood in its subjective, social and cultural context, is a conceptual tool that addresses the above shortcomings of migration theory about migrant decision-making processes.

3.3 Decision-Making in Social Theory and Anthropology

Anthropological theories of decision-making centre on two dichotomies: reason/emotion and structure/agency. The former dichotomy, referred to as *Homo Duplex* by Durkheim (1915: 154) is concerned with cognitive processes that inform an individual's actions. Reason, or mind, represents objectivity in decision-making

while emotion, or the body, represents subjective aspects in decision-making. The structure/agency debate is concerned with restrictions placed on individuals by society and the freedom individuals have in their actions.

3.3.1 *Homo Duplex*

Decision-making has conventionally been portrayed as a process based on tensions between reason and emotions, or similar dichotomies such as mind and body, where the former refers to an objective and universal truth and the latter to subjectivity and physical senses (Parkin 1985; Lambek 1998). In Western thought, these dichotomies have their origin in Ancient Greek and, more recently, in Cartesian philosophy. Anthropologists of the body have shown that the 'stratification' (Geertz 1973) of the person is in no way unique to western philosophy (e.g. Douglas 1970; Parkin 1985; Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987; Lambek and Strathern 1998). The mind/body dichotomy refers to fundamental tensions experienced universally within different cultural expressions (Lambek 1998). For the purpose of this thesis, *homo duplex* has two shortcomings for explaining decision-making. Firstly, the blurred boundaries between emotion and reason create significant problems for their definition. Secondly, it is questionable whether there was ever a dichotomy, but rather a trichotomy. A third agency such as soul or society has always been present in the emotion/reason dualism. *Homo duplex* is a social actor. Therefore, the emotion/reason dualism is inextricably linked to the structure/agency debate.

Reason

Historically, reason, or rationality, was in the domain of 'perfect knowledge', which was only within the purview of God (Gigerenzer 2008). Models of 'bounded rationality', developed by Herbert Simon (e.g. 1955; 1956; 1982) challenged this divine and detached conceptualisation of reason. Instead, Simon (1956) likened rationality to a pair of scissors with two blades: environmental structure and goals. In models of bounded rationality it is possible for a person to be rational, because rationality is inherently subjective.

According to Over (2004), the predominant approach to rationality has been instrumentalist. For instrumentalists, such as David Hume and Herbert Simon, rationality is defined in relation to how well the action is suited the goals of the action. The instrumentalist approach thus focuses on the rationality of action rather than epistemic rationality, which is the rationality of beliefs and inferences. In contrast, epistemic rationality has been the focus of the 'rationality debate' in anthropology (e.g. Winch 1973; Hollis and Lukes 1982; Overing 1985).

Since this thesis focuses on decision-making, I will focus on what constitutes rational action. Elster (1996) states that a rational action has three characteristics: i) it is a means of realising desires, given a particular set of beliefs ii) it must be based on rational beliefs and iii) it is executed after spending optimum time and effort, the so-called 'golden mean rule', in choosing the action. A strictly instrumentalist approach to rationality is not concerned with the goal of the rational action, but only the means with which to achieve it (Over 2004). Rational action, particularly in economics, is associated with 'optimisation', or utility maximisation (Gigerenzer and Selten 2001). Selten (2001: 13) argues that modern economic theory portrays agents as 'fully rational Bayesian maximisers of subjective utility.' This description of rational action and rational actors has two shortcomings. Firstly, rather than pursuing utility maximisation people seek to 'satisfice' their desires (Simon 1956: 129). Within the context of limitations such as environmental structures and time constraints, rational actors pursue a decision that is consistent with their goals and aspirations. As Selten (2001) argues, given that people cannot be fully rational, they have to pursue non-optimising decision alternatives. Secondly, rational actors are supposed to act in their own self-interest (Gigerenzer and Selten 2001). Charles Taylor (1982: 87), for instance, considers 'someone who acts flagrantly in violation of his own interests, or of his own avowed objectives' to be irrational. This begs the question of what constitutes self-interest. An action that might seem to be damaging in the short run, might in the long run be beneficial. Seemingly irrational behaviour associated with rites of passage would be an example of such an action (e.g. Lupton 1999; Fessler 2001). Neither of these parameters for meeting goals reflect decision-making accurately, and thus remain prescriptive or normative rather than descriptive models.

Heuristics, or rules-of-thumb in decision-making, are necessary to fulfil the 'golden mean rule' of decision-making because they are short-cuts that allow the actor not to spend too much time or effort in coming a to a decision about the rational action (Gigerenzer 2008: Chapter 2). .Cognitive biases are systematic errors that result from resorting to heuristics (Keren and Teigen 2004). An example of a heuristic, and resultant cognitive bias is the 'availability heuristic'. It is common for individuals to evaluate the likelihood of the occurrence of an event by drawing on similar events they are able to recall immediately. The experience they recall, however, may not be representative of the frequency in which the said event occurs, because individuals tend to recall most important or unusual events with more ease (e.g. Tversky and Kahneman 1974). The heuristics and biases approach, developed by Kahneman and Tversky in the 1970s, is ultimately concerned with the deviation or coherence of 'lay' persons' intuition about uncertainty from normative cognitive calculus (e.g. Tversky and Kahneman 1974; Kahneman, Slovic et al. 1982).

Research on biases and heuristics falls outside the scope of this thesis for three reasons. Firstly, there is no 'correct answer' to deviate from in the context of migratory decisions. Secondly, in contrast to the hypothetical and static scenarios that inform most of the heuristics and biases research, the context of this thesis is highly complex, dynamic and actually occurring. Furthermore, even in the case of seemingly straightforward cognitive calculation, the context in which the calculation occurs matters. Lave's (1988) research into arithmetic calculations among shoppers in California demonstrates, for instance, demonstrates how context shapes cognitive calculations. Lave (1988: 154) states that: 'conventional assumptions treat calculation as a cognitive function and its context merely as a stage on which action occurs. But activity-in-setting, seamless stretched across persons-acting and setting often turns the latter into a calculating device.'

Finally, while many of the experiments that inform research on heuristics and cognitive bias are based on 'snap judgments', the decisions with which this thesis is concerned take place over a longer duration of time and require commitment. Ortiz (1973) in her research on the production decisions of Páez Indian farmers in Columbia, for instance, argues that the decisions underpinning planning are

qualitatively different from 'on-the-spot' decisions. The evaluation of the context that informs decision-making and risk perception is a dynamic process subject to change over time. Research on heuristics and biases has greater relevance for 'on-the-spot' decisions, rather than the longer-term decisions which are the subject of this thesis.

Emotions

The definition of emotions varies greatly in the relevant literature. Davidson and Bondi (2004) define emotions as 'embodied and mindful phenomena that partially shape and are shaped by our interactions with the people, places and politics that make up our unique, personal geographies.' Elster (1994; 1996), however, holds a more specific working definition. Firstly, emotions should elicit a physiological arousal. Secondly, emotions have intentionality; they are about something. Unlike physical pain, which also shares these qualities, emotions have cognitive antecedents and cognitive consequences. Emotions have valence, they can be either positive or negative. Emotions tend to lead to an action. Emotions have physiological manifestations such as blushing or perspiring. And, finally, Elster (1996: 1389) claims that emotions have can lead to what Ekman (1985: 172) calls 'emotional wildfires', which occur when emotions 'go out of control, acquiring a momentum of their own, not subsiding with time, as they usually do, but instead intensifying.'

Emotions are culturally embedded. It is widely accepted that there are some emotions that are experienced universally (e.g. Damasio 1995; Mellers, Erev et al. 2001) despite the cultural heterogeneity in their understanding and expression (Parkin 1985; Lutz and White 1986; Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990; Fessler 2001; Harding and Pribram 2002; Milton and Svasek 2005). Appadurai (1990: 92) observes that: 'In contemplating emotional life in any culturally specific setting, it seems important to note that emotions have a linguistic life and, public and political status that frequently engender formulaic modes of expression. Yet, it also seems that emotions, unlike other phenomena, appear to have a basis in embodied experience, thus inclining us to see them as rooted in some elementary biophysical repertoire that is both limited and universal.' Hochschild (1979: 552) distinguishes between primary emotions 'which are passively undergone' and the '*secondary acts* performed by ongoing unreflective stream of primary emotive experience.' Therefore, for Hochschild emotions are not

subject to social control but their expression and actions based on emotions are. Elster (1996: 1387) draws a similar distinction between 'occurrent emotions' and 'emotional dispositions', where the former can be controlled only to a small degree. This is the distinction between being irascible and angry (1998: 52).

Emotional Rationality and Rational Emotions

The conceptual ambiguity of the emotion/reason dichotomy is further compounded by the question of the relationship between emotions and rationality. Theories on judgment and decision-making emotions frequently portray emotions as hindrances to rationality. Emotions are seen as 'sand in the machinery of action' (Elster 1994: 34). For Selten (2001), for instance, emotions limit full rationality along side cognitive constraints. Parkin (1985) states that the emotion/reason dichotomy is hierarchical and emotions have occupied a lesser position. It has also been argued that emotions are essential to rationality. Wilson (1970: 188), for instance, argues that 'feeling is not opposed to reason. On the contrary, the notion of feeling is central to human rationality.' Emotions are integral to rationality, because 'a person's action and his ends of action make sense, and form a coherent whole, because they are rooted in a complex network of feelings and attitudes' (Wilson 1970: 189). Anthropologists such as Lutz and White (1986) and Svasek (2005) and have further argued that the centrality of emotions to decision-making calls the existence of the Cartesian dualism into question.

Elster (1996: 1391) argues that emotions can be both rational and inhibit rationality. Emotions generate aspirations, which in turn set goals for action, thus constitute one blade of Simon's (1956) rationality scissors (Selten 2001). Emotions serve to maintaining the 'golden mean rule' by providing stopping rules and limiting search (Gigerenzer and Selten 2001). Emotions are tie-breakers between decision alternatives. Damasio's (1995) research shows that people who have had removed the part of their temporal lobe where emotions are thought to be located, lose their ability to choose between several options. They are able, for instance, to assess the costs and benefits of appointment times, but are unable to decide on which to choose. There has been an increasing literature on so-called 'gut feelings' where emotions can be

manifestations of subconscious rational decisions (e.g. Gladwell 2006; Gardner 2008; Lehrer 2010).

Gaps in Homo Duplex for understanding decision-making

The degree to which emotions and rationality overlap calls into question the role of the emotion/reason and related dichotomies in understanding decision-making. Lambek (1998: 107) argues that 'mind/body dualism is at once everywhere transcended in practice yet everywhere present, in some form or other, in thought.' Elster suggests that (1996: 1395) a 'fruitful question may be to study how people choose among various responses to emotional distress, and notably whether they respond rationally to the costs and benefits, their temporal distribution, and the certainty with which they will be produced.' He provides the example of a person faced with the option of taking a pill or a drink after being confronted with an emotionally distressing situation. The pill or drink may provide a short-term alleviation of the problem, but in the long term may lead to addiction, which in turn would result in social, physical and financial costs. In keeping with Elster's (1996) suggestion, rather than focusing on the parameters of reason and emotion, this thesis seeks to understand the impact of emotionally distressing situations on decision-making and risk perception in a broader temporal perspective.

It has thus far been argued that emotions can be rational, and reason emotional. It has further been demonstrated that emotions, and the expression of those emotions, are socially and culturally constructed, and that rationality is socially embedded. Emotions and reason therefore exist in a trichotomous relationship with society. Parkin (1985: 127) argues that in Western philosophy there has always been an independent agency implied in the dichotomy between mind and body: the soul which provided the link between of both mind and body to God. He argues that in the post-enlightenment era society constitutes the third independent agency between reason and emotion. Elster (1994) claims that emotions, reason and social norms exist in a trichotomous relation. He argues that reason and emotion are not internal cognitive processes isolated from society, rather they may be integral to the formation and maintenance of social norms, and are themselves shaped by social norms. Therefore,

the role of rationality and emotions in decision-making cannot be understood in isolation of the role of social structures and individual agency in decision-making.

3.3.2 The Structure/Agency Debate

The structure/agency dichotomy pertains to the 'age-old question of the relationship between individual and society' (Giddens 1977: 274). The structure /agency debate explores the role of social structures in enabling or restraining individual action. I agree with Levi-Strauss' (2006[1952]: 136) assertion that 'the term "social structure" refers to a group of problems the scope of which appears so wide and the definition so imprecise that it is hardly possible for a paper strictly limited in size to meet them fully.' Therefore, the focus of this section will be based on debate between Anthony Giddens' (e.g. 1979; 1984) 'structuration theory' and Margaret Archer's (e.g. 1982; 1996) critical realist approach. For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to recognise the several limitations of the structure agency debate. Firstly, the fact that the debate has taken place outside the subjective and socio-cultural context in which decisions are taken weakens its explanatory value. Furthermore, the debate has mostly been silent on the interplay between agency and structure when significant structural or social changes are occurring in the actor's life. Finally, as Archer (2007: 10) claims, a major shortcoming of social theory is that it does not offer an explanation for 'why people do not respond in uniform fashion under the same structured circumstances.'

The dividing issue between structuration theory and the critical realist perspective is the degree to which agency *constitutes* social structure. According to Giddens (1979: 40) agency is to be understood not 'as an articulation of discrete and separate "intentions", but a continuous flow of intentionality in time' and 'not to be treated as a set of conscious states that in some way "accompany" action.' Thus, for Giddens, agency arises from the reflexive monitoring of action. Social structures, Giddens agues, do not have a substantive presence but only a virtual existence (1984: 17). They are not to be confused with social systems, which have structural properties. Social structures are dualistic as they are both 'the medium and the outcome of the social practices they recursively organise' (1984: 25). Thus social structures exist 'as time-space presence, only in its instantiations in such practice and as memory traces orienting the conduct of knowledgeable human agents' (1984: 17). Similarly, Ingold

(1991: 374) claims that 'notional collectivities such as cultures and societies' cannot act, and that it is only people who have the ability to act.

A primary critique to structuration theory comes from the critical realists and in particular Margaret Archer (1982; 1996). Archer (1982: 459) identifies two major problems with Giddens' duality of structure. Firstly, she argues that agency is 'hyperactive', which leads to constant volatility. Structures can be changed and established at will. Secondly, agency and structure are so closely intertwined that it renders theoretical analysis based on the dichotomy meaningless. Furthermore, critical realists argue that social structures have emergent properties; in other words they have some agency and ability exist without the constant exertion of human agency (Archer 1982; Bakewell 2010). Anthropologists such as Durkheim and Radcliffe Brown have held a similar view of social structures. Radcliffe- Brown (1952), drawing on organic analogy, claimed that the constituent parts of social structures can change without changing the structure. Thus, social structures had continuity despite changes in social relations that constituted them. Fortes (1983: 34) holds the agency of social rules central to the creation and existence of society.

Dispositions, such as Bourdieu's *habitus*, constitute an emergent property of social structure. Bourdieu (1977: 72) defines *habitus* as 'systems of durable, transportable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures'. *Habitus* represents internalized social structures — 'history turned into nature' (Bourdieu 1977: 78). Dispositions, such as the *habitus*, are relevant to this thesis because they are a means by which social structures are transported with people as they are on the move. However, there have been many criticisms of the *habitus* and subsequent sociological usage of dispositions to explain agency. Lahire (2003) argues that Bourdieu's understanding of disposition, its sociological usage, is flawed because it neglects subjectivity and the consequent heterogeneity of dispositions. Furthermore, he argues that there is a difference between dispositions to act and to believe. Each individual has a variety of dispositions. It is the agency that individuals show in choosing which dispositions will inform their actions or beliefs that creates heterogeneity of action in the context of the same social structures. Farnell (2000) argues that the *habitus* has taken over the role of the person as the agentic actor. This

is ‘an “unnecessary shuffle” in order to get to the a genuine source of agency’ (Farnell 2000: 403). Farnell (2000: 403) further states that that Bourdieu’s practice theory is ‘a mind-less notion of human agency.’ Farnell argues that Bourdieu’s practice theory falls short of its avowed objective by failing to transcend the dualisms of society/individual dichotomy and in situating agency theoretically and methodologically within the context of action.

The structure/agency debate, as has been discussed thus far, explores the question of the relationship between the individual and society, in abstraction from the context of the action. Emirbayer and Mische’s (1998) ‘chordal triad of agency’ situates the definition of agency in the context of action. They define agency as ‘the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments—the temporal relational contexts of action—which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations’ (Emirbayer and Mische 1998: 970). The chordal triad of agency is constituted of iteration, projectivity and practical evaluation. Thus, they argue that the study of agency must be situated in the actor’s past experiences, their aspirations and the assessment of the practical context of the action, all of which are closely intertwined. The chordal triad of agency thus seeks to locate the agency within action. In so doing it does not go beyond, in effect, re-iterating the decision-making models for rational action as put forward by Elster (1994; 1996), for instance, and for the purpose of this thesis shows the same limitations.

The structure/agency debate has been in part informed by a static portrayal of social structures and does not engage with social change. Social change is particularly important for this thesis, not in understanding how social change occurs but how social structures continue to influence action when social change is occurring. In the ‘Political Systems of Highland Burma’, Edmund Leach (1970) challenged the sociological portrayal of social structures as static and stable. He argued that social structures ‘in practical situations (as contrasted with the sociologist’s abstract model) consists of a set of ideas about the distribution of power between persons and groups of persons’ (Ibid: 4). Societies are never in equilibrium and that they are ‘process in

time' (Ibid: 5). There are two kinds of changes that societies undergo: changes which allow for the continuance of existing social order and changes that fundamentally alter the formal structure, such as forms of governance. People hold contradictory ideas about the social system and are able bring about changes collectively to suit their interests. Swidler (1986) distinguishes between "settled" and "unsettled" periods, in which two separate models of cultural influence apply to action. She argues that in settled periods, culture influences action by providing a 'tool kit' from which people can construct new paths. In unsettled periods, culture has 'independent causal influence' because 'it makes possible new strategies of action — constructing entities that can act (selves, families, corporations), shaping the styles and skills with which they act, and modelling forms of authority and cooperation' (Ibid.: 280). It is, however, the 'structural opportunities' that determine which strategies of action survive (Ibid.: 273).

The question of structural change, and its relation to culture, is particularly pertinent to this thesis, as it is concerned with migrants who are confronted with a new set of social and political structures upon arrival in Turkey. It is a commonly held view that migrant communities tend to maintain their cultural identities in the new structural settings in which they intend to settle. It has been argued that it was only when South Asian labour migrants in the UK decided to settle in Britain with their families, for instance, that they started preserving their cultural values selectively (Ballard 1994; Shaw 2000). In these cases, the intention to settle or become more settled is important in understanding the process of cultural continuity and change in the host communities. In the case of my informants, some of whom did not intend to settle in Turkey, another relevant is question is how social structures and culture influence the decision-making processes of migrants in countries where they do not intend to stay permanently. Bal and de Theije (2010), in their study of illegal Brazilian gold miners (*garimpeiros*) in Suriname, argue that the liminal state that miners occupied in Suriname allowed them greater freedom to pursue new opportunities. The fact that *garimpeiros* had "no ties and no rights" and did not intend to settle enabled them to be more flexible and take greater risks. Monsutti (2007) found that the migration of young Afghans of Hazara ethnicity to Iran was a rite of passage to adulthood. By working in Iran, they would earn money and acquire professional skills that upon

return to Afghanistan would allow them to re-integrate as adult men. In the liminal phase of rites of passage, the person undergoing the rite is considered to be 'invisible to social structures' (Turner 1967: 95) and, consequently, there is a suspension of social norms. Hazaras in Iran, who were embedded within Hazara communities in Iran, lived and worked to fulfil social expectations of them upon return to Afghanistan. Change in life stages and the occurrence major life events, may also bring a structural re-positioning.

This thesis is concerned with the decision-making of a group of individuals who, at a first glance, are constrained by the same structural forces but who engage with these structures differently. Archer (2007) argues that social theory fails to provide a satisfactory explanation where there are heterogeneous responses to similar structures. She claims that with a better understanding of reflexivity in action would address this gap where by reflexivity is defined as 'conscious deliberations that take place through "internal conversation"' (Archer 2007: 3). This thesis argues that the heterogeneity of the responses of Afghan migrants to structural constraints might be explained by the varying perceptions of and, tolerance towards the uncertainty inherent in the structural context of decision-making, which is best understood within the theoretical framework of risk.

3.4 Decision-making and Risk

This section first defines risk and outlines the main theoretical approaches to risk. Through relevant examples in the literature, it demonstrates how risk has been used as an analytical tool for understanding within-group diversity in decision-making, by situating decision-making in its broader context and addressing the perception of uncertainty. Finally it argues that risk in migration literature, although often-mentioned, is poorly understood and under-theorised.

3.4.1 Defining Risk

In common parlance risk is associated with danger or harm. 'Risk' in common parlance may refer to ideas associated with danger, uncertainty, variability and dread, for instance (Krebs 2011: 4842). In quantitative research, risk and uncertainty have

specific meanings: 'Risk is the probability of an event multiplied by its impact, and uncertainty reflects the accuracy with which a risk can be assessed' (Ibid.). In other words, risk is 'uncertainty associated with an event that can be qualified on the basis of empirical observations or causal knowledge. Frequencies and probabilities are ways to express risks' (Gigerenzer 2008: 256). Most of the research in social science on risk, however, does not refer to phenomena that can be quantified as such. Where it does (e.g. Shaw 2009), it demonstrates that quantitative analysis of risk is interpreted within subjective, cultural and social context. Therefore, what is referred to as 'risk' in social sciences often refers to 'uncertainty' in the technical terminology. Furthermore, 'risk' usually has a negative connotation in this literature, often implying 'danger', in contrast to the neutrality of the term in its technical usage.[24]

This thesis adopts Rosa's (1998: 28) sociological definition of risk as 'a situation or event where something of human value (including humans themselves) has been put at stake and where the outcome is uncertain' (also cited in Boholm 2003: 166). This definition is useful because it incorporates two elements of risk that are of interest to social sciences: that something—the object at risk—is in danger of being lost but it is not certain that it will be, and that the value of what is at danger is defined by the person—subject of risk. It enables an approach, also taken in this thesis, that seeks to understand how the object of risk is defined and, how the subject of risk evaluates the uncertainty associated with potential loss. In emphasising that the object of risk is of 'human value' the definition distinguishes itself from the objectivist discourse of risk, which refers to the 'scientific assessment' (Boholm 2003: 161) of risk, which is confined to 'phenomena and causality in the natural word that can have harmful effects' (Ibid.).

This thesis is not only concerned with 'risk perception', that is understanding the subjective and socio-cultural construction of risk, but with responses to risk as well. 'Risk acceptability' refers to proclivity or aversion towards risk taking as a response to risk. As discussed in Chapter 1, this is not a suitable approach for the purpose of this thesis because risk in migration decisions is not quantifiable and is not shared by

[24] Both Douglas (1992: 23) and Lupton (1999: 7) state that risk could be qualified as 'good' or 'bad' until the end of the last century.

all members of the group. Some of the approaches to risk outlined below make references to risk acceptability.

3.4.2 Theoretical Approaches to Risk

There is a vast literature on risk from social and life sciences. This section uses Lupton's (1999) categorisation of these approaches as a means of distinguishing between the main debates. By focusing is on the cultural/symbolic approach to risk as developed by Mary Douglas, the section lays the groundwork for the subsequent discussion of literature that uses risk as an analytical tool for understanding intra-group variation in decision-making.

Lupton (1999: 17) identifies two major theoretical approaches to risk: cognitive science perspective and the social constructionist perspective. Research on risk by cognitive science is mostly directed at understanding the deviation of the lay person's perception of risk from an expert's view of what constitutes risk. This deviation is explained by heuristics and cognitive biases (e.g. Kahneman and Tversky 1979; Kahneman, Slovic et al. 1982). Mary Douglas (1992: 13) describes the attitude of scientists within this paradigm as one that sees individuals as being "hedonistic and calculators calmly seeking to pursue private interests. We are said to be risk aversive, but, alas, so inefficient in handling information that we are unintentional risk-takers; basically we are fools." Her research on risk was aimed at rectifying this bias by understanding risk as a social construct.

For the purpose of this thesis, the cognitive science perspective has two shortcomings. Firstly, this approach, much like the research on decisions discussed earlier, focuses on 'on-the-spot' perceptions of risk rather than the kind of more considered decisions that are the focus of this research. Secondly, most cognitive research is based on an objectivist definition of risk. Risk is seen as hazard or threat that exists in nature, but its perception is distorted by individual and social biases. By contrast, the social constructionist theory of risk holds that all 'risk' is socially and subjectively constructed.

There are three approaches to risk within the social-cultural paradigm: governmentality, risk society and the cultural/symbolic perspective (Lupton 1999: 17). The 'governmentality' approach is informed by Foucauldian theories of power and resistance. The theories in this approach 'explore risk in the context of surveillance, discipline and regulation of populations, and how concepts of risk construct particular norms of behaviour which are used to encourage individuals to engage voluntarily in self-regulation in response to these norms' (Lupton 1999: 25). This approach scores highly on Lupton's scale of 'social constructivism' because what constitutes risk is defined by society. Foucauldian theories of power have been deployed in medical anthropological studies of decision-making and risk, seeking to understand the body as a site of state or structural control and of resistance (e.g. Day 2000; Lewin 1998). In the field of migration, Nyers (2006) applied the Foucauldian notion of biopower to state control of the movement of people. The governmentality approach could be relevant for understanding the construction of risk in the context of migration management discourses, being suited for understanding how host societies perceive and interact with migrants, rather than for explaining the decision-making process of migrants within host societies. It has the advantage of addressing issues of power, agency and discourse, but anthropologists whose work would be considered to fall within the cultural paradigm also address these issues (e.g. Shaw 2009).

The 'risk society' approach is based on the works of Anthony Giddens (1991) and Ulrich Beck (1992), who characterise modernity in the West by its attitude towards risk. Beck (1992) argues that the reduction of risk in the West is a central to its modernity. He argues that life in the West is much safer than in the past, which renders it fundamentally different from pre-modern times. Giddens (1991), on the other hand, argues that it is the changing perception towards risk, rooted in reflexivity, that is a defining characteristic of modern society. This approach has been criticised on several grounds. Firstly, Lupton (1999) argues that Beck and Giddens portray individuals as 'rational actors', much in the same way that cognitive scientists do. I argue that the problem here lies not with their characterisation of people as rational, but Beck and Giddens' understanding of rationality. As argued above, rationality is inherently subjective and socially and culturally embedded, which is compatible with cultural/symbolic approach to risk. Secondly, the approach is objectivist. Vera-Sanso

(2000: 128), for instance, argues that Beck by not questioning 'why some people or things are defined as risks and others are not', fails in fulfilling 'our task' of the socio-cultural analysis of risk. She argues that his focus on western responses to technology is misguided because 'it is not technology that people worry about, but how society is organised, what its impacts are on the individual, where power lies and how it is managed as well as the impact of individuals on society' (Ibid.). Finally, I argue that the primary focus of the risk society literature appears to be to qualify modernity rather than to understand risk. However, the empirical basis of 'modernity' in Beck and Giddens' work has criticised for being uninformed (e.g. Caplan 2000b; Nugent 2000). Employment in the West under capitalism, for instance, has been characterised as being fundamentally precarious for workers (e.g.; Standing 2011, Banki 2013: 2-3). Authors such as Ho (2009) and Zaloom (2004) demonstrate the centrality of risk-taking to the financial markets.

There has recently been in an interest how the 'risk society approach' may apply to migration. It has been argued that, as marginalised communities within the global mobility regime, irregular migrants and vulnerable migrant workers have been exposed to greater risks (e.g. Hernandez Carretero 2008). This approach, in line with Giddens and Beck, takes a fundamentally positivist approach to risk. It does not seek to understand how, and whether, risk is perceived by migrants themselves, and how the perceived risk is mediated.

It is the cultural/symbolic approach, pioneered by Mary Douglas (e.g. 1986; 1992) offers the richest theoretical grounding for this thesis. This approach seeks to understand the socio-cultural context and boundaries of risk as well as the cultural heterogeneity of risk perception and acceptability.

Douglas' risk theory can be described as culturally bounded rationality. According to Douglas cognitive sciences failed to account for risk perception and acceptability among non-experts because it did not take into account the cultural context in which they made their decisions. For Douglas (1986) an individual's rational choice is bounded by cultural norms. With regard to risk assessment for agricultural decisions in a Colombian farming community, she stated that 'the living culture is the

mnemonic system which holds the farmer to his priorities and leads him through what would be a horrendously difficult calculation were an individual to try to perform it on his own' (Douglas 1986: 81). Therefore the choices that the farmer has are culturally bounded, and within that range he makes choices informed by his personal preferences. In this case, however, it would appear that Douglas does not consider the farmer's agentic action within prescribed cultural norms as risk taking, despite the fact that there is an element of uncertainty about the outcome of his actions. This may be rooted in the fact that Douglas located risk at the margins of the society. Risk taking for Douglas was to do with transgressing moral and cultural boundaries. Boholm (2003: 166) argues that transgressing boundaries, or breaking 'taboos', brings about punishment *for certain* and therefore 'respecting taboos' cannot be seen as risk management because there is no longer uncertainty associated with the decision to respect taboos.

Douglas saw risk as a modern 'blaming system' (1992: 15). In the grid/group model Douglas shows how risk-taking behaviour is explained by the structural organisation of the society (Douglas and Wildawsky 1982; Douglas 1992). There are two ideal types of social organisations on the group-index: 'high-group' society with strong cultural boundaries and 'low-group' with weaker ties and less cohesion. The grid index relates to societal and cultural constraints on individual behaviour. 'High-grid' societies place more constraints on individuals then 'low-grid' societies. These combine to create four approaches to risk behaviour: hierarchists (high-group, high-grid), egalitarians (high-group, low-grid), individualists (low-group, low-grid) and fatalists (low-group, high-grid). The hierarchists confirm strongly to social norms relating to risk. Egalitarians blame outsiders for risk and take a participatory approach to risk. Individualists are risk-prone, and see both benefits and dangers arising out of risk-taking. Finally, fatalists believe that they do not have control in managing risks. Douglas (e.g. 1992) applied the grid/group model to understanding societal attitudes to risk with regard to HIV. Douglas' definition of risk as a transgression of cultural boundaries enables her to construct a model on risk acceptability because the definition implies is cultural consensus on what constitutes risk in each of these hypothetical societies. As the knowledge of taboos are shared by all members of the particular society, it would be possible to discern who is risk-prone or risk-averse.

Douglas' theory, and the cultural approach in general, has been criticised for its static view of culture and its cultural determinism (e.g. Boholm 2003). Douglas' focus on the maintenance of cultural boundaries in her earlier work, carries on into her work on risk. Douglas (1986) does, however, write of 'the living culture' and claims with regard to the grid-group model that 'there is no assumption of fixity, on the contrary, the four types are represented in any community, and social life is in permanent tension and flux' (Douglas 1999: 411). Douglas (1992: 102) claims, for instance that '(…) the self is risk-taking or risk-averse according to a predictable pattern of dealings between the person and others in the community. Both emerge, the community and the person's self, as ready for particular risks or as averse to them, in the course of their actions. The person who never thought of himself as a risk-taker may, in the unfolding drama of his life, and under the threat of community's pressure, finds himself declaring a commitment to high-risk'. Nevertheless, her work on risk neglects the role of individual agency in re-interpreting and shaping cultural norms that bind choice and risk acceptance. This is because she does not allow for subjectivity in her analysis. Douglas (1992: 102) claims with regard to the construction of the 'self as a risk-taker' that 'no subtle or subjective concept of the self is to be used here. Psychology, emotions or aesthetics play no part.' Thus, for Douglas, risk acceptability is a preference that is ultimately culturally constructed. As Jenkins et al (2005) in their research on diversity of how patients respond to medical uncertainty state, however, 'people do not always do what their culture tells them to do.'

Risk perception and acceptability are both subjective and culturally informed processes. Fessler (2001), for instance, argues that when taking risks, emotions contribute to reasoned action by favouring certain desired outcomes over others. He cites the example of a murder of a young man over a minibus fare that took place during his fieldwork in Bengkulu in south-western Sumatra. The murdered man was embroiled in an argument with a minibus driver when the latter demanded more money than the victim claimed was agreed upon and was killed. As the sum was so small, some old men said that the murder was insanity. Younger men, however, claimed that the victim was avoiding demonstrating *malu*, or shame, in front of his

girlfriend. Fessler (ibid.) illustrates that high-risk behaviour that is seemingly irrational, appears logical when considered within the emotional context. As discussed in the following section, Shaw and Charsley (2006a; 2006b; Charsley 2007) have demonstrated how emotional risks relating to broader kinship structures and marriage are integrated into the migration strategies of British Pakistani communities. Other subjective factors that influence risk are aesthetic, hermeneutic, life-style and pleasure, and identity formation (e.g. Lupton 1999; Green and Sobo 2000; Tulloch and Lupton 2003).

Given her cultural determinism, Douglas' approach to risk was not directed at understanding intra-cultural variation within groups with regard to risk, but as an analytical tool to compare perceptions of risk in different societies and attitudes towards those who are seen as risk-takers. Thus, this approach to risk may appear at odds with the purpose of this thesis, which is to understand diversity of decision-making within a group. There is evidence of intra-group diversity of risk perception in Douglas' work, most commonly in the form or dichotomous tensions between the technical and layman's view of risk. The static view in Douglas' work may be attributed to her abstraction of risk perception from subjectivity. The following section will demonstrate how socio-cultural theories of risk since Douglas' work contribute to understanding within-group decision-making.

3.4.3 Decision-Making and Risk

Most anthropological literature on risk has at its starting point the deviation of public behaviour from the expectations of policy makers or other experts. What seems to be irrational, risk-seeking behaviour by the public is demonstrated to be a reasoned assessment of risk when situated in the subjective, social and cultural context of their decisions. Thus, it calls into question whether such a thing as 'objective' risk exists . This juxtaposition between the expert opinion and lay person's behaviour has two interrelated findings significant for the purpose of this thesis: first it demonstrates that decisions can best be understood within their broader contexts. What appears to be a decision about a threat to the public interest for instance, may actually be a decision about something else entirely. Secondly, the literature highlights how people who are similarly positioned within society perceive and respond to uncertainty differently.

Thus, risk, is a useful analytical tool for understanding the heterogeneity of migrant decision-making.

The subjects in the literature on risk tend to be marginalised, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in society. Among the anthropologists whose works are discussed here, for instance, Elisa Sobo works with poor inner-city women in the US, Janet Bujra (2000) with poor villagers in Tanzania, Sophie Day (2000) with sex workers in London, and Mary Douglas (e.g. 1992) with, in her terms, 'AIDS victims'. Douglas in her discussion of morality and risk argues that 'the poor risk more' (1986: 6) because 'the present distribution of risk reflect the only the present distribution of power and justice' (1986: 10). In order to substantiate her argument she refers to the fact that 'non-whites' in the USA tend to hold jobs where they are at a higher risk of physical injury (Douglas 1986: 6). While 'non-whites' tend to report injuries at a lower rate than 'whites', they tend to have more serious injuries. While it is not clear whether there are structural constraints that would prevent these workers from approaching hospitals, Douglas seems infer that they more tolerant of risk. Douglas later hypotheses that a community that is habituated to higher levels of risk, such as miners, would be more willing to accept a power station, for instance, that other better-off communities would view as too dangerous to be acceptable to be built near them. The question that Douglas is getting at, whether people who face more dangers in their daily lives have a higher threshold for risk or whether they construct risk differently than other groups, is also one of questions that inform the thesis.

What the literature on risk demonstrates is not necessarily that the 'poor risk more' (Douglas 1986:6) but that different people perceive risk differently, because what is at stake varies between people. When public does not comply with expert opinion or policy guidance, on issues such as AIDS prevention for instance, public behaviour is seen as irrational and/or risk-prone, and as rooted in lack of knowledge or misinformation. There are two problems with this assumption. Firstly information and advice is received by different sources, and not all sources are trusted—particularly among those who are marginalised within the state. Caplan (2000b) in her research on the perceptions of risk regarding BSE found that both her research groups in Lewisham and Wales mistrusted the information they received either from the media

or the government. Sophie Day (2000) found that sex workers in London were distrustful of towards the discourse of risk reduction through the 'medical language' of epidemiology but were receptive towards the language of 'public health'. Epidemiological discourses were based on statistical analyses that were difficult to interpret and based on a fundamentally negative image of sex work (Day 2000: 38). By contrast, the public health discourse, although based on the same data as the epidemiological discourse, provided sex workers with a narrative through which to advocate for rights, because of its emphasis on safety and prevention. Skinner (2000), himself, ignored the radio broadcasts that proclaimed that the eruption of the volcano Montserrat was safe and left, while many of his neighbours trusted the information and stayed on.

Secondly, the advice of public officials does not take into account the context of decision-making. Sobo (1995), for example, found that unsafe sex among poor inner-city women in the USA has traditionally been attributed to lack of education and material neediness from a man. In her study of condom use among poor African American and Latina women in inner city Cleveland, she found that women who chose not to use condoms were influenced by low self-esteem and social status associated with relationship ideals. Being in a monogamous relationship brought social status to the women. Women chose not to use condoms to prove their closeness to their partner. It was also acknowledged that men were likely to stray. Practicing unsafe sex with their partners proved their degree of commitment and self-sacrifice to the relationship. Sobo (1995) argues that it is not the women in her study did not have the information about safe practices but that they interpreted this information in a way that public officials did not understand. Similarly, Shaw's (2009) work on consanguineous marriage and risks of genetic illness among Pakistani communities in Britain challenges the public assumptions that lack of information leads to high-risk behaviour. Shaw illustrates that, firstly, the risk of giving birth to a child with genetic illness is not the only risk involved in accepting or refusing consanguineous marriages. The choice of not marrying within the family, or of not having children, or of having an abortion may be associated with additional risks such as that of offending the family and the broader community or committing a sin, for instance.

How causality is understood shapes the response to risk. Risk is interpreted based on an understanding of several factors such as past experiences, changing attitudes and the degree of control people perceived to have over their fate regarding this decision. Shaw's (2009) research debunks what Gigerenzer (2008) terms the 'illusion of certainty' created by predictions based on statistical probabilities. Gigerenzer (Ibid.) in his research among medical professionals, he found that experts often hold strong but misguided readings of statistical probabilities. Shaw's (Ibid.) informants told her that although the doctors can predict the likelihood of one outcome over another, they cannot explain the process behind the occurrence of an outcome. This is a matter of subjective interpretation. As one man explained in a television documentary on cousin marriages, for instance, if there is only one in four chances of their offspring being born with a particular condition, how is it possible that he had several children without this condition?[25] Shaw (2009)'s informants' attitudes towards risks changed over time due to, for instance, personal experiences of illness and changing interpretations of religious doctrine. Similarly, Bujra (2000) found in her research among villagers in Tanzania that while most of her informants understood the scientific reasoning behind contracting HIV, their explanation of why some people had it and others not could be attributed to witchcraft or amorality. Cohn (2000) argues that how causality is constructed in relation to risk, also influences the perception of the degree of control over the future, which in turn shapes how individuals manage risk. Among the chronically ill patients with type II diabetes, he found that if individuals did not have any sense of control, they may not comply with advice for prevention.

The literature reviewed so far demonstrates that individuals within the same group respond to risk differently. Caplan's research (2000b) on the responses to the two scares of BSE, or the 'mad cow disease' in the UK, among residents of Lewisham in London and a village in western Wales, illustrates how risk can serve as an analytical tool for understanding within-group diversity in decision-making. In Lewisham she identified four different responses: those who stopped eating beef in the long term, those stopped eating beef for the short term, those who switched to beef and those

[25] Channel 4, Dispatches: When Cousins Marry. First broadcast on 23 August 2010. Further information available at: http://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/episode-guide/series-68/episode-1 [Accessed 10 April 2014].

who did not alter their behaviour. Caplan (ibid.: 189) claimed that there were no correlations between factors such as ethnicity, gender, age, class or household composition. She identified four different responses in Wales: those who stopped eating beef, those who ate beef under certain circumstances and those who ate as before. In this group she found an overarching mistrust of information given by the media and the government. The first group of responses were mainly given by individuals who identified themselves as being 'alternative' and who viewed the meet industry negatively. In the other two sets of responses the key factor related to the knowledge about where the meat came from and who produced it. Thus, whereas in London the variation of responses to the risk relating to BSE was about 'what's wrong with modern food production' and distrust of scientists, experts and the government, in Wales it was to do with localised knowledge of meat production (Caplan 2000b: 1999). This case study illustrates how risk provides a conceptual framework for understanding within-group diversity of decision-making.

3.4.4 Risk and Migration

Although risk is a commonly used term in migration studies, it is poorly understood and under-theorised. Risk in the migration literature is often objectivist and migrants are portrayed as being risk-averse. Neoclassical migration theory explains migration as an individual's decision based on the cost-benefit analysis of opportunity differentials in the labour market (Massey, Arango et al. 1993). It predicts that the individual will migrate if there is a net gain from migration in the labour market. New economics theories extend the unit of analysis to the household and portray migration as a risk-diversification strategy markets for gaining better access to labour markets (Stark 1984; Stark and Bloom 1985; Stark and Taylor 1991). Although the level of analysis of economic theories is the micro-level, migration is explained as a response to macro-level economic forces. Networks are described as social capital that reduce the risks associated migration by facilitating the journey and increasing the likelihood of access to employment in the country of destination (Ritchey 1976; Massey et al 1993, 1998; Dahinden 2005: 192; Koser and Pinkerton 2003). As Jordan and Düvell (2002) have argued, migration networks can increase risks for migrants. Furthermore, the focus on the sending/receiving countries creates the illusion of a linear trajectory from the country of origin to the destination removing the strong element of

uncertainty in the migration process, and underplaying the importance of risk assessment in migration decisions. The assumption that migrants are risk-averse is contradicted by anthropological evidence that people are not always risk-averse (e.g. Lupton 1999; Caplan 2000; Tulloch and Lupton 2003), and that high-risk behaviour may also occur in the context of migration (e.g. de Theije and Bal 2010).

In his ethnography on the management of irregular migration from Western Africa to Europe, Andersson (2014) looks at how risk is conceptualised at the level of international border-management between the EU and its neighbours, with particular emphasis on Frontex — the EU border management agency. His analysis is useful for understanding how the 'expert' views on risk are constructed in the EU, thus, informative for this thesis because Turkish migration policy is heavily influenced by the EU, both in its narrative and practice (see Kaytaz 2014). The EU tries to manage the threats that migrants pose to themselves as well as to the European borders though information campaigns that highlight the dangers of the journey to Europe. In his discussion of these campaigns as part of the 'illegality industry' around international migration, Andersson refers to migrants' perceptions of irregular journeys to Europe. He claims that 'rather than being ignorant of the risks, migrants *embraced* it in a quest to affirm their masculine prowess' (2014: 59) but later states that 'illegal migration (…) came to resemble less a sign of bravado and sacrifice, than a disease-like affliction' (2014: 64). Therefore sensitisation campaigns changed migrants' attitudes towards risks associated onward irregular travel.

A concept that implies risk and uncertainty which is applied to migration is that of 'precarity'. 'Precarity' emerged as a concept to refer to the insecure and dangerous predicament of workers who are unable to secure regular employment (e.g. Standing 2011). In relation to migration it has used to conceptualise the different sources of insecurity that migrants and refugees encounter. Banki (2012: 8-9) constructs a four-part typology for precarity as applied to refugee predicaments ranging from 'low precarity' when refugees have access to permanent status and 'extreme precarity' when refugees have access to 'neither documentation nor effective networks'. Banki uses this typology as a basis for delineating between refugees' different modes of political engagement with their homeland. She argues that refugees who are in in

'extreme precarity' are paradoxically more motivated to engaged with political activism in the homeland despite their limited resources. Banki (2013:4) also conceives of 'precarity of place' to refer to the degree to which an 'individual is vulnerable to removal or deportation because of his or her legal status and/or possession of documentation, or lack thereof, in the host country.' The notion of precarity is useful for the purpose of this thesis in highlighting the different degrees of sources uncertainty faced by migrants as a result of both 'formal (legal, political) and informant (social, cultural) processes' (Banki 2012: 8) and its impact on different decisions. Most informants' legal predicaments were characterised by precarity, as defined by Banki (2012; 2013). Nevertheless, informants value and engage with the precarity differently. Some choose to live in Istanbul in a situation that would be closer to what Banki terms 'extreme precarity' over the possibility of the asylum system which in Banki's typology refers to 'mild precarity'. This is because informants perceived the benefits and the costs associated with their legal statuses differently (see Chapter 5).

Williams and Baláz (2012) in their article on the application of risk theories to migration—the only research to date to do so—find similar shortcomings with the use of risk in migration. They argue that 'migration should probably be understood as being associated with expectations about risk formed under conditions of partial knowledge' (Ibid.: 169). They outline several areas where risk could be used in migration, but focus on the potential contribution of migration from economic and sociological perspectives (Ibid.: 176). Most significantly for this thesis, they ask 'why, within particular socio-economic and socio-demographic categories, do only some individuals migrate? And, why do some households, but not others who are similarly socially situated in relation to risk, use the migration of individual members to diversify risk?' (Ibid.: 177). They argue that risk tolerance or aversion, could provide a suitable framework for understanding this question.

With the exception of Shaw and Charsley's (Charsley 2006; Charsley and Shaw 2006b; Charsley 2007) research on transnational marriages among British Pakistanis, migration theorists have not sought to understand how migrants themselves perceive

and accept the risks associated with their decisions.[26] Shaw and Charsley's research highlights the significance of situating migratory decisions within the broader cultural context and demonstrates the value of considering risk in understanding migration. They found that there are many dangers associated with marriage. A partner, for instance, may conceal their motives; the proposal to marry may be rejected or the daughter of the family may be mistreated. Transnational marriages carry further risks. The spouse coming from Pakistan may never be granted their visa for the UK, rendering the spouse in the UK an 'immigration widow' or the spouse may be solely marrying for the purpose of the visa. Furthermore, transnational marriages result in one spouse leaving their family behind in Pakistan. Transnational marriages, however, also enable British Pakistanis to choose spouses who are more likely to assume the traditional roles expected of them and not be exposed to some of the negatively perceived cultural influences in Britain. In order to reduce the risks associated with marriages in general, and transnational marriages in particular, British Pakistanis resort to changing marriage rituals and marrying within the family. Consanguineous marriage, for instance, is a means for ensuring that information is obtained about potential spouses in advance of marriage. Marriage rituals are adapted so as to protect the British Pakistani bride becoming a marriage widow.

3.5 Resilience and Self-Efficacy as tools for Explaining Within-Group Diversity

Here I provide some examples of literature that seeks to differentiate migrants who are considered to occupy better positions in the host society, thus implicitly offering explanations for within-group diversity. This literature draws on concepts from psychology and makes reference to social capital in its discussion of social positioning (e.g. Dominguez 2011). I will start with a discussion of resilience.

Literature on resilience in migration is concerned with accounting for the psychological robustness of migrants. It seeks to understand how some migrants withstand the challenges presented by migration better than others. While resilience is a psychological term that relates to coping skills, the literature on resilience also

[26] It should be noted that although the subjects of their research are not migrating themselves as they enable others to migrate from Pakistan to Britain, their research falls within the scope of this thesis.

points to a particular kind of social positioning. Resilience in the psychological literature refers to 'the capacity to maintain stage levels of functioning, as well as positive emotions and generative experiences, following or under the conditions of significant adversity' (Mancini 2011). Within this literature there is a tendency to either consider resilience as a character trait, which Mancini (Ibid.) terms the 'resilience-as-personality' approach, or as an 'outcome or process in response to significant adversity' (Ibid.). This division is also evident in the literature on migration. Resilience has been explored as a personal quality, which brings about positive outcomes such as better integration into society, better health and better education. Wong and Song (2008:133), for instance, discuss resilience in terms of conditions encountered by migrants that will bring about 'poor mental health outcomes' in their research on internal migration to Shanghai.

Resilience has also been used to refer to certain attitudes and strategies by migrants who obtain success in host societies. Gonzales (2012), for instance, in his study of undocumented children at Los Angeles, refers to resilience to explain how some of these children did much better at school than was expected. It is predicted that children of generation 1.5, who have arrived in the US before age of 12, would not do well academically because they start behind their peers and they are more likely to display antagonistic attitudes towards the school and authorities. Some children, however, excel in school due to specialised programs and classes, which encourage positive relations with their peers and provide the children with a support network of caring adults. Gonzales (Ibid.: 271) argues that the children's 'resilience is shaped' through these relations. In this sense resilience refers to a set of relationships and attitudes that can be cultivated. Gonzales focuses both on particular school initiatives that bring about resilience as well as on the students' changing attitudes as a result of these programs. It is the latter understanding of resilience, which can also be referred to as 'resiliency' (Mancini 2011), that this thesis focuses on. Unlike this literature, however, this is thesis is not motivated by explaining the success of certain migrants over others or describe migrants' ability to withstand stress, but focuses instead on explaining diversity.

Dominguez (2011) analyses within-group variation her research among Latin American migrant women in two Boston public housing developments within a framework informed by concepts such as agency and self-efficacy. She 'explores how neighbourhood poverty affects immigrants and why some immigrants who live in are socially isolated and stagnant while others have rich networks and enjoy social mobility' (Dominguez 2011: 12). She argues that this can be accounted for by the 'trauma inflicted by neighbourhoods and domestic violence' (Ibid.) She refers to the women who achieve social mobility as 'self-propelling agents' because of their personal beliefs in their abilities to achieve social mobility and 'drive to develop trajectories towards' this goal (Ibid.: 17). The factors that contribute to the achievement include, among others, the crafting of narratives, social positioning, and social support and leverage. In this regard Dominguez explores similar themes to those I explore in this thesis, albeit with a focus on social mobility and within a theoretical framework that is informed by social psychology. In particular her focus on the social skills and ability of immigrants to leverage their networks to achieve their goals has parallels with my findings on the diversity of the ways my informants navigate their social lives.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter it has been argued that anthropological theories of risk offer a theoretical framework for understanding the migrant decision-making process — in particular how similarly situated migrants make different migratory decisions. Socio-cultural theories of risk address the gaps in the migration literature by explicitly questioning the how migrants view uncertainty and what is at stake and therefore situating decisions within its broader socio-cultural and subjective context. The sources for the diversity in decision-making highlighted in the literature include differing interpretations of information, causality and perceptions of control. The following chapter will begin to distinguish between informants' differing attitudes towards risk through experiences of their 'journeys' to Turkey.

Chapter 4

Afghan Journeys to Turkey: Narratives of Immobility, Travel and Transformation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of the journeys of informants prior to their arrival in Turkey. The material in the chapter is drawn together mainly from informants responses to the question 'Can you tell me about how you came to Turkey?' The ensuing conversations mainly comprised either descriptions of travel to Turkey from the previous country of residence or longer narratives reaching as far back as childhood. This chapter documents the conditions and nature of irregular travel to Turkey focusing particularly on travel between Iran and Turkey, which has hitherto been overlooked in research. The chapter begins to build the analytical framework for the thesis, which extends through subsequent chapters documenting the heterogeneity of attitudes to managing uncertainty in Turkey.

The chapter starts with a review of the relatively scant literature on journeys. The journeys covered in this literature are mainly irregular, long, non-linear, unpredictable and arduous. The literature illustrates two significant ways in which the experience of the journey impacts migrants in the subsequent phases of the migration process. Firstly, it demonstrates the transformative potential of the journeys, which offer opportunities for acquiring skills and demonstrating different abilities, as well as for failing to take up such opportunities. Secondly, the literature demonstrates how migrants construct meaning, subjectively and collectively, through narratives that encapsulate the journey. These two observations, on the nature and the meaning of the journeys, are particularly relevant for the purposes of this thesis. Through the presentation of a 'typical migrant journey', this chapter goes on to describe common characteristics of the journey to Turkey, and at the meanings migrants' ascribe to the journey. The journeys are typically non-linear trajectories constituted of longer

periods of immobility and many instances of travel. The adversities that migrants had to negotiate usually concerned the conditions of travel, smugglers, bandits and state authorities. Migrants gave meaning to their experience by constructing journey narratives that often began before the physical migration. Such narratives also reveal how the journey equipped some migrants with skills they were to utilise in subsequent migration decisions.

4.2 The 'Journey' in the Literature

The 'journey' is an understudied aspect of the migration process. This may be due to the sending/receiving country bias in the study of migration, which neglects the transitory stages.[27] It may also be because the journey is in some cases conceptually indistinguishable from migration itself, particularly when there are no clear transitional stages in the migration process and the final destination is not known. In this sense, the journey was perhaps captured in the literature on 'transit migration'. Hagan (2008), for instance, frequently refers to the travel undertaken by Guatemalan migrants to the US both as a journey and as transit migration.

Moreover, migrants themselves may not be forthcoming about their journeys in cases where journeys are irregular and may thus be criminalised or have unwanted impacts on immigration proceedings. There is a common belief among Afghans that UNHCR does not grant protection to Afghans who have stayed for long periods in Iran. Consequently, in a couple of instances, informants who did not want to disclose the length of time spent in Iran were evasive about their journeys to Turkey as well. One informant claimed that he had only spent a few weeks in Iran on his way from Afghanistan, although I found out later on that his wife was Iranian and his children were born there.

The relative invisibility of the journey in academic research is contrasts strikingly with media coverage, for instance of the recent well-publicised tragedies in the

[27] Roger Zetter (2012) 'Researching migrant journeys: conceptual and methodological challenges', presentation delivered at University of Oxford on October 11, 2012. Podcast available at: http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/researching-migrant-journeys-conceptual-and-methodological-challenges [Accessed 15 January, 2014]

Mediterranean and en route to Easter Islands.[28] Journeys are also accorded a prominent role in autobiographical accounts of migration. These accounts illustrate the dynamism, uncertainty and transformative potential of journeys. As personal accounts, they demonstrate that journeys are constructed through narratives that give meaning to the journey. The following three examples from the literature illustrate these points.

Three 'lost boys of Sudan' who fled from the Sudanese civil war in 1985 wrote about their escape from their village in Southern Sudan until their re-settlement to the US in 1998 in their memoir 'They Poured Fire on us from the Sky' (Deng and Deng et.al. 2005). When they embarked on their journey, they were just children, aged between five and seven. They first went to Ethiopia, were driven back to Sudan and then went to Kenya. They encountered fighting, predators such as hyenas and lions, and survived starvation, malaria, yellow fever and dysentery. They walked thousands of miles throughout their journey, which took several years. Their stories convey the transformative power of the journey on themselves as they transitioned into adulthood and others around them in the harshness they endured during the journey.

Shmuel Avraham (1986), a well-known Jewish Ethiopian political activist who fled to Israel recounted his experience in a book titled the 'Treacherous Journey: My Escape from Ethiopia'. Contrary to what title of his book suggests, Avraham discusses his travel to Israel via Sudan over a very small section of the book. A central narrative of his book concerns his going to a school far away from his village, and it is this which leads him to win a scholarship to go to a boarding school. He eventually settles in Addis Ababa. His political activism and lifestyle is formed during this process, and makes him a target for the Ethiopian authorities. He is imprisoned for several months and upon release and after much deliberation he escapes from Ethiopia. His account suggests that the journey does not begin with the migration itself but with a sequence of events that lead to the migration. Furthermore, his account illustrates how the construction of such a narrative provides meaning to the journey itself.

[28] E.g. Luke Mogelson, November 15, 2013. 'The Dream Boat'. New York Times Magazine, available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/17/magazine/the-impossible-refugee-boat-lift-to-christmas-island.html?hp&_r=2 [Accessed on January 15, 2014].

Shahram Khosravi (2010) in his auto-ethnography titled the 'Illegal Traveller' writes about his journey from Iran to Sweden via Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. The journey, as described by Khosravi, is a space in the migration process where the landscape of opportunity and danger is constantly in flux. In addition to the constant threat of deportation, Khosravi faces many dangers in the journey, including imprisonment in Iran, attacks in Pakistan and homelessness. He entrusts his safety to the smugglers and other middlemen in his journey and implicitly relies on the oversight of the authorities so as not to be deported. Ultimately his destination is determined by how much money he can spend on travel. When in Pakistan, one of his friends, by virtue of having 500USD more than Khasravi, is able to move to Canada, whereas Khosravi can only afford Sweden. Khosravi's account also illustrates the agency that migrants on-the-move hold in shaping their journeys, through the use and expansion of social networks and resourcefulness. For example, Khosravi eventually travels to Pakistan with the help of a contact, despite having been imprisoned after his first attempt to leave Iran. He talks about the performativity of the border, where he himself and other migrants learnt to act in certain ways so as to avoid detection. His story is thus both illustrative of the lack of control that migrants en route have on the road as well as their agency in navigating these constraints.

The neglect of the journey in academic research is exemplified by the extensive research [29] Caplan et al. (1989) conducted into the economic and educational achievements of the so-called 'Boat People', the Indochinese refugees in the US.[30] As the book's title and the name given to these refugees suggests, their journey out of Indochina to neighbouring countries is a key marker of the refugees' identity. Furthermore, the authors frame their introduction to the research with reference to the hardship that the refugees endured in fleeing their countries of origin. In their analysis of whether or not their respondents were able to attain their goals in relation to refugee resettlement in the US, they focus on the 'pre-migration' phase, looking at factors such as cultural values, family structures, demographic data and at the opportunity structures and assistance offered upon arrival at the US. The authors

[29] Caplan *et. al.* conducted research in five different locations, holding interviews with three different ethnic groups, across 1,384 households.

[30] A majority of these refugees left by sea to neighbouring countries fled Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam after 1978 while some crossed the Mekong River to Thailand. Prior to resettlement to third countries, many lived in camps under difficult conditions for varying lengths of time, sometimes for several years.

acknowledge not gathering any information about what happened between 'the two points' (Ibid.: 152), but hypothesise that the suffering on the journey does not seem to have 'scarred' the individuals and may have even led to individuals dealing with stress better in later stages of migration.

Gadi Ben-Ezer's (2002) book 'The Ethiopian-Jewish Exodus: narratives of the Migration Journey to Israel 1977-1985' is one of the few books that focus exclusively on the journey.[31] Importantly for the purpose of this thesis, his work illustrates the potency of journey as a foundation for an attitude to dealing hardships and the diversity of its manifestation during and after the journey. His research is based on interviews with Ethiopian Jewish refugees in Israel on their journey to Israel via Sudan. The Jews from Ethiopia (Beta Israel or *Falasha*) started fleeing to Israel in the late 1970s. Current events in Ethiopia, such as the civil war, combined with the deep rooted sense of non-belonging and discrimination that Ethiopian Jews experienced in Ethiopia, led the Ethiopian Jews to believe that the time had arrived for the realisation of the destiny of the Beta Israel, namely their 'return' to Jerusalem. Furthermore, they had been included in the Israeli 'Law of Return', which gave them the right to live and claim citizenship in Israel. Between 1977 and 1984, 8000 Jews arrived in Israel via Sudan and a further 8200 were airlifted in 1984 and 1985. The journey in and out Ethiopia was extremely dangerous due to the physical conditions of the travel and the risk of arrest by authorities. Furthermore, those waiting in Sudan to be taken to Israel by the airlifts organised carried out by Israel faced many difficulties, including negotiating access to the airlifts and the necessity to conceal their Jewish faith to avoid deportation. Ben-Ezer's initial interest in the 'journey' is as a 'frame of reference for current events in Israel' (Ibid.:2).

For Ben-Ezer (Ibid.:199) journeys 'are highly intensive events, which are registered as a distinct period and experience within the life history of the individual.' Ben-Ezer identifies three key characteristics of the journeys among Ethiopian Jews. First, the journey is a reification of Jewish identity of the refugees. The purpose of the journey is to fulfill religious destiny and to escape religious persecution. During the journey Jewish code of behaviour was observed. God was credited with showing the way and

[31] e.g. Zetter 2012, Ben-Ezer and Zetter 2014.

helping to protect refugees. The journey is a source of suffering created by the act of separation from home and family and the dangerous conditions of travel. The 'continuous state of shock' continues upon arrival to Sudan (Ibid.:105). When in Israel, the refugees used the suffering they experienced during the journey to legitimise their place in Israeli society. Finally the journey is an opportunity where qualities of inner strength and bravery are brought out. These qualities, alongside resourcefulness and leadership, are attributed frequently to men who are said to be *gobez*, which roughly translates as brave. Young boys were able to prove themselves by caring for the elderly and children and safeguarding the group. Thus, the journey was a source of transformation for them.

Ben-Ezer focuses on the unifying experience of the journey in building a sense of identity en route to Israel and in Israel, on the one hand, and on the differing impact on individuals' personal development and growth on the other, particularly for adolescents and young adults. He argues that for boys who were able to withstand hardships and demonstrate bravery, as is culturally expected of them, the journey brought about personal growth. Conversely, for those who were not, the journey had a traumatic impact. For girls, who are not expected to endure hardship as boys are, the spectrum was narrower. He refers to this range of effects of the journeys as the 'narrowing' or 'extension of personal boundaries' (Ibid.:200). Thus, the journeys are transformative experiences that influence the life of the migrants in the subsequent phases of migration and settlement.

For authors such as Khosravi and Ben-Ezer, the journey is associated with liminality - the status that, in Victor Turner's work on ritual, follows separation and precedes integration and thus has transformative potential (Amit 2010). For such authors, the journey is given prominence in the migration process as a link between leave-taking and settling, and this interpretive framework necessitates a clear break from the status quo. Liminality, in this sense, is not a useful concept for this thesis, because most informants did not convey the sense of a rupture that is implied in this literature. Journeys may have coincided with significant shifts in life stages of informants, but in this case their importance lay with the life stage event rather than with the journeys themselves. The positioning of the journey as an 'in-between' phase perpetuates the

polarity of the migration process between the country of origin and destination whereas the journey in narratives transcends this dichotomy.

Risk, although inherent in journeys, is rarely made explicit in the academic research on journeys. Hagan (2008), for instance, surveys the types and frequency of the dangers her informants encountered on their journeys to the USA from Central America. She concludes from her survey that 'not all migrants are at equal *risk* for the same level or types of danger (emphasis mine)'. She argues that factors such as length of time spent on the journey, geography and different ways of organising the journey contribute to the experiencing of these dangers. Dangers of the journey are well known to those who undertake it and migrants try to minimise the risk of crossing national boundaries by, for instance, spending more money on particularly hazardous parts of their journey, using personal networks and on a variety of organisations. Those who are the poorest who undertake travel by freight trains across Mexico face the gravest dangers.

Melly (2011) found that risk-taking was an important feature of local narratives on irregular journeys by boat undertaken by men from Senegal to the Canary Islands. Risk-taking in these narratives, which she refers to as 'pirogue tales' because of the type of boat used by the migrants, also reflect emerging socio-economic trends in Senegalese society. The pirogue tales 'insist, brotherly ties and hard work are no longer sufficient; instead, migration is a matter of luck, of chance, of risking one' life savings (or those of family) and one's life.' In other local accounts, the risks inherent in the journey foster the formation of new social ties, as migrants who intend on taking the journey must conceal their intentions and plans from their closest to avoid detection while working with other migrants on the journey to overcome hardships on the boat. Migrants travelling in pirogues are, in turn, responding to the need for men to engage with the informal sector and behave more individualistically to be successful in society. Melly (2011: 373) then highlights the dialectic relationship between the pirogue tales and the men who created them, as the tales also 'shape the behaviours, strategies, and perspectives of the same actors who gave them life and meaning.' Thus, narratives of journeys in Melly's research also impact migrants experiences at the point of departure, before they become migrants or as they attempt

to migrate again, as well as in the country of destination—as illustrated by Ben-Ezer for Ethiopian Jews in Israel.

4.3 A Typical Journey

Ali's[32] story of his journey to Turkey captures most of the key findings of this chapter. Ali left Afghanistan due to a family dispute and fled to Iran when he was 14. In Iran he had been working for an Iranian man who had been supportive of him. He had concerns that his *dushman*[33] in Afghanistan would find him in Iran and so decided to leave Iran for Europe. His journey include four loops that start and end in Iran. His experience illustrates many common features of the journeys experienced by informants on their way to Turkey. He travelled the most common routes between Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey. The dangers posed by 'bandits', smugglers and authorities are also representative of the experiences of the informants.

Moreover, Ali's story reveals many aspects of the nature of the journey as is commonly experienced by Afghans who travel irregularly to Turkey. His journey was non-linear and included periods of immobility — he was not on the move all the time, but the possibility of migrating, whether voluntary or forced, was on his mind. When I met him, he had been recognised as a refugee, had a job and was in the process of negotiating resettlement through sponsorship. He was nevertheless open to the possibility of undertaking another irregular journey out of Turkey. Were he to leave Turkey, perhaps he would think of his time in Turkey as a part of his journey out of Afghanistan. He encountered many challenges on the way, including deportations. Some of these obstacles were out of his control, whereas others he was able to navigate resourcefully, with his social networks and manual skills. The perseverance and flexibility he demonstrated on his journey were also evident in how he negotiated the challenges and uncertainties of his life in Turkey.

[32] All the names of the informants have been changed to preserve their anonymity as discussed in Chapter 2.
[33] *Dushman* is both the Farsi and Dari word for enemy, which is also close to the Turkish word *düşman*. Afghan asylum seekers used this word to refer to anyone they were feuding with or being threatened by, including family members or armed elements. Asylum seekers who did not want to talk about their reasons for fleeing Afghanistan or reasons for not going back often said that they had *dushman* in Afghanistan. I have also discussed this in Section 2.2. under the heading Conducting Interviews.

Loop 1: Iran-Turkey-Afghanistan-Iran

I earned money. I came from Urmiye (in Iran) to Van and then to Istanbul. I wanted to go to Zeytinburnu but [the smugglers] wouldn't let me. We were in a basement, all 150 of us, the door rang at 10 in the morning, the police came. There were 10 of them. The first handcuff was for me. They took 20 of us out and then left the other 130. I say this is fate, what luck? We went to Vatan Avenue (the General Security Directorate for the Foreigners' Police). The interpreters wanted money from us. They took photographs and fingerprints. I said I wanted to work. Nobody told me about what it is to be a refugee. I said I want to go to England. I want to go to Greece first. They said nobody will give you a card in Greece.

It was Ramadan. They took us to the detention centre. They showed us a room and beds. Are we going to stay here for then years? They said no. We stayed there two or three months. They said that we should buy our plane tickets. I asked how long it would take if they sent us back. The *hırsız*[34] catch them [deportees], if you don't give money they cut your ears. I was very scared. I called [my boss in] Iran and asked for 470USD for a plane. It took a week for the money to get there. They don't allow phones in the detention centre. The police said the passengers should come forward. They read my name as well. I was very happy. I went to Kabul. The plane took off at 1 o'clock in the morning. It was an Air Ariana flight. It was the first time I had been on a plane. I was scared, I held on to my friends when we were flying. From Kabul I went to Herat by bus. The bus driver didn't take money from me for the food.

We arrived at [a town] but Taliban were firing, the driver said that he wouldn't go further. We stayed there. I went to my mother's father's house. I said 'I am tired, I don't want to leave.' He said to me 'don't be crazy, within a month or two they [the *dushman*] will recognise you. I was 14 when I first left. He gave me money, 2000 Afghan money, an ID and then sent me on my way.

Loop 2: Iran-Greece-Turkey-Afghanistan-Iran

So, I came to Iran. Passports are expensive. My boss [in Iran] is also my friend. He said that I should go to Van. I came to Turkey and then went to Greece. In Greece the

[34] This is the Turkish word for thief. Informants used the word to refer to bandits that they encountered while crossing the border. It seemed to me that these bandits were colluding with the smugglers at times.

police caught me and sent me to Istanbul. They didn't take my fingerprints there. From there they sent me to Van. In Van we went to the small police station, buses came and they took us to Iran within half an hour. They dropped us off at the border and shot in the air two or three times. The Turkish police left, then the Iranian police came. They searched us, swore at us. They gave us two breads and we ate them, meek as a lamb. They always take fingerprints in Iran. We waited outside. It was spring, there was snow and rain. A hundred of us stayed at the village until the morning. Some of us were from Afghanistan and others from Pakistan. In the morning they took us with buses from to Zahedan and then to Afghanistan. We were handcuffed. There were no toilets. We stayed one or two nights at the border. There were two thousand of us. We crossed the bridge at Al Khidr.[35] The last time they took 500USD, this time 200-300 USD.

Loop 3: Iran-Turkey-Afghanistan-Iran

I returned to Nimruz (a province bordering Iran). There are *dushman* at Herat. My boss was from Tehran. I worked for 2–3 months in Iran. He said you should go now. So I came again. But this time I couldn't make to Van. We got caught at Başkale (on Turkish side of the border) this time. Iranian police took us to [Sheikh] Sarmes, the Iranian police tormented us again. They hit us. They sent us again from Al Khidr to Zahedan. I then made my way back to Tehran again. If there are many people caught, they send you back straight away.

Loop 4: Iran-Turkey-Iran

I went to Tehran, I stayed there for six months. I went to Van again. But when we continued our journey, we were caught again. I was thirsty and hungry. They sent us to the small police station again. I stayed in Erciş (in the province of Van) for ten days. There were 64 of us in two rooms. It's still better than Iran. Three of us shared a bed, we took turns.

On the eleventh day they released us. It was very dark. There was a toilet. They once brought us kebab. In the small police station there were 50 Afghans. I said that I was there to work. They took fingerprints, and then sent us back to Iran again. I stayed and worked in Tehran for six months. I changed smugglers. I found another smuggler

[35] It could be a border crossing point on the mountains 'Khwaja Khidr'.

from the Iranian Kurds. I came to Urmiye early in the morning. The police caught me again, I said that I was from Mashad[36] and they let me go.

Iran-Turkey

On the final instance he left Iran for Turkey, he went to Zeytinburnu in Istanbul, although he had aspirations to go to Europe. 'I didn't have any money left. I went to Zeytinburnu.' He then applied for asylum on the advice of his boss in Zeytinburnu and was assigned Van as a satellite city. This was also typical in that it was rare that informants knew about the asylum system when they arrived in Turkey. They were often advised by other Afghans or smugglers to go to the UNHCR.

Ali's story illustrates the importance of studying journeys for the purpose of this thesis because his skills and his attitude to managing uncertainty during his journey carried through to his life in Turkey. Although we did not know this when I met Ali in Van, I first spoke with him in 2008 when I was working for an NGO and advised him on his asylum case. I had advised him that it was unlikely that UNHCR would accept his case and he was indeed rejected. His case file was later closed with the NGO because his asylum claim case was deemed to be weak. With the help of another refugee in Van, he wrote his appeal letter. He was accepted by UNHCR as a refugee almost three years after he had registered as an asylum seeker. In the meantime he was in the process of negotiating resettlement to Denmark, through the help of one of his friends who had settled there. He told me how he kept calling the embassy and UNHCR to make sure that his application went through. He was able to find a good job with full board and accommodation in Van, which afforded him time to pursue language education in English and Turkish as well as doing sports. He had many friends, including young children he took English classes with, Iranian refugees and Turks. Ali, was thus able to negotiate many risks he encountered in Turkey in much the same way he had during his journey: by constructing social networks, finding employment and being persistent.

[36] There are many Afghans who live in Mashad, some of whom have regular status in Iran. Ali was able to convince the police that he had been living in Iran for a long time or that he had regular status.

4.4 The Nature of the Journey

The following section will first demonstrate the nature of journeys undertaken by the informants to Turkey by highlighting the commonalities with Ali's journey, looking at trajectories, circularity and conditions of the journey. It will then move onto the discussion of the meaning of the journey.

4.4.1 Common Trajectories

Informants commonly travelled to Turkey from Afghanistan through Iran, sometimes preceded by a brief journey into Pakistan, and then to Turkey by land. The route from Iran usually involves a stop in Urmiye or Salmas, both cities close to the Turkish border. Those coming from Pakistan usually travelled through Afghanistan and Iran as well.

The Turkish city of Van bordering Iran is a hub for migrants entering Turkey through Iran. After crossing the border, migrants are brought to Van and proceed onwards according to their agreements with the smugglers. When I enquired as to why Van had become such a hub, my acquaintances in the city explained that the city owes a large portion of its wealth to other illegal smuggling activities, such as drugs. Furthermore, it had also been relatively immune to clashes between the authorities and the PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party) who are believed to hold their assets in the city. Therefore it would make sense that smugglers would take migrants to Van. Furthermore, Van has long been host to a large number of Iranian asylum seekers. Since the early 1990s the UNHCR office in Van has been registering asylum seekers and carrying out RSD. Most commonly, smugglers or other Afghans directed migrants to the UNHCR office. The November 2011 earthquakes in Van altered smuggling operations for a few months because the region was still shaking with tremors and the city was in ruins. The UNHCR office was temporarily closed. I never returned to Van after the earthquake, but was informed that, by the following summer, the smuggling routes seemed to have been restored. When in Van, informants who wished to travel further to Istanbul were put in buses or lorries.

During my fieldwork, irregular travel from Turkey onwards took place primarily from Istanbul. I also heard that some migrants attempted to go to Greece from Izmir and Çanakkale. Izmir was a busy hub until around 2008. Following some well-publicised drownings off the coast, the Turkish police and coastguards stamped down on the irregular migration flows. When I visited Izmir in the summer of 2011, I could not find any Afghans to speak with. The NGO staff I met with confirmed that in their impression most of the irregular travel was being arranged through Istanbul. For Afghans, the Zeytinburnu district of the city was the centre for meeting smugglers.

4.4.2 Circularity

Many journeys were not linear, and involved zig-zags and back and forth travelling. Ali's journey stands out among the informants for having so many loops. The non-linear journeys, are however, quite common. This is particularly so for migrants who arrange their journeys so that they have to stop when they arrive at a new destination and make travel arrangements for the next leg of the journey. This is what Ali and several other informants did.

For many informants, coming to Turkey was not their first migration. Some informants had already moved to Iran when they were young. Some had then moved back to Afghanistan, only to return to Iran. Others had moved between several different countries and cities over their lives. It appears, however, that the recent deterioration in the situation of Afghans in Iran and Pakistan has triggered a particular kind of circularity in migration patterns. Aziz, for instance, was born in Afghanistan but moved to Iran when he was a year old. When things started getting worse for Afghans in Iran after 2001 his family moved back to Afghanistan in 2004. They returned their refugee card to the Iranian state when they left for Afghanistan but could not get it back when they returned. Aziz said:

> The second time it was harder, we couldn't walk on the street, police stations, they catch you and deport you. They caught me once, but let me go in exchange for money because I was young. My mother came, gave money, and they didn't say

> anything. Very few people are 'legal', they can't send everyone. Some people get deported two or three times and come back. It has become normal.

Thus, it would appear that the circularity of the migration patterns is in part due to the change in Iranian policies towards Afghan migrants. Abdul, like Ali, is typical of the migrants who get deported but come back. Abdul came to Iran when he was 14 years old after his parents were killed in Afghanistan due to a blood feud. When in Iran, he was arrested and deported to Afghanistan twice. After his parents were killed in Afghanistan, he fled to Iran for fear of his life. He did not talk about the first journey to Iran, but started talking about his first deportation from Iran to Afghanistan. During the two and a half years that he spent between leaving Afghanistan for the first time and coming to Turkey, he was constantly faced with the threat of deportation and being found by his *dushman*. He told his story to me through his friend and my interpreter as follows:

> At first he caught at Mashad, the took him to the 'deport centre' at Sang-e Safid.[37] He was there for one month. He says,'They treated us like dogs. There was no food, no hot water. It was very dirty. There was nothing. There was no both. It was very crowded'. When they deported him, they took him to the border. When he goes to Herat the problems will begin again, the *dushman* will kill him, he doesn't have a place to stay. He stayed in Herat for four months to come to Iran. The work was very difficult. He worked secretly so that the *dushman* won't find him.
>
> When he was at the Herat-Iran border (…) There were some clashes at the same time. He was by himself in the middle of it. He escaped narrowly. Some Americans helped him out of there.[38] Then he went to the Pakistan border. In Pakistan the weather is hot, he doesn't have the languages. He doesn't have anyone but the problems are the same. He found somebody to help him come to Iran. He saw deaths on the border. [Iranian border guards] shot an Afghan in front him.

[37] Informants who had been in Iran referred to deportation centres as 'deport centres'. Sang-e Safid is a well-known deportation centre near the Afghan Iranian border.
[38] An informant, who had a similar experience, claimed that international aid workers sometimes help migrants cross the border in their cars. Their cars are often not searched, and they are large four-wheel drives so there is room to squeeze people in.

In Zahedan, the first city he went to in Iran, he found himself in the hands of *hırsız* (bandits). An Afghan friend found him, and he escaped with difficulty. He almost got deported in Shiraz, but because his friend knows the language, they escaped that as well. When the police stopped him and he pretended to be a local. Then he went to Isfahan. He started working there with his friend. They were working as tailors. He was working in the basement in small workshops. They weren't allowed to go anywhere. The factory was owned by an Iranian but Afghans were working there as well. He was afraid of his *dushman* catching him. After a while he was by himself because his friend went to Europe. He was working on his own. He worked there for one year. He left and then started to work at the construction business. They didn't pay him there because he didn't have papers.

In Isfahan he was caught by the police. They sent him to the deportation centre where Then they sent him to Mashad, to Sang-e Safid, and then stayed for a month and then to Herat. Like the time before. He didn't have money for the bus, so he borrowed money from the other detainees. They collect about two or three thousand people and then deport them all together. It is a huge place, it's like a jail.

When he got to Herat he saw a friend and followed him. [He says:] "I knew that they [*dushman*] were following me too, so I got very scared." He then went to Ghazne and then to Bamyan. He worked in very difficult jobs but managed to save money. He went to Pakistan and then to Iran, again. Since he is under eighteen he doesn't really need a visa. He went to Shiraz. He was caught by the police. An Afghan paid the police and then he was released. He then went to the Isfahan again. There they are very racist, they don't like Afghans. When he saw that things were like that, he decided to come to Turkey.

[He says:] 'There is a danger of death, I was very lucky.' There were two Afghans with him who had come here before. He came from Iran to Turkey in 10 days. They walked for 17 hours. One day for 10 hours and the next for 7. There was not much food on the road. When he asked for food, he was slapped. [He says] 'We have bad luck.' In Van they were again caught by the *hırsız*, but they were lucky because his friend had an Iranian phone that works in Turkey. He called his brother who then contacted the smugglers saying that they had been abducted by the *hırsız*. The *hırsız* were pretending to be the smugglers. He told them to run if they can. 'We escaped from the house when one of the men stepped out of the house.

Most of the back and forth in Abdul's and Ali's travel appears to be caused by their deportations and was thus involuntary. Abdul and Ali, however, also moved within Iran to avoid deportation and find employment. Aziz's father similarly worked at an Iranian city that was not the city he lived in. Jamila and her husband lived in Iran for many years until they were threatened by their *dushman* from Afghanistan there too. They applied for asylum in Turkey with their two youngest children. Their son was meant to join them in Turkey. He was kidnapped for ransom near the Afghan border. He was somehow freed and then returned to Afghanistan. Jamila and her husband were afraid that their *dushman* would harm their son and went from Turkey to Afghanistan to find and bring him back. They had been informed that their *dushman* would attempt to attack them when they retrieved their son from Jamila's mother's house. While Jamila's husband stayed at the border town for fear of being spotted, she went back to their hometown. They were able to secretly get their son back and come back to Turkey after a few weeks. Similarly, Ali was living in Istanbul saving money to go to Germany, where his fiancée was living. His initial plan was to travel by land to Germany. He went to Greece in the summer I interviewed him. He thought the situation in Greece was very bad, so he came back to Turkey. After working in Istanbul for a couple of years, he was able to secure safe travel to Germany.

The circularity of the journeys outlined here, while typical for many informants, are also a function of smugglers whom informants had access to and the difficulty of reaching the country they wanted to travel to. There are Afghans who undoubtedly have more linear and clearly bounded journeys. Some informants came directly from Iran without any deviations over short periods of time.

4.5 Conditions on the Journeys

The conditions of the journey, including length and ease of travel, are dependent to some extent on the smuggler that one can afford. At the more expensive end of the spectrum, Afghans arrive in Turkey with legal documentation, and then change documentation to go their country of destination by plane. At the other end of the spectrum, Afghans arrive either in Van or Istanbul without further travel

arrangements. In between, Afghans have arrangements for travel by land to Greece or further away in harsh conditions. They are kept in warehouses or other locations as they await the next leg of their journey. Ali, for instance, was kept in a warehouse on one of his attempts to go to Europe. For a researcher, migrants who spent longer times in Turkey were easier to reach. This meant I almost exclusively had access to the cheaper end of smuggling. The journeys of my informants from Iran would typically take several days. A majority of the informants I spoke with arrived with only the means to go to Turkey, or had to abandon their journey to Europe due to various sources of misfortune.

My only informant who had access to higher-end smuggling is Hamid, a journalist in Afghanistan who fled from the threat of the Taliban. He arrived in Istanbul by plane legally. He had arranged to travel on land for the rest of the journey. I met him a couple of days after he had a failed attempt at crossing the Evros river with an inflatable dinghy, which had deflated due to the cold weather when they were in the water. He was in Turkey for a very short period of time; he had only been in Turkey for three days at this point and left the following week. Within a month he had sought asylum in Belgium, after spending time in Denmark where he decided it was not expedient to seek asylum. It was a coincidence that I was able to speak with him as he was staying with another informant and his journey was hampered by the unusually cold weather.

Most of the journey narratives I heard were on travel from Iran to Turkey; and so my discussion of the conditions largely focuses on this portion of irregular transnational border crossing. Informants coming from Iran reported travelling with other Afghans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis but rarely with Iranians. Iranian refugees also suggested that their irregular journeys were different my informants' journeys: they were shorter, involved little or no walking and were made in smaller groups. I only found out about time spent at barns and waiting in open air when speaking with Afghans. This difference between the journeys of the Iranian refugees I met and my informants may be rooted in access to different smuggler networks and the cost of crossing borders, thus supporting the earlier observation that this thesis captures a particular kind of journey.

Amir's journey is a typical experience of the journey from Iran to Turkey. As his journey will illustrate, journeys were not smooth. Migrants often waited at different points, staying at barns during the day and moving at night. Different modes of transport were used such as horses, cars and lorries. The majority of the journey, however, was on foot. Sometimes less mobile migrants were given a horse to ride for parts of the journey. Smugglers were armed and strict with migrants. They often misled migrants during certain points of the journey, which was almost always longer and more strenuous than migrants had been led to believe. Migrants were also distrustful towards their smugglers particularly at the point of payment. Furthermore, there was always a danger of encountering Iranian or Turkish security forces and *hırsız*.

Amir travelled by plane from Afghanistan to Iran after receiving an imminent threat to his and his family's lives. At that point he had no plans beyond going to Iran. However, in Iran he met a migrant travelling to Europe he obtained the name of a smuggler from him whom Amir thought could take him to Denmark. He had not expected that the journey would be so difficult and long. He had taken a plane from Afghanistan to Iran, so he had not experienced that kind of irregular border crossing. His journey got off to a slow start when he was held at a house near Tehran.

> First we were at the house for about 15 days. The house was in a bad condition. 15 days felt like 15 years. Police is on the way, so we must stay. We left at midnight.' They went to Urmiye by car and then spent 18 hours 'on mountains at night, walking. It was raining badly, we didn't know where we were going.' The smuggler would point at a mountain and tell the migrants that that's how far they would have to walk, 'we came to the top of the mountain and saw five more mountains we had to cross.

Amir estimated that there were '150 people including women, children.' They were also carrying big bags with them. There were three smugglers that accompanied them. There was a man with a broken leg, travelling with his wife. He was given a horse. Migrants were not allowed to do anything that would reveal their whereabouts: 'No lights, no cigarettes, no one can speak, just silence. And, you have to take care of the children, no crying or shouting, I carried a child.' They nevertheless encountered both

Iranian security forces. ‘When we were going down, they called to say that police are on their way. The police were using their guns. They fired. (…)When police fired, we fell off and the horse was injured. ‘ Amir’s group also saw some hırsız from the distance. He said they ‘were more dangerous than the [smugglers].’

It was, however, when they were kept in shelters that Amir found the experience the hardest:

> They put us in stables. Breakfast was inedible. At that point I hated my life. Everybody had written something on the wall. They had written things like ‘I lost my family on the way’; ‘Been here for 60 days’… When I saw this I wanted to go back. I thought that if I could go back I would at least be with my family. (…) There was no light in the room, just a candle. We put the candle by the wall. We stayed for two days in the mountains.

Later, they were taken to the border with Turkey where they stayed at a house. At this point the smugglers put migrants in trucks and lorries for crossing the border. ‘They bring a car, dump truck, put a tent on the car, no one can sit or stand until the end. We don’t speak, we had to be silent. It was hot. Tent was uncomfortable. One child was crying, they shouted at him. We were ready to fight the smuggler. They gave the child a syrup to make him sleep. When we got to Başkale we thought the child was dead. He was one and half or two years old.’ Another informant was incredulous at how tightly the smuggling lorry was packed: ‘When you are smuggled here, there are 180-200 people sitting on top of one and other in the lorry. You wouldn’t believe it if you don’t see it. They stack you like furniture on the road.’

Amir and the migrants he was travelling with stopped when they arrived in Turkey. ‘There was a park by the mosque, it was six or seven o’clock in the evening, then they took us to Laleli for one night.’ When in Turkey, smugglers sometimes try to break their agreement with migrants by asking for more money or taking their payment before their destination. Migrants in Amir’s group appeared wise to these dynamics. ‘The smuggler wanted the money, we didn’t want to pay now but later.’

Amir's account strongly conveys the degree of control that smugglers have over the course of the journey. As one informant put it 'They are all armed (…) On the road you can't do what you want to do.' Smugglers at first often confiscate belongings. One informant, for instance, was never able to recuperate his belongings. The smugglers made him and his wife leave their bags and took all their possessions including golden earrings that his wife had and 'even' his English book.

The smugglers often mislead the migrants. They would, for instance, give a shorter period of time for the travel and not describe the conditions accurately. Informants often conveyed a sense that they did not know what the smugglers were asking of them, which further increased tensions. As Daoud described of one leg of his journey from Iran to Turkey: 'There was a lorry. We were packed. They say "1-2-3 you sit down", we didn't understand. We sat and travelled for six hours. We didn't stand up again until we stopped. There were Afghans, Pakistanis and Iranians. We were moved by smugglers. The smugglers ordered us to come from the lorry, walk for one hour, it was almost sunset. They said the lorry will wait for you. We walked about ten hours that night. It was very hard.'

The border between Iran and Turkey is mountainous and rocky, which makes it very difficult for the physically less able to cross the border. Several of my informants travelled with children, while heavily pregnant or very sick. Three of my informants had to help carry their fathers who were paralysed. One informant, who was travelling with his two children and wife, showed me mobile phone footage of one of the mountains they were made to climb down. In the short clip, they were rushing down a very steep and rugged edged cliff with sharp rocks sticking out. Some migrants who were elderly or sick were given donkeys, for instance, for a part of the journey. Fahim and Jafar, both had to carry their fathers, who were paralysed, on their backs during the journey.

The size of the group that Amir travelled in seemed quite typical although the numbers of the groups may vary at different points in the journey as well. This is illustrative of the tactics of smugglers to separate and combine groups. In this process family members may get separated from one another. In Sivas I met two brothers, 15

and 16 years of age, who were separated from their parents on their way to Turkey. There are frequently messages on social media and emails from concerned relatives looking for family members that were lost.

Daoud was separated from his wife and his friends when he was travelling:

> My wife was pregnant during journey. (…) The smuggler said that women should be separated from men for two hours and then you will join them. We were taken to a mountain. I saw that four to five hundred had come a few days ago, he collected all of them. When we were taken there, the smuggler told us 'we will take you by lorry'. We asked somebody else 'why so many?' They said: 'We had been taken to border. If we continue to go forward we will be arrested. We have been here for 1 week, no food, no water, beaten by smugglers.' (…) It was hard because I thought I can't see my wife again. If we were arrested, we would be deported afterwards, I wouldn't be able to find her. We were taken to a city. I was told it was Van but it could have been Diyarbakır as well. I waited for my wife for a couple of days and then saw my wife.

Zehra and her four-month old daughter were separated from her husband, only to be reunited several weeks later. During the final leg of travel from Iran to Turkey migrants were put in buses with fake identity documents that with pictures or descriptions that resemble the migrants. Smugglers then group migrants together to according to the marital status and information provided in the identity documents. Zehra and her husband were thus separated and were put in different buses. Zehra's husband was caught by the gendarme. The smugglers lost track of her husband but held Zehra and their daughter captive to ensure that they would receive their payment from her husband. After two months in captivity Zehra escaped with her daughter and some others to Van. She said that they went to the highway and found a sympathetic bus driver who helped them. She found her husband when she applied for asylum at the UNHCR office in Van. The gendarme had detained her husband for 20 days, then sent him to Van from where he was sent to Kayseri. Anxious that they would be detained by the police or get into trouble with the smugglers, he came to Van to collect them. It was only when he saw his wife that he released the payment to the smugglers. Delaying payment to smugglers until they reach the destination is a way of

ensuring that the smugglers would not harm them and that they would reach their final destination.

An informant was 14 years old when he arrived in Istanbul with smugglers. The smugglers kept him and their other clients at a building. They took money from them everyday and would not allow them to leave. The migrants had no food and no means to work to earn food or pay the smugglers. They would call the relatives of migrants for more money. My informant said that he did not even know which city he was in. In addition to detaining migrants to ensure payment or obtain more money, smugglers were hostile towards their clients during the journey as well. Daoud said that when he was walking from Iran, among the group of migrants:

> There was an old man who can't walk normally. A smuggler took a stone and hit his leg. He fell down. He can't move anymore. When other people wanted to help him, the smuggler hit them. I don't know what happened to him. When somebody protests, [they get] beaten hard by smuggler. The smuggler said 'Last year we killed people who didn't move. If you protest, can't walk we will kill you like others before. You can see the remains of the people from last year if there was light'.

Halima travelled with her mother from Afghanistan to Turkey. Her mother already had health problems and she passed away when they arrived at Van. As a result, Halima was detained by the police for one night and her mother was given a burial the following day, as is customary in Turkey. Halima was travelling to go to Denmark, to be with her sister. They were going to go to Istanbul and then to Europe, but the smugglers took their money and threatened Halima about disclosing their identities. It had been over forty days after her mother's death when I met Halima, and she said told me that she was afraid to go to her mother's grave in case the smugglers would pursue her.

Many informants reported being afraid of the *hırsız* they encounter on the journey. It was not clear to me, however, whether there is cooperation or interaction between the *hırsız* and the smugglers themselves, as the smugglers were also reported to be hostile and to kidnap migrants. One informant described his fear of the *hırsız* as follows 'We are used to these roads. It is scary and there are many dangers. It is better to fall into

the hands of the *dushman* [in Afghanistan] than into the hands of the *hırsız*.' You can only die once.' The *hırsız* were rumoured to hold migrants hostage, rob them and physically harm the migrants. Ali said that he had heard that they cut off migrants' ears.

4.5.1 Encounters with Authorities

Most of the informants were not caught or detained upon arrival in Turkey unless they were involved in a medical emergency that brought their illegal presence to the attention of the police. Masooma and her family were detained on their way to Istanbul after their accident:

> We had an accident in Pınarbaşı (on the way to Istanbul), it is one hour away from Kayseri. There were thirty-seven people in the minibus. Eight Pakistanis and two Afghans, including my husband's brother, died. My son had a haemorrhage. He has a problem with his back. The UN says we will have him operated but they haven't done anything. The UN saw it in the newspapers. The van belonged to the smugglers. The police took him to the state hospital(…)We knew about the UN in Van, we wanted to go but the smugglers wouldn't let us, they said you have to go to Istanbul because they wanted to take the money.
>
> We stayed at the police for 22 days. We said we want to go to the UN and the police said that we had stayed there if we want to apply for asylum. We were in the Foreigners' Police detention centre for one week and Hacılar, which was like a prison. My son was in the hospital. He is twelve now. We were five [in the prison], including myself, my husband and my other child. My second child kept fainting. They didn't let us speak on the phone, they wanted to deport us. We were only able to apply to the UN when we were released. Because the children wanted to go to the bathroom often they only gave them one bottle of water. I washed the dishes. My husband is ill too, he had diabetes and rheumatism. I am ill as well. We couldn't see a doctor. They took my son and we couldn't see him until we were released. He has epilepsy. The little one was scared by the accident, he has psychological problems.

It is also not uncommon for migrants to encounter security forces on the border between Turkey and Iran. Ali had said that the Turkish police would shoot them at the

border. Similarly, Iranian security officials are rumoured to have the authority to shoot. As Daoud said: 'When you are crossing the border there is the danger of bullets. Iran has given permission to shoot'. Fateh encountered the Turkish police twice on his way into Turkey. When they were on the border they had to hide from the gendarme. In Van he was stopped by the police, they asked him for his ID and where he was going. Fateh replied that he was going to Istanbul and the police let him ago. Another informant claimed that in his experience 'the police collaborate with the smugglers, they know the ID document is fake and let it go'.

Jamila's sixteen-year old son was not as fortunate as Fateh. He was detained by the police after he entered Turkey and accused of being 'a spy for Iran (…) because he came with a fake ID document and because he spoke very good English.' He had been given a Turkish identity card after he arrived in Turkey in case he was stopped on his way to Istanbul. The document belonged to a 27 year old but he was only 16 years old. He was thus arrested for carrying a false Turkish identity card—a criminal offence. At the court hearing there was no translator provided. 'In the court when the judge asked him questions he answered in English and the judge didn't accept.' According to Jamila, had her son been over 18, he would have been punishable with a six-year prison sentence. Only after the hearing was Jamila able to get a lawyer for her son. Under international refugee law, asylum seekers must not be punished for entering a country with false documents. Given, however, the legal vacuum in Turkey in the absence of domestic law on refugees and asylum seekers, such cases may often only be resolved with intervention from UNHCR and Turkish lawyers. She contacted UNHCR and, on their advice, found a lawyer in Erzurum. With help from the police and the city's bar association she succeeded in securing free legal aid for her son. This is a remarkable feat, given particularly that Jamila only speaks Dari and was caring for her nine-year-old daughter with a serious heart condition who was in Istanbul. Her lawyer then told her that the court did not believe that she was the mother of the detainee. Jamila's son was born in Iran and had been undocumented all his life. Lack of documentation is a problem for asylum seekers in Turkey who have to navigate a bureaucracy heavily reliant on identity documents and other proofs. Jamila's son was released from prison after two months.

When Rasoul left to go to Greece after not getting anywhere with his asylum claim he was on an inflatable dinghy. He said that he had heard that Greek coast guards sometimes deflate dinghies and send them back to Turkish coast, but this is not what happened to Rasoul.[39] His boat broke down:

> On the boat there were two Turks, one of them was driving the boat and the other was showing the way. There were Iranians, Arabs and Afghans all sitting together. (…) We were fifteen in the boat, including children and families. The boat stopped working and they told us that they wouldn't be able to take us any further. There was an Iranian on the boat, he helped and somehow we went for maybe another 200km or so. We were maybe forty-five minutes away from the islands and we got caught. We stayed on the shores in open air for 2 days. And then we were taken to Aydın to a police station that was turned into a deport centre. The windows all had iron bars, so there was no escaping. (…) Because I knew Turkish, I took the children and women to the hospital. If you wanted to escape you could have. (…) There were three families, and they called [an NGO in Istanbul]. Everybody was deported. Four people had died in another boat. Their brides etc. were still alive and deported as well. Because I had a file at UNHCR they sent me back to Van.
>
> We went by bus, our hands were tied. We went to Doğubeyazıt. Ali Bey [a police officer] came, tied my hands and took me to Van. I didn't know that I would stay there for so long. I got two meals a day one for lunch and one for dinner. There was no bathroom [in the cell]. There was a TV on but on the other side of the iron bars. Sometimes the police would pity me. It was harder than Aydın. Once a family came. I once cleaned the bathroom. There were no windows, there was a terrible smell. In Aydin there was a bathroom, it was cleaned by a cleaner. After ten days they gave me a book, but it was very difficult, I begged them a lot. And then an Iranian came and they deported him. Then Afghans and Pakistanis came from Iran, they were kept for two or three days, they had been caught in Gevaş. They were deported too. And then a group of sixty or seventy people came and they were deported too.

A few months later after our interview one of my informants, whom Rasoul had introduced me to, had a similar experience. Rasoul told me that this informant had also been caught before making it to Greece, only to arrive in Van at the time of the

[39] For recent report on pushbacks between Greece and Turkey, see Amnesty International (2013).

earthquake. He was nevertheless pleased because he had found out in detention that he was recognised as a refugee.

4.6 Meanings of the Journeys

In this section I will first look at how migrants craft narratives of their journeys, and what this means for the migration process. I will then focus on the transformative potential of journeys. In doing so I refer to the key findings of the literature on journeys as discussed above.

4.6.1 Narratives

The section of the interviews on journeys stood out in that it was the part of the interview where informants told stories about their lives. While some informants merely described the travel between two countries, often Iran and Turkey, others embedded the journey in broader narratives about their lives. The narratives shed light on migration decision-making processes as reflected upon in hindsight. Furthermore, the ability to construct narratives is also an important skill in itself skill in itself, not only in affirming agency but one that may be critical in subsequent negotiations of the asylum process.

Narratives are important as an object of study because narratives are 'central ways in which 'we' as outsiders might attempt to understand their experiences, for narratives reflect history, experience and meanings, and help shape them' (Gardner 2002: 27). Gardner (Ibid..: 29), in her research among the ageing Bangladeshi population in the UK, found that stories are important for migrants because 'they give coherence and meaning to experiences', and because they are 'characterised by movement' like migration as the story is constructed from beginning to end, for instance.

Unlike the communities which Gardner (2002) and Ben-Ezer (2002) worked with, my informants' narratives of their journeys were not a means of establishing collective identities. Ben-Ezer (Ibid..: 194-195), for instance, argues that the construction of narratives on journeys is a form of myth-making as a means of re-affirming identity that contributed to the creation of a cohesive community. This is perhaps because — unlike those undertaking journeys involving a clear break from the country of origin

to the country of destination — most of my informants had been migrants most of their lives. Rather than creating communal identity, the narratives of journeys were a means of understanding how informants made sense of their previous decision-making processes in relation to migration.

Most of my informants have been traveling from an early age within Afghanistan and elsewhere and have been migrants outside of Afghanistan. When talking about the journey to Turkey, however informants started to talk about their lives from different points. Some only spoke about the time spent traveling from Iran or Afghanistan to Turkey while others recounted a story that begun from earlier on in life leading to their arrival in Turkey. The narrative of journeys aligns the important life events with migration experience to Turkey.

Narratives of journey reveal the time when intent to travel was set or with an event which later led to migration. Zehra, for instance, began her account of her journey by talking about the death of her father when she was in Iran. After her father died, she was married to a man in Afghanistan when she was 'just a child' only to leave Afghanistan with her husband again. She had been living in Iran for eight years without documentation but her journey did not begin with the move to Iran. It was her father's death that acted as a catalyst to a series of events in her life that sometimes involved migrating that brought her to Turkey over the course of many years. Similarly, Gulbahar moved to Iran when she was one year old and lived there for many years. Her journey to Turkey, however, begins with her marriage in Iran. She and her husband migrated to Afghanistan, then, within several months, back to Iran and then to Turkey. Although she was separated from her husband she saw her future being shaped by her marriage because she sees her husband's *dushman* in Iran and Afghanistan as a threat to her. In contrast, in describing his journey to Turkey, Arash started telling me about fleeing Afghanistan as a five-year old to Pakistan where he spent many years and left to go to Turkey as a student via Afghanistan.

Mobility accounts for relatively short periods of time in the narratives of journeys. In fact, journeys involved long periods of immobility punctuated by travel. Arash, when asked about how he came to Turkey, told me his story starting from becoming a

refugee in Pakistan aged five to his arrival in Turkey aged 20, but had only travelled three times. In other journeys the possibility of mobility — forced or voluntary — featured prominently in journeys even if the informants had stayed in the same place for some time. This is particularly true for those informants who were in Iran trying to stay in Iran or arrange onward travel. It could also be that certain types of mobility were not portrayed as being significant. There were, for example, informants who migrated within Iran for security and economic reasons but did not mention it explicitly.

It is not only narratives that are important for understanding the migration process, but the narrators' abilities to craft them in the first place. Firstly, constructing narratives is an essential skill for immigration procedures, particularly for the asylum process. Khosravi (2010: 33) for instance in his description of the performativity inherent in the refugee status determination process, emphasises the importance of being able to consistently relay a detailed narrative, complete with dates, names and places, for success in the process.[40]

Secondly, the construction of narratives is an agentic action in imbuing the journey with meaning and constituting the present. Although a strong sense of communal identity arising out of suffering in the journey did not exist among the informants, there was some element of it in the use of certain narrative idioms, for example in the following two accounts that emphasise confronting fear, suffering and even death on the road. Arash, when talking about his journey from Afghanistan to Pakistan as a five-year-old said:

> We Afghans we are brave. (…) From the main roads we went to Pakistan. We got off the bus halfway through the road and put on the dresses of the Kuchi (a nomadic Afghan tribe) and then we crossed with camels and horses. Russians and the Mujahid were fighting, we could hear the firing sounds, but we had to cross. (…)The struggle to stay alive strengthened our resolve. If that resolve didn't exist we would not have

[40] He argues that it is a Eurocentric legalist narrative that is required for the process, which may be antithetical to cultural forms of narratives. Constructing a narrative requires also requires an ability to recall events, give a chronological order to them and to be able to articulate them. Therefore, even if it is not in keeping with a particular legalistic style, narrative construction is an important skill in immigration proceedings.

> survived. Because our lives have been such a big struggle, we can overcome any obstacle.

Abdul when talking about the difficulties of his journey to Turkey, which continued when he was in Turkey said: 'One side of the *kaçak*[41] road is death, the other is life. I have seen so much suffering that I accept death.' I heard many other young men refer to the precarity of the '*kaçak* road' and acceptance of its dangers.

4.6.2 Transformation through Journeys

As I discuss above in this chapter, the transformative potential of journeys is a prominent theme in the literature, in which transformation mainly arises out of suffering which leads to transition into adulthood, construction of collective identity and psychological transformation. These accounts feature a clear break from the past that is not a common feature of the journeys of the informants. It would therefore be difficult to attribute transformational power to journeys at the expense of a combination of factors such as those that lead informants to leave Afghanistan or Iran in the first place, for instance. Nevertheless, as a result of their financial and emotional consequences, journeys were transformative in their impact on the decisions informants took for further travel. Furthermore, many components of what could be thought of as social capital that were acquired through journeys, such as labour skills or social connections, were maintained upon arrival.

Journeys resulted in expected and unexpected financial costs to informants. Those who were caught by the police or were robbed by their smugglers were not able to carry their journeys out as planned. Ali and other migrants who were arrested en route to another destination had to revise their migratory decisions. Masooma and her family had a road accident before they were able to reach their destination. Halima lost her mother and was unable to complete her journey through Istanbul as it had been planned. Some informants said that after experiencing the conditions of the journey to Turkey, they were reluctant to undertake further irregular travel. Ali, at one

[41] *Kaçak* means illegal or smuggled in Turkish. It is used to describe irregular migrants in national legislation. In the news and public discourse refugees and asylum seekers are usually described as being *kaçak*. Some informants used this word to describe their status in Turkey, even if in the asylum system.

point said that he was ‘tired’, for instance. This sentiment could have contributed to his perseverance in his asylum case and insistence upon staying in Turkey. Similarly Amir, who expressed shock at the conditions of his journey, was unwilling to embark on another journey. Fahim and Hadi both expressed reluctance to go further to Europe. This was due both to their financial situation after the journey but also to the difficulties the journeys entailed, Fahim caring for his sick father and Hadi being sick himself during the crossing. Although, the journey to Turkey put Fahim off from undertaking further travel, one of his brothers continued travelling to Europe by irregular means soon after arriving in Istanbul. Therefore, the two brothers were transformed by their journey in different ways.

The journey, however, also represented opportunities. After returning back to Turkey from Greece, Fateh started working for his smugglers by allowing other migrants to live with him until they could undertake further travel. He was then able to secure his journey to Europe to be reunited with his fiancée. During their journeys, some informants learnt about they asylum process in Turkey from other migrants or smugglers. Similarly being intercepted by the authorities could result in deportation, but admission to the asylum procedure as well.

I observed after a few months of conducting fieldwork that the men I interviewed who had been migrating from a young age, seem to be better at coping with adversities. Professional, social or language skills that ensured their survival during journeys, were also useful for them in their lives in Turkey. I told Hamid and Arash my hypothesis and asked them whether they thought moving from a young age made people more ‘resilient’, and they agreed with me. Hamid, himself exemplified this most clearly. I discuss both their stories in greater detail in Chapter 6, but I summarise Hamid’s story here to explain this hypothesis. Hamid was forced to flee their home with his family when he was nine years old. On the journey from Kabul to the north of the country, he encountered a woman being beaten by the Taliban at a checkpoint. This image still haunts him today. He was separated from his parents by the age of 12. He then moved several times within Afghanistan, to Pakistan and to Iran in pursuit of a better education. He undertook several treacherous border crossings, mostly by himself. These journeys afforded him the opportunity to demonstrate his

independence to his family and gave him the ability to pursue his educational aspirations by convincing his father of his self-sufficiency. He learnt to speak several languages and experience different lifestyles during this time. As an adult he continued to assert his independence from his family in a variety of matters and encouraged his younger siblings to migrate. Therefore, for some informants the journey offered the potential for confronting and managing challenges relating to the migration process and their lives in general.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter first provides information on the conditions and nature of the journey to Turkey, with particular regard to the portion of the journey between Iran and Turkey. Accounts of these journeys revealed the arduousness and risks of the border crossing which were particularly shaped by the smugglers' attitudes towards informants. In relation to the nature of the journeys, it demonstrated that for most migrants their arrival to Turkey had been preceded by non-linear journeys that involved much uncertainty and periods of immobility. Secondly, the chapter provided insights into the decision-making processes of informants because through narratives of the journeys informants contextualised the migration to Turkey within past life events. The chapter argued that the construction of narratives for the journey is also important both as a skill necessary for negotiating bureaucracy and as an agentic action that gives meaning to the migration process as whole. Finally the transformative potential of the journeys for informants was illustrated both in terms the impact of the journey on migration decisions in Turkey as well as the ability to acquire and demonstrate different skills and autonomy.

Most significantly for the question this thesis seeks to answer, the diversity of the informants' responses to the journey was illustrated. Some informants were able to construct narratives relating to their journeys encompassing past migration decisions and give meaning to the migration in relation to their current predicament in Turkey. Informants had to overcome a variety of challenges to arrive in Turkey including

repeated deportations and the lack of financial means. The stories of informants such as Ali, Arif, Abdul, Daoud, Zehra and Arash will be further elaborated in the rest of the thesis to demonstrate that their attitudes to managing the risks of the journeys are also manifest in other areas of their lives in Turkey.

Although I do not have enough information on most of my informants' journeys to illustrate the analytical categories *restless* and the *resigned*, I will focus on Fateh's attitude to travel, which I characterise as *resilient*. When I met Fateh in March 2011, he had been in Turkey for over one year and was planning on going to Germany to live with his fiancee and because 'life the life standard is better there'. He knew 'road was very difficult' between Afghanistan and Iran, but did not tell his family because he thought they would not let him go. It cost him 450USD to come to Tehran. He stayed with some relatives in Iran while working to raise the funds for the second leg of the journey to Turkey, which cost him 1000USD. He said 'did not pay the smuggler until I arrived in Istanbul', which I interpret to mean that his relatives in Tehran kept the payment until they had confirmation of his safe arrival in Turkey. He got a construction job in Istanbul immediately to start earning money for the next leg of his trip, although he had financial support from his family for the first three months. Through some of his distant relatives in his home city, he got in touch with an Afghan man who had Turkish nationality who owned some shops. When I first met Fateh he was working at one of these shops. He was very knowledgeable about travel conditions onwards from Turkey and was in touch with Afghans who had left Turkey irregularly:

> Last year a friend crossed with 4-5 people, on a row boat, someone fainted in the boat. It was in 12 hours from 8 until 8. It was very scary. They arrived on a Greek island. The easiest way is the Edirne. Every friend who goes informs us. A friend left the day (…) and then another friend left as well. They were all successful. After Greece it is 4000 Euros to Germany by plane or by lorry. I am thinking of going in September. Because it starts getting cold. It is very difficult in the summer because a lot of people, so people get caught. The prices now are 1500-1000 USD at the moment. The cheapest is 600USD, if you find someone whom you know. They take you over the river with the boat as well. Everything is possible when you are doing the journey. A

> friend of mine got stuck in the forest, by the river, and they were bitten all over by mosquitoes.

Fateh knew smugglers in Istanbul and was able to explain how smugglers operated and the dangers smugglers faced:

> When someone from the group of a smuggler dies, the smuggler is totally responsible. The family of the person who died can come and ask to the smuggler why he did not protect their relatives. And after that nobody will give want to travel with this smuggler. A month ago, someone died from a family and the smuggler had to escape to Afghanistan with all his family. The smugglers are connected among each other, the one accompanying you form Afghanistan to Iran and the one from Iran to Turkey are connected.

Fateh also had information about the asylum systems in different countries. He said that in Turkey 'it is easier to get accepted as an Afghan, it is unlikely that they will send you back because you are Afghan. If they catch you at the border it could be bad in Turkey as well, but [it is good] if you apply yourself.' In contrast in Germany, 'as soon as you enter you have to apply for asylum or they catch you. You wait for six months to one year for a response and you can act accordingly. You have to defend your case well. If you get rejected they will return you back'.

Fateh was nevertheless determined to go to Germany. His mother, who was afraid of the dangers of the journey to Germany, tried to dissuade Fateh by promising him to marry him to a distant relative in Turkey. Fateh, however, was determined to pursue his ambitions, and convinced his mother and family to support him:

> I told her that I have a long road. I do not want to stay here, this is very expensive in Turkey, we have to work a lot, I am spending my life here to work. In Europe it is much more easier to find a good job and they offer you accommodation as well. If I had an Ikamet life would be different, but still, even if I have an Ikamet I cannot work in an office, I will have to work in construction or things like that. But in Europe, you can have insurance even if you are in the construction. (…) Here my salary is not enough, it is just enough to live in Turkey, my family will help me to pay the travel to Greece. I told my mother that I want to go to Germany. At the beginning my mother

> did not want me to go but I told her that I would do that whatever she says. I told her that I want to leave during one year and a half. It is not only my mother, but my big family, uncles and brothers will help me to pay the smugglers. Later on, once I will reach Germany or somewhere else, I will help them.

In September 2011, I heard that Fateh left to go to Greece. Not long after his departure, however, he came back to Istanbul. He said that the conditions in Greece were intolerable. When he returned to Istanbul instead of taking his old job back he started working for some smugglers. Through the man who owned the shop he worked with, he somehow managed to secure a temporary residence permit, which enabled him to rent a flat. He housed Afghans who were about to smuggled to Greece in his flat for a fee and took them to their meetings with smugglers. The Afghans who stayed with him appeared to have access to a more expensive kind of smuggling as they would often fly into to Turkey and be taken to destination countries in Europe rather than only to Greece. Fateh travelled to Germany in 2013.

Fateh can be characterised as being resilient because of his wide knowledge of smuggling and immigration systems, which he furthered through his social contacts. He built his social relations in such a way as to position himself as part of the smuggling network. Through his knowledge, social ties and perseverance he managed to reach his goal by minimising the dangers associated with journey. In the three subsequent chapters I will show how informants managed risks associated with their negotiations with gatekeepers, their daily lives and their health.

Chapter 5

Permits, Petitions and Pleas: Daily Negotiations with Gatekeepers

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I describe informants' interactions with gatekeepers of the asylum and migration system and demonstrate how these interactions represent three different attitudes to decision-making. Gatekeepers include anyone who holds power within the migration and asylum system including staff at UNHCR and NGOs, foreigners' police officers and civil servants. Gatekeepers provide informants with access to services such as healthcare, education, welfare and legal status. However limited these provisions may be, they are often crucial to the survival of informants in Turkey— particularly those lacking outside support from family or friends. Turkish bureaucracy is structured with *ad hoc* regulations and directives in the absence of a legal framework, offering scope for discretionary authority and allowing considerable room for negotiation. The system is flexible to negotiations by migrants as well as by third parties such as NGOs.

When I embarked on fieldwork I assumed that the only decisions that migrants would have to make within the bureaucratic sphere would relate to choice of legal status: to apply for asylum, to be irregular, to regularise status and to obtain or extend student status. Furthermore, I assumed that the decision about legal status would be the most important decision a migrant would make, that all other decisions would be subservient to the question of legal status. In fact, migrants face an array of bureaucratic decisions much broader than the commitment to a legal status. Potentially costly and powerful decisions need to be made for instance about whether to advocate for oneself to authorities (most often in the form of petitions), to whom to focus these advocacy efforts and with what frequency to carry them out. At one extreme some informants seem to create opportunities out of thin air through these negotiations and were consumed in their interaction with gatekeepers; at the other

extreme some informants stagnate. This chapter will demonstrate how the three different attitudes towards risk manifest with regard to interactions with gatekeepers.

This chapter will also demonstrate that decisions relating to legal status are not always about securing a particular status. A legal status either serves or is a consequence of other priorities. Decisions about legal status and strategies for negotiating with gatekeepers can therefore only be understood by understanding these priorities. A related finding that emerges from the chapter is that migrants do not always view irregularity as undesirable, as a disadvantageous legal status or as a morally inferior position.

The chapter starts with a brief discussion of literature relating to migrant legal consciousness focusing on concepts such as deportability, precarity and fairness. This section highlights discussions of migrant legal identities to which I refer later in the chapter. The second section of the chapter details the key gatekeepers for migrants. The third section looks at what informants perceived the roles of the gatekeepers to be, what they expected of them and, finally, how they evaluated these gatekeeper.

The fourth section outlines the different kinds of decisions that informants took within the system. It focuses particularly on the construction of narratives, the efforts of informants to advocate for themselves with regard to different gatekeepers and, finally, informants' decisions on choosing, maintaining or abandoning different bureaucratic paths. This section illustrates the diversity of decisions taken by informants who are similarly situated within Turkey. This section introduces some of those informants whose experiences form the basis of the typology presented in this thesis, and whose decisions are used to illustrate differing attitudes to risk across the subsequent chapters.

The concluding section uses three informant case studies to situate the heterogeneity of migrants' decision-making processes within the typology presented at the start of the thesis. Thereby, it also demonstrates one of the central arguments of the thesis, which is that migrant decision-making can only be understood in its broader socio-

cultural and subjective context and the diversity of decisions can usefully be explained through a framework of risk.

5.2 Precarity, Compliance and Migrant Legal Consciousness in the Literature

In this section I discuss the literature that I used to formulate my approach to the analysis of my informants' relations with gatekeepers and their decisions regarding their legal status. This literature is mainly concerned with migrants' attitudes towards the law, legality and illegality and fairness — in other words their 'legal consciousness'. This literature mainly originates from North America where the legal context and some of the issues migrants face differ from the situation of my informants. I comment on these differences and similarities later in this section.

One approach to understanding migrant decision-making with regard to state and bureaucracy is to study migrants' compliance with the law. Ethnographies by Susan Bibler Coutin (2000) and Jacqueline Maria Hagan (1994) explain how two different Latin American communities understood and responded to immigration reform and naturalisation in the US in the 1980s and 1990s. Both demonstrate that migrants' understanding of and engagement with state bureaucracy must be studied in the context of the broader social and cultural environment in which migrants act. How information is disseminated and then interpreted individually and at a community-level can explain the differences in migrant uptake of naturalisation programs, for instance. Although both ethnographies demonstrate diversity of migrants' strategies with regard to naturalisation, their explanations for this diversity focus on temporal dimensions, looking at factors such as community initiatives or changes in the law, rather than individual decisions. This is because the authors are interested in explaining particular trends or waves in the uptake of naturalisation. Coutin (2000: 23) describes her research as an 'ethnography of a legal process'. The ethnographies mention but do not analyse migrants who were not a part of these waves. For the purpose of my thesis, this work is important for demonstrating the complexity of the decision-making process, which is changeable being shaped by gatekeepers, information networks and subjective considerations.

There is a literature on migrants' compliance with migratory regulations that is of interest (e.g. Braithwaite 2010, Brown 2009, Kirk et al. 2012). This literature seeks to understand why migrants do or do not comply with certain immigration legislation. It is similar to the ethnographic literature mentioned above in its focus on migrant compliance with particular policies. It also introduces concepts such as fairness, trust and 'predisposition to compliance', which are useful tools for understanding migrant decision-making (e.g. Costello and Kaytaz 2013a). Some of the key findings in this literature on compliance are that 'legitimacy' is a key determinant of whether migrants comply with the law, and that legitimacy is 'rooted in assessments of *procedural justice*, meaning not merely that government follows pre-ordained rules and procedures, but also that it acts in a manner perceived by individuals themselves to be fair' (Costello and Kaytaz 2013: 8). The judgement of the legitimacy of a system is based on factors such as 'the quality of interpersonal treatment; evaluations of the trustworthiness of authorities, judgements about the neutrality of decision-making; and the degree to which opportunities to participate were afforded' (Ibid: 9). Later in this chapter, I demonstrate that informants hold negative views of these factors as it applies to the asylum system, in particular. Their perception of legitimacy, or lack thereof, influences their decision-making processes. Furthermore, perceived legitimacy is important because the stakes of operating in a system with no legitimacy may be higher, or may require different tactics.

To understand how migrants understand and respond to a host country's legal framework, it is also important to understand the context of the countries that they came from. Kirk et. al (2012: 7) for instance, argue that what migrants perceive to be fair in the USA 'reflects the characteristic of the justice system' in their countries of origin. The perception of fairness, in turn, is a key determinant of how migrants interact with the legal systems of the host society, in particular whether they comply with it. Understanding my informants' relationships with state authorities and gatekeepers prior to coming to Turkey is therefore important as part of understanding their decision-making process regarding their bureaucratic choices in Turkey. Furthermore, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter, informants acquired skills in

dealing with state authorities and gatekeepers, including smugglers, in their journeys to Turkey. These relations are also manifest in the skills that informants possess.

Afghanistan is often portrayed as a failed or fragile state.[42] All my informants claimed to have left Afghanistan or that they cannot return to Afghanistan because their basic needs, for safety, freedom and financial security, will not be met there. Furthermore, they believe the *dushman* from whom they flee will pursue them in Afghanistan where, they say, these *dushman* are protected by state authorities. Their descriptions of their experience with power relations in Afghanistan is consistent with the anthropological literature on the state in Afghanistan, which describes the political system as normless (Geller 2010) and fundamentally governed by local politics, kinship ties and ethnic networks (e.g. Coburn 2011; Ibid; Schetter 2013). My informants have therefore not been living under a government with a centralised power and strong bureaucratic system such as in Turkey. Most of my informants lived in Afghanistan during times of conflict, and were consequently not imbued with a strong state-centred ideology.

A majority of my informants, however, had spent longer periods of time in Iran — with and without documentation— than in Afghanistan. Some were born in Iran and had never had regular status, or had it only for short periods of time. For informants like Amir, securing legal status had been a major preoccupation:

> I was born in Iran. When we first arrived there everybody welcomed us, it just after the regime change. My parents (…) found out they knew some people in Mashad so they went there. We were given these blue ID cards, and everything was OK. And then, when I was about 12 or 13, the government introduced a new type of card. They said that the blue cards weren't valid. They collected the blue cards and gave us cards that said that we should leave Iran in one month. You could get an extension for that but it was very difficult. My father had passed away by that time and I was living with my uncle. He had a heart problem so we could get an extension through UNHCR on that card as well, but it was very difficult. And these cards were also declared invalid. Then we began to stay *kaçak*. It was around this time that they started deportations as well. We were at Mashad at that time, we heard that it was

[42] It was ranked 6th in the Failed State Index in 2012, for instance.

> easier to get cards at [another city]. I was about 15 at the time. My family left but I stayed for a few months to finish school. And then we moved to [this city] for about a year. And then we returned to Mashad because we realised that it is still difficult there. When we returned to Mashad, we applied for an ID through UNHCR because my uncle is sick, he has got heart problems. The IDs they issued us with would have about 2, 3 or 6 months validity. We had to keep go and renew them.

Despite the fact that Amir's uncle had obtained documentation from the authorities, and had serious health conditions, he was detained at the Sang-e Safid deportation centre three times. Amir took him what he needed once a week in a journey that took an entire day. Amir's characterisation of his situation in Iran was that of constant fear of deportation and uncertainty about the future. If deported to Afghanistan, he had 'no life guarantee' because 'there are no connections there'. Amir, like many of my other informants, spent considerable lengths of time in their lives with this sense of uncertainty, fear of deportation and lack of documentation. Amir's story was not typical, however, in that not all my informants, or their families, pursued documentation so actively. Amir, despite the difficulties he faced, managed to attend school, and eventually arrived in Turkey via a short time spent in Afghanistan. My informants were not all as persistent as Amir's family in pursuing regular status and staying in Iran. Some of my informants' families left Iran when they were unable to get permits or retreated to living irregularly.

Concepts such as 'precarity' (Banki 2012, 2013), 'deportability' (de Genova) and 'legal liminality' (Menjivar 2006) draw attention to how uncertain legal statuses shape the lives of migrants such as Amir. As discussed in Chapter 3, Banki (2012) examines the impact of precarity in the political engagement of refugees with their countries of origin. A major source of precarity for migrants is their susceptibility to the threat of deportation, which de Genova (2002) refers to 'deportability'. Amir's account illustrates how the threat of detention and deportation was ever-present in the daily lives of himself and his family. Menjivar (2006) shows that ambiguity and uncertainty in the legal statuses of Guatemalan and Honduran migrants to the USA

creates long-term uncertainty in all aspects of their lives. She terms their predicament 'legal liminality'.[43]

This literature is useful for the purpose of this thesis because of its emphasis on the impact of uncertainty relating to immigration status on the daily lives of migrants. Menjivar (2006: 1001), for instance, argues that 'it is not simply an undocumented status that matters theoretically and analytically, but the long-term uncertainty inherent' in her informants' legal status. Villegas (2014) discusses how uncertainty experienced by Mexican migrants with precarious legal status in Toronto permeates their life plans in all areas of their lives, from education to buying household goods. How informants perceive and manage uncertainty is also central to my thesis. In this chapter, and in Chapter 7, I discuss the sources and consequences of uncertainty arising out of bureaucratic processes. The literature identifies the absence of permanent legal status as a source of uncertainty and presents uncertainty as an undesirable outcome; in contrast, permanent legal status is associated with certainty and is therefore desirable. I argue that, for my informants, such uncertainty is not always attributed to temporary legal status or illegality, and that uncertainty is not always undesirable.

To understand migrant legal consciousness and decision-making, it is important to understand whether migrants themselves attribute the sources of uncertainty directly to migration policy or legal status. Informants in Menjivar's (2006) and Villegas' (2014) studies make explicit references to the immigration system as creating uncertainty. Some of my informants found it difficult to deal with uncertainty that they attribute directly to their immigration status —mostly asylum-seekers awaiting decisions from UNHCR. A few informants who had similarly precarious lives in Turkey did not see their immigration status as creating uncertainty. Particularly, these

[43] Much like my informants as migrants in Turkey and other countries previously, the Central American migrants who are the subject of Menjivar's research depend on short term permits from the US government from the late 1980s onwards. The conditions for eligibility and compliance for these permits are ambiguous for migrants and these statuses are issued only on a temporary basis. Therefore, migrants may slip in and out of illegal status or be allowed to participate legally in some areas of life and not others. Their legal status therefore creates much uncertainty. Family reunification is one aspect of their migration decision that 'legal liminality' shapes. Given the uncertainty around whether migrants can obtain permanent regular status, temporary family separations are prolonged indefinitely. Where reunification occurs it is often stressful due to the lengthy separation. Migrants often turn to churches, both old and newly established by recently arrived migrants, for spiritual support and financial and organisational assistance to address the challenges that created by the legal limbo.

informants did not consider irregular immigration status to be undesirable or make a clear link between legal status and precarity or uncertainty. I hypothesise that this situation may arise because many of my informants have had precarious statuses for most of their lives and do not experience the rupture in immigration status from being legal to illegal as clearly as the subjects of the literature cited thus far. The literature on migrant legal consciousness that has been discussed so far is concerned with migrants from South and Central America who arrived in the US or Canada without extensive periods of being irregular migrants or refugees in other countries.[44]

This literature demonstrates that migrants' legal consciousness is also shaped by the moral values that host societies attach to immigration status. These values can be internalised through partial integration or legal participation in host societies. Many of my informants never experienced the kind of integration with a host society that is possible for irregular migrants from South and Central America in the USA. This comes across especially clearly in the work of Gonzales (2011; Gonzales and Chavez 2012) and Abrego (2011) on differences in the attitudes of Latino migrants towards illegality between migrants of 'generation 1.5', which consists of migrants who arrived unauthorised in the US at a very young age and first generation migrants. As children, migrants of generation 1.5 can participate in society in the similar way to citizens because they are not required to produce identification. They become aware of their illegal immigration status as they get older, when they want to apply for driving a license or go to college. Awareness of their 'abject' status in society as occupying 'the lowest most contemptible and most wretched social status' induces emotional stress, hopelessness and trauma (Gonzales and Chavez 2012: 256). Abrego (2011) argues that generation 1.5 then experience illegality with a greater degree of moral stigma than do first generation migrants who arrive in the US later, whose legal consciousness is dominated by fear. My informants who lived in Iran and Pakistan were brought up to be aware of their status as Afghan refugees and were segregated from locals in their daily lives. Therefore, they had never experienced the sense of legal security that the migrants in these studies experienced.

[44] See e.g. Coutin (2000), Hagan (1994, 2012), Menjivar (2006), Villegas (2014), as discussed above.

The literature on legal consciousness of migrants with precarious legal statuses demonstrates how long-term uncertainty, threat of deportation and legal exclusion is detrimental to migrants' lives and fundamentally shapes their daily lives. This literature, however, tends to focus on migrants who experience a break or sudden change in their legal status and can participate to some degree in the society without documents. There is not much research done on how individuals who have permanently been living in legally precarious situations perceive and manage the kind of uncertainty studied in this literature. In this chapter I will argue that irregularity, and the associated state of precarity, was not always viewed as something dangerous. Irregularity is not understood as something inherently amoral, and therefore a 'risk' as defined by Mary Douglas. This stands in contrast to the findings of scholars such as Abrego (2011) who document the moral stigma felt by undocumented migrants. One reason for this could be that my informants were not socialised to perceive being in breach of migration law as a morally contentious. The prejudice and alienation in Iran and Pakistan was on the grounds of their ethnicity and nationality, rather than their immigration status. This is different to the North American context where undocumented migrants Central America face such moral stigma for their legal status so as to be dehumanised in popular media, for instance (Menjivar and Abrego 2012: 1389). Furthermore, my informants already had to acquire certain skills that allow them to negotiate irregularity and precarity, and therefore do not view their predicament as inherently dangerous.

Returning to the starting point of this section, most of the research discussed here demonstrates that migrants deal with uncertainty arising out of their immigration status in diverse ways. Villegas (2014: 287), for instance, refers to one of her informants who sees her position in the 'system of illegality' as being inherently limiting while also acknowledging the scope for negotiations. She then demonstrates the different strategies her informants adopt towards managing the uncertainty of their illegal status. Gonzales and Chavez (2012) also highlight that migrants within the same generation deal with their status differently. This literature, however, does not seek to theorise the differences in migrants' behaviour. In this chapter, I will first demonstrate the diversity of the ways informants engage with gatekeepers and then demonstrate how informants fit into my typology of decision-making. While

immigration status creates multiple sources of uncertainty in my informants' lives, I will argue that it is the uncertain outcome of the 'situation or event where something of human value (including humans themselves) has been put at stake' (Rosa 1998: 28)—that is, of what is at risk— that accounts for the heterogeneity of migrants' attitudes towards their immigration status.

5.3 Gatekeepers

This section describes the gatekeeper organisations and people with whom migrants interact with in their daily lives. The policy context and legal framework that these gatekeepers operate has already been sketched in the introduction to the thesis. The primary sources of information for this section are interviews conducted with staff, and participant observation and, to a lesser extent, informants whose perspectives on these gatekeepers constitute the third section of this chapter.

5.3.1 The Foreigners' Police

The Foreigners' Police Department in each city is the main point of contact with the state for asylum-seeker informants. Specifically, all the - albeit limited - rights and resources to which asylum-seekers have access are brokered through the police. Irregular informants came into contact with the police during identity checks on the street and in the process of regularising status, but these interactions were more rare. Students hardly mentioned interacting with the police.

Upon entry to the country, asylum-seekers are obliged to report to the police at the city closest to the point of entry. Often informants went directly to a UNHCR office where they were notified of the city of residence designated to them by the Ministry of Interior. These cities are called 'satellite cities'. Asylum-seekers must register with the police at their satellite city immediately after their arrival. Police then check asylum-seekers' documents and register them. As many of my informants did not have identity documents the police can exercise discretion on issues such as date of birth. Age determination is contentious issue in the asylum procedure for two reasons: firstly, unaccompanied minors can live in state-run institutions until they turn 18 and

secondly, the police do not interview underage children in asylum-seeker families. The police are generally distrustful towards asylum-seekers who claim to be minors. Two of my informants reported being threatened and physically assaulted by police when they claimed that they were underage and one was never registered with his correct age. Furthermore, the police may create other obstacles in registering asylum-seekers. One of my informants, for example, reported that the police would not register him.

Once registered, asylum-seekers must go to the police on a regular basis to 'sign in'. The frequency with which asylum-seekers had to present themselves to the police varied with city and gender. In Van, for instance, men were expected to sign in on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and women on Wednesday mornings. If an individual were unable to present themselves at the police station due to health problems, such as mobility issues, they would require a certificate to exempt themselves from signature. The document may need to be re-certified. In the case of informants who were caring for paralysed relatives, for example, this meant that the police had to see the paralysed men first. The police had discretion as to how much struggle they create for migrants who asked for exemptions and enforced these rules with differing degrees of strictness across the four cities I surveyed. Not being registered by the police or not signing in with the police renders an asylum-seeker illegal in the eyes of the Turkish state and means that if an asylum-seeker is recognised as a refugee, they may not be granted an exit permit.

Asylum-seekers have to go to the police to get all their legal documents, and gain access to education and healthcare through the police by submitting petitions. If they want to leave their city of residence, be it for personal reasons or for an interview with the UNHCR, they have to secure permission forms from the police. One of the main struggles for informants was to convince police to accept their petitions and then to obtain information about their processing. Signing-in days were also a time when the police could be lobbied by persuading them to accept and follow up on petitions.

The Foreigners' Police Departments may also have detention centres on the premises. Asylum-seekers are not detained automatically upon arrival but may be detained if

they leave their designated city of residence without permission or are caught attempting to exit Turkey illegally. Two informants reported being detained after they being caught by the police following failed crossing attempts.[45]

Informants in Istanbul did encounter the police and one family was detained and threatened with deportation. However, informants did not report feeling threatened by the police on a regular basis in Zeytinburnu, despite the presence of police in the area. One informant said that he had been stopped by the police who then let him go when it became apparent that he was Afghan. He hinted that this was a common occurrence.

Afghans with Turkic heritage acquire residence permits that require police signature at some point during the process. One of my informants had an interview with a police officer in the process of applying for residence permit. It would appear that there were irregularities in the process, because the informant would not be entitled to apply as an irregular migrant.[46]

5.3.2 UNHCR

As discussed in Chapter 1, a Turkey has a 'parallel procedure' whereby UNHCR and the Turkish state conduct the refugee status determination (RSD) procedure separately. In practice however, the decision issued by UNHCR as to the status of the asylum-seeker is respected by the Turkish state. None of my informants mentioned their RSD interview with the police to me. In contrast, the RSD interview with UNHCR is a central part of informants' experiences of the asylum system. Therefore, this section first provides an outline of the RSD process and then focuses on the other roles of UNHCR.

Informants learnt of the existence of UNHCR in Turkey and the possibility to apply for asylum either while travelling to Turkey or after arriving in Turkey. They often found out about the procedure from smugglers or Afghans and migrants of other nationalities they met on their way to Turkey or after their arrival.

[45] Encounters with authorities was discussed in Chapter 4.1.1.
[46] This process will be discussed in the section on ethnic associations below.

The asylum process is as follows. First, asylum-seekers have to register with UNHCR where they are asked basic questions about their background and for a brief explanation of the reasons leaving their country of origin. At this point, if they have not already done so, they are referred for registration with the police. For most informants this process often took place in Van, where they enter Turkey. For asylum-seekers arriving at other parts of Turkey, registration often took place at Ankara. UNHCR conducted registration for one informant in Istanbul, however none of my informants had registered at Istanbul.

After registration, UNHCR provides asylum-seekers with a date for an RSD interview. In this interview, asylum-seekers —or applicants in UNHCR terminology — are asked in greater detail about their reasons for leaving their country of origin. The purpose of the interview determine whether the applicant is refugee according to the 1951 UN Convention on the Status Refugees, which is defined as follows:

> A person 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.

Thus, contrary to popular belief—also commonly held among informants— a person who is only fleeing war or general insecurity is not considered a refugee under this definition.

In Turkey, interviews are primarily conducted in Ankara and Van. Applicants are invited to the interview several days in advance and have to ensure that they obtain permission to travel from the police, if necessary. For applicants who do have to travel, they have to ensure that they can get bus tickets in advance, either through UNHCR or their private means. They are asked to arrive early in the morning, but may not be interviewed until much later in the day. This means that sometimes applicants have to travel overnight to Ankara or Van, and are tired by the time they

arrive at the interview. The waiting room at the UNHCR office in Ankara is in a basement and is guarded. It is advised that applicants bring food with them.

A UNHCR Eligibility Officer (henceforth, officer) conducts the interview, with an interpreter if necessary. Informants referred to the officers as their lawyer— *whakil* in Farsi and *avukat* in Turkish. Adults within the same family are interviewed separately regardless of whether they have the same claim. It is possible for applicants to bring a legal representative to their interview. This is quite rare in Turkey, however, given the paucity of lawyers who work on asylum issues. The UNHCR has guidelines concerning every aspect of the interview. At the start of the interview, applicants should be asked, for instance, whether they can communicate with the interpreter, be informed of their responsibility to be truthful and be reminded of the confidential nature of the interview. The officer asks questions and types the answers provided by the applicant. Because the officer types the interview, asylum-seekers cannot say more than couple of sentences at a time to ensure that the transcription is accurate. Thus, although questions are directed in a chronological order, the flow of the narration is frequently interrupted. If the officer conducting the interview needs to, they s/he may contact the asylum-seeker later on by telephone or invite them for an interview for clarification.

This is a typical description that informants gave to me about their registration and interview process:

> When we entered UNHCR yard we had to fill a form. 'Why did you leave? Why can't you go back? (…) You wrote a lot. Just two lines.' At the office there was just a picture of a black woman. They then said 'go to police' and then we went back to UNHCR. Six months later, they gave us an interview. [A staff member at UNHCR] was no help just interview. He said 'No help here! Be very patient! It takes a very long time.' There is no other way, so we followed.

UNHCR later issues either a recognition of the refugee status of the asylum applicant or the rejection of asylum application. Informants often referred to having received or being *kaboul* (acceptance in Dari) or *estinaf* (appeal in Dari). It is possible to appeal a rejection within 30 days of the receipt of the rejection letter before UNHCR closes the asylum case, although this deadline is more flexible in practice. An appeal is lodged

with a letter where the asylum-seeker can counter the reasons that UNHCR offers for their rejection. However, letters from UNHCR contain very little information for the reasons of rejection. The letter may state that the applicant was not found credible, for instance, without clarification on what aspect of their testimony is not found credible. An appeal letter does not guarantee a further interview or telephone conversation. Upon the rejection of an appeal, the UNHCR closes the asylum case of the applicant, which can only be reopened if asylum-seekers can demonstrate new grounds for assessing their claims.

Until the summer of 2011 a third possible outcome for Afghan asylum-seekers was to receive 'special recognition' under the UNCHR's extended mandate. Informants used the Turkish translation to say they have *özel kabul*—the Turkish translation of special recognition— or simply *özel* (special in Turkish). This practice was in place briefly for Somali asylum-seekers in the years 2007 and 2008, but to the best of my knowledge, it was only in place for asylum-seekers for Afghan origin during my fieldwork. UNHCR recognises Afghan asylum-seekers who do not fit the definition of a refugee under the Refugee Convention but who come from areas of Afghanistan that are insecure, such as Ghazni, Kandahar and Helmand. This practice was in place for several months as of 2010. As my informants explained to me, the refugee status conferred on the ground of special recognition was then 'converted to normal recognition' in the summer of 2011. Under 'special recognition' UNHCR rejects the applicants refugee claims under the Refuge Convention Refugee Convention without offering them the opportunity to appeal this decision. Thus, UNHCR was inconsistent with its own guidelines on RSD. For the purpose of this thesis and from the point of view of the informants, the 'special recognition' seemed like a lesser status because it appeared to exclude asylum-seekers from the possibility of re-settlement to a third country.

Given that Turkey does not recognise the refugee status of non-European applicants, even if UNHCR has recognised their status, the only possibility for refugees to obtain legal security, and eventually citizenship, is to be sent to a third country. It is one of UNHCR's important roles in Turkey to send the files of refugees to re-settlement countries such as Australia, Canada and the USA. Most resettlement countries,

however, prioritise those refugees come to Turkey from neighbouring countries as they are deemed to be the more vulnerable. Given the limited quotas, once Iranian and Iraqi files are processed very few Afghan refugees are ever resettled. When speaking with asylum-seekers, most gatekeepers in the field, such as police, NGO staff and UNHCR officers, referred to the resettlement process as being sent to a 'third country'. Hence, informants who spoke about resettlement would refer to it in terms having a *üçüncü ülke* — 'third country' in Turkish. There are several steps to resettlement. Once asylum-seekers receive refugee status, which can take several years, they wait for their case to be updated to 'RRF' on the UNHCR results website. 'RRF' is an abbreviation of 'resettlement registration form' and is used as a kind of legal status by asylum-seekers. After they have been to the UNHCR Branch Office in Ankara to fill the registration form, they wait to see whether they will be assigned a country. Informants often talked about 'not having a country' or 'waiting for a country' during this period. Even when assigned a country, there is no guarantee that they will be resettled. As part of the resettlement process, refugees will be called for further interviews with an organisation such as International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), which offers support to countries of resettlement during the resettlement process. At this stage, refugees are interviewed again with regard to their refugee claim. During this process the police has to authorise visits to Istanbul or Ankara.[47]

UNHCR can also provide one-off financial support and medical care as well as a small stipend for refugees. UNHCR's capacity to provide such support to asylum-seekers and refugees is, however, very limited. During the interview, UNHCR may refer applicants to a hospital in Ankara for a check up. Recognised refugees are given a monthly stipend, which increases according to the number of children that an applicant may have.

5.3.3 Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation (SYDV)

[47] Although once referred to a third country UNHCR does not play a role for processing resettlement applications, many informants hold UNHCR as being responsible for the whole resettlement procedure. Therefore, I have chosen to include this discussion here. The perception of UNHCR's duties will be discussed in greater details below.

Another source of potential support for refugees is to approach the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations, which operate under city governorates and normally provide welfare assistance to Turkish citizens. The Turkish state in its directives and circulars relating to asylum-seekers allows asylum-seekers to approach the SYDV in their local city for assistance with shelter, healthcare and subsistence assistance in a non-binding commitment (HCA 2008: 12)[48]. Some of my informants did approach their local SYDV and received occasional assistance. In Kayseri for instance, some families said they received some aid from them twice. After 2011 the cost of urgent healthcare was to be met by the SYDV. In Van, for instance, the SYDV provided a food package worth 60TL to asylum-seekers in need and nappies.

5.3.4 Civil Society

In proportion the large number of irregular migrants and asylum-seekers in Turkey, there are very few NGOs that specialise in migration. There are no NGOs that help irregular migrants specifically, however there were two ethnic associations that irregular migrants approached. I interviewed staff at the NGOs outlined below to better understand the particular challenges in the satellite cities and the services available to asylum-seekers.

The NGOs that work with asylum-seekers can be broadly divided into three categories. There are those such as TIHV (Turkish Human Rights Foundation) and Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (HCA) that concentrate on advocacy work. There are Turkish charities and foundations such as IHH (Humanitarian Relief Foundation) and Mazlumder (Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People) that provide material aid. Finally UNHCR has an 'implementing partner' in most satellite cities. These organisations were typically offices of Association for Solidarity with Migrants and Refugees (ASAM) or Human Resources Foundation (IKGV). These NGOs have better access to UNHCR and help liaise between asylum-seekers and UNHCR. They also advocate on behalf of asylum-seekers with the Turkish state on issues to do with access to healthcare, education and welfare. The organisations listed

[48] The abbreviations I provide for the different organisations are often the abbreviations of their Turkish names because these organisations are known in the field by these abbreviations.

here primarily cover those that have programs specific to the needs of asylum-seekers. Some NGOs may assist asylum-seekers during Ramadan or on one-off occasions.

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the options that informants have for seeking support. As will be discussed further, informants used these resources available to them in different ways. Some of them more actively sought out support, joined the organisations, gathered and distributed information about services available or the law, while others were unaware of the support there was. Before these different ways of interaction can be explained, it is important first to give a brief overview of civil society in the field sites.

Istanbul

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Refugee Advocacy and Support Program (HCA)

Some of my informants were or had been clients of HCA—or Helsinki, as it is commonly referred to— while I was working there between 2010 and 2011. [49] Of these three families were my clients, while others had different legal advisers. Other informants and Afghan asylum-seekers I spoke with had been clients of the HCA or had contacted them.

The HCA provides legal aid to asylum-seekers and refugees, mainly to asylum-seekers whose asylum cases have been refused or closed by UNHCR. The HCA is uniquely positioned in Turkey because it is the only organisation that provides asylum-seekers with their complete reasons for rejection. As explained earlier, UNHCR's letters for rejection only provide the reasons for the rejection in tick box format, without going into specific details of the cause for rejection. HCA has an agreement with UNHCR whereby UNHCR sends the HCA the RSD assessment forms for HCA clients. The assessment contains details of the interview, sometimes including lengthy transcripts, and the RSD analysis of the claim. The legal advisers at the HCA then go through the assessment with their clients. Depending on several different factors the legal advisers may, for example, advise their clients on how to

[49] I have discussed the nature of my work with the HCA and the ethical implications my work in Chapter 2.

write their appeal letter themselves or write the letter on their behalf accompanied by a legal submission.

Privately retained lawyers may also contact UNHCR to obtain the assessment forms for their clients or sit on in the interviews. An informant, for instance, retained a lawyer in Ankara who charged him 500 $ for a written summary of their assessment form. Both my informant and his husband were illiterate, however their son was able to explain their parents the contents of the document. For further fees, the lawyer would assist in the writing of the appeal letter or represent the client should there be a further interview. There are only a few lawyers who offer this service. My informant said that her family heard of the lawyer through Iranian asylum-seekers who were promoting his services —allegedly for a fee —outside the UNHCR office in Ankara. It is a significant deficit of the Turkish asylum system that asylum-seekers have had no effective right to appeal their reasons for rejection given the limited number specialist lawyers or legal advisers in the asylum field and lack of legal aid. Therefore, HCA received a high volume of applications from asylum-seekers.

Although HCA is based in Istanbul, the majority of its clientele are in the satellite cities. Therefore most of their work is conducted over the phone. Given the diversity of the languages spoken by clients, interviews are often conducted through an interpreter. Therefore, sometimes, the clients and the legal adviser never meet or speak with each other directly. This meant that when I spoke with Afghan asylum-seekers in different cities they would not necessarily know the name of their legal adviser but their interpreter instead. Sometimes HCA staff went around different satellite cities to meet their clients. As I discuss in the chapter on methodology, My trip to Van coincided with one such visit.

Human Resources Development Foundation (IKGV) Istanbul Office

In Istanbul IKGV is the implementing partner of UNHCR and may register asylum-seekers or help register them by directing them to UNHCR in Ankara. There is a UNHCR office in Istanbul but they mainly focus on protection and sometimes RSD. Therefore registration and similar administrative tasks are carried out through IKGV.

Only my informant who applied for asylum in Istanbul dealt with the IKGV in Istanbul.

Association for Solidarity with Migrants and Refugees (ASAM) Istanbul Office

ASAM in Istanbul supported UAMs held in children's facilities around Istanbul. One of my informants knew some of their staff through this project.

Istanbul Inter-parish Migrants' Programme (IIMP)

The IIMP is a Christian faith-based organisation that was formed in response to the requests for support the heads of individual churches in Istanbul received from migrants. They run English courses and provide different services such as medical care and some financial support. It is usually African migrants and Christian migrants who go to the IIMP, however two of my informants received support from them.

Van

The key NGOs in Van were VAKAD (the Van Women's Association) and the local branches of MazlumDer, Turkish Human Rights Foundation (TIHV) and Human Resources Development Foundation (IKGV). These NGOs often worked together and referred clients among each other or to other state institutions.

Women's Association of Van (VAKAD)

VAKAD's primary focus on sexual and gender based violence against women in Van. They serve all women of Van and had a sizeable clientele among asylum-seekers, particularly Afghan women. They appeared to offer support to their clients with all aspects of their lives in Turkey, mainly focusing cases of sexual and gender based violence by offering legal support, facilitating medical attention and liaising with UNHCR.[50] They assisted women in divorce proceedings. They also run a shelter for women who were seeking refuge from violence or vulnerable new arrivals. Where necessary they advocate on their client's behalf with UNHCR, for instance for expediting their refugee claims.

[50] Interview with Gül Kıran, Director of VAKAD, 6 June 2011, Van.

Kıran, the Director of VAKAD, characterised the problems faced by asylum-seeker women in Van to be similar to those faced by local women, such as domestic violence, kidnapping and rape. Asylum-seekers, however, faced additional challenges due to their legal statuses. In criminal matters, for instance, the police responded to their complaints with even less interest. In the context of a rape and kidnapping case that the organisation was working on a police officer said of the victim 'what was she doing here in the first place?' This victim-blaming attitude, whereby asylum-seekers were held responsible for misfortunes that occurred in Turkey, is common among police and some other gatekeepers. In the case of workplace related claims, such as harassment and fraud, the employing organisations were unable to offer much support because the employees worked without permits and contracts. In some situations staff at VAKAD were able to place women as domestic workers with families known to staff. Another issue that they encountered specific to Afghan women was to do with addiction to a type of local cannabis among the husbands of some of their clients. Some men were reported to threaten to sell their children to get money to buy more drugs or be abusive towards their families.

During my time in Van, VAKAD also hosted regular meetings for the group of NGOs that provide support to asylum-seekers in Van and UNHCR.

Association for Human Rights and Solidarity with the Oppressed (Mazlumder)

Mazlumder is an Islamic faith-based humanitarian and advocacy organisation. I was unable to interview the director of the program in Van, although I met with her briefly on a couple of occasions. My informants who received support said that they would bring mainly foodstuffs and other basic needs to some asylum-seekers. Some informants received a one-off food packet, usually during Ramadan or other religious occasions, while others receive support more regularly.

Human Resources Development Foundation (IKGV) and Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV)

Both IKGV and TIHV were collectively referred to as *insan hakları*, which means human rights in Turkish. Therefore when my informants talked about going to these

organisations it was not always clear which one they were referring to. Some were not aware that these two different organisations existed. They would sometimes know the names of the interpreters or could describe the staff.

IKGV Van Office

The IKGV is the implementing partner for UNHCR in Van and several other cities in Turkey. In Van, the organisation mainly assisted asylum-seekers get access to healthcare and social services. Where necessary, the organisation liaised with UNHCR regarding their clients. The organisation also helped draft and submit petitions with the police and the social services.

TIHV Van Office

TIHV specialises in offering psychosocial and medical support for torture survivors in Turkey. Their office in Van, however, was set up to offer social support to asylum-seekers and refugees in Van.[51] Much like IKGV, TIHV assisted asylum-seekers and refugees in accessing medical and social services available to them. As the project co-ordinator explained, the organisation is situated 'between the state and the refugee' addition, through the help of their particular lawyer, they offered legal support in a wide variety of institutions such as the foreigners' police, hospitals and schools. They support asylum-seekers who face deportation and work from the detention centre. They referred asylum-seekers who claimed to have been survivors of torture to their Documentation Centre in the city of Diyarbakır. This was a crucial service for collaborating asylum-seekers' claims to have been tortured or ill-treated, as well as trying to obtain appropriate psychological support.

IKGV, VAKAD and TIHV advocated on behalf of their clients very resourcefully and creatively. In some situations they would merely ensure that their clients access the services they had a right to under Turkish regulations, but more often they would use their personal and professional networks to ensure access to services and medicines. Staff at all positions had to be skilful in negotiating and persuading authorities and gatekeepers. They were able to do this partly because of the changing and opaque

[51] Interview with Umit Aslan, Head of Office, and Onur Varol, Lawyer, TIHV, 9 June 2011, Van.

regulations in the field of healthcare, for instance. At other times it was because some gatekeepers, such as police officers, have discretionary power over the proceedings, in the time taking to process petitions for instance. These characteristics of the asylum system render it more elastic to those who have the resourcefulness to negotiate the boundaries well. This situation in turn meant that they were an indispensable resource for asylum-seekers who were not entitled to support under the system, as well as those having difficulty accessing the support they were entitled to. The level of negotiation involved in their work, which at times amounted to creating resources almost out of thin air, stood out with regard to the work of these organisations in Van.

Kayseri

ASAM Kayseri Office

ASAM is an organisation that was set up with support from UNHCR and operates as its implementing partner in different cities. As mentioned earlier, they have a program for UAMs in Istanbul. In Kayseri the organisation liaised with UNHCR regarding its clients and supported asylum-seekers with access to healthcare and other social services. The majority of its clients were Iranians, as there were very few Afghan asylum-seekers resident in the city. Furthermore, at the time of my visit to Kayseri, the Kayseri authorities were very liberal in their interpretation of the directive pertaining to provision of healthcare to asylum-seekers therefore enabling asylum-seekers to access services without need for additional support.

Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) Kayseri Office

IHH is a national foundation that offers humanitarian support to Muslims in Turkey and in approximately 100 countries world-wide. Their work with refugees in Kayseri consisted of providing food assistance to families, running a shelter for a few single, vulnerable women and hosting English classes run by refugees. Much like the Mazlumder office in Van, the ethos of the organisation is based on an Islamic understanding of charity. They did not engage in any form of advocacy. The food distribution was only available to families, not to single men, and was based on whether the men in the family were in employment. It appeared that the support offered among the asylum seeking community was mainly directed at Afghans. This could have been because Afghan asylum-seekers had a reputation for being more

deprived than their Iranian counterparts residing in Kayseri, as well as being more pious. Following the Turkish Prime Minister's visit to Somalia where he pledged to help Somalis, the IHH shifted its resources to help newly arrived Somali asylum-seekers in Kayseri.

Sivas

ASAM in Tahtakale

ASAM opened an office in the close-by city of Tahtakale. A representative from that office visited regularly but infrequently. One informant said that they had approached him to obtain funding to run English classes to refugee children, but had not received any support.

Other NGOs, such as Dost Eli Derneği, Hayat Ağacı and IHH that offer humanitarian help but not specifically to asylum-seekers offered some supported to the Afghans in the city during the month of Ramadan, for instance. Mazlumder was expected to visit the city to assess the needs of asylum-seekers in the summer of 2011.

Ethnic Associations

In the Zeytinburnu district of Istanbul there are several associations formed by migrants with Turkic origins such as East Turkistan, Kazak, Ozbek and Afghan Turks. Some of my informants were in touch with one of these associations, which they referred to as *dernek* ('association' in Turkish) or by the name of the director of association. Officially the organisation is an ethnic association, however it seems to provide Afghan migrants with immigration-related services, some of which appear to be of questionable legality. Some informants went to the *dernek* for assistance with access to healthcare, residence permits, education and citizenship. Because of the nature of the association's activities, informants were not forthcoming about the association's activities. Informants who had sought assistance appeared to have been kept in the dark about the services they had paid for. All but one of them claimed to have paid the association for its assistance; the exception was an informant who was Ozbek, who said that the *dernek* does not ask for fees from Turks. An informant who

was irregular paid the association for obtaining a residence permit, for instance. Under Turkish law, however, migrants who arrive irregularly do not have a right to apply for residence. He was promised a permit by the *dernek*. When I met him he had just visited a police officer. He said that he was accompanied by a member of the association and told the officer what the member of the association had instructed him to do so. He had no idea about how long the process would take or what exactly he would be receiving in return.

5.4 Perceptions of Gatekeepers

To provide a better understanding of the different ways in which informants interacted with bureaucratic structures and gatekeepers in Turkey, this section discusses how informants perceived these structures. This section relies exclusively on information provided by informants, rather than by staff or gatekeepers themselves. It focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on the asylum system, because informants had most interaction with gatekeepers as asylum-seekers. The section starts with an analysis of the perception of UNHCR, which many informants described as their 'biggest problem in Turkey', and then discusses perceptions of civil society and of the police.

Perceptions of the gatekeepers are important because judgements on fairness and trustworthiness influence whether migrants comply with the law as discussed earlier (e.g. Kaytaz and Costello 2013) and, I will argue, a broader set of decisions that relate to their migration status. The chapter will demonstrate the sense of discrimination and injustice that informants feel with regard to the asylum and migration system as whole, even if they have more positive and trusting relations with some individual gatekeepers. This is important for the purpose of this thesis because perceived unfairness in the process creates a greater uncertainty in two interconnected ways. Firstly the uncertainty of the decision-making process of the UNHCR with regard to RSD and resettlement is one of the aspects of the system that is seen as unfair. Secondly, the perception of unfairness in a system creates uncertainty because fair outcomes are by definition predictable. Kamyar's statement captures this predicament:

> Our biggest problem is UN, it is uncertainty. At the UN there aren't deserving people, you close your eyes and give it to the children, everyday it is worse than the one before. There are disloyal, not worthy.

This section bridges the previous section's description of the roles of various gatekeepers and the next section's outline of the different spheres of decision and action that informants undertook. While presenting commonly held perceptions of gatekeepers, I highlight informants whose views differ from the common perceptions, therefore pointing to diversity among informants. Furthermore, some informants whose quotes exemplify attitudes towards gatekeepers are also those who stood out through their crafting of narratives about their predicament in Turkey. As I discussed in the previous chapter, and discuss again in the following chapter, narratives are important skills in negotiating the migration system.

5.4.1 Perceptions of UNHCR

Informants' attitudes towards the asylum system are best characterised as consisting of mistrust and scepticism. Although the Turkish state also runs RSD, it is the UNHCR that bears the brunt of this criticism as it is most prominent in the process. In addition to frustration with UNHCR for not providing the material support and rights that informants wanted, most of which are in the purview of the Turkish state, informants thought that UNHCR treated them unfairly and that they were discriminated against in the asylum system. These opinions were not only related to the outcome of the decisions, as would be expected, but to the perceived inequality in treatment compared with Iranian asylum-seekers in waiting times for RSD, the resettlement process, and the presence of Iranian interpreters at UNHCR.

Seeing UNHCR as a State

Informants accorded UNHCR—or the UN as most referred to it— both the power of state and an all-powerful benevolent power charged with protecting those who need shelter. UNHCR was held responsible for not providing work permits, healthcare, financial support—all the duties of the Turkish state. Underlying this perception is also the fact that asylum-seekers take it for granted that they will be resettled and that

there is no option to stay in Turkey as citizens. Consequently, much of the frustration regarding struggles in daily life is directed towards the UNHCR. It was common to hear statements such as Jamila's: 'We are happy in Turkey, UN didn't do as much for us as Turkey did' followed by lengthy lamentations about not getting enough healthcare or not being allowed to work. Another informant said: 'The UN, according to us, doesn't respond well, it should either give us jobs or build a camp.' It was common to hear statements such as 'UN is our only hope'. Informants did not understand how the UNHCR could not provide financial or medical aid to everyone in need or to send refugees to other countries for resettlement.

The responsibility attributed to UNHCR was evident in recent protests, organised and attended by some informants, in front of the UNHCR Ankara Office in April and May 2014. Afghan asylum-seekers took posters asking for the right to work and financial aid. In public statements and interviews, the protestors held UNHCR accountable for the challenges they face in Turkey while claiming that they do not have any problems with the Turkish state.[52]

A reason for UNHCR being held accountable for the failings of the Turkish state could be that UNHCR conducts RSD. My experience of working with asylum-seekers of other nationalities and following refugee protests in Turkey suggests that expectations from UNHCR are particularly high. At a protest in Isparta (another satellite city) staged by women asylum-seekers of different nationalities —but mainly Somalis — in front of the mayoral building, the Afghans were the only nationality that talked about UNHCR.[53] All the other women asked for more rights from the Turkish state, which is why they were protesting in front of a state building. The Afghan refugee women were saying that their only hope was for UNHCR to process their asylum claims and send them to a third country. As UNHCR conducts RSD for

[52] See e.g. Memişoğlu, S. 'Afgan Mülteciler Neyi Protesto Ediyor?' in *Rakidal*, 5 May 2014. http://www.radikal.com.tr/radikal2/afgan_multeciler_neyi_protesto_ediyor-1192454 [accessed 10 February, 2015].
Memişoğlu writes that ' Refugees, while being dispersed by the police, insisted that their problem is not with Turkey but with UNHCR. So long as UNHCR cannot offer satisfying answer to Afghan refugees, and continues to act their distant and harshly, UNHCR is going to be the institution that refugees complain about most frequently.' [my translation]. Memişoğlu then goes onto argue that the Turkish state is accountable for the refugees' suffering, because the state has failed to offer a durable solution. UNHCR is stepping in to fill the protection gap left by Turkey.
[53] The footage for this protest has been removed from the internet.

all refugees in Turkey, the prominence of UNHCR in the lives of Afghans alone cannot account for expectations from UNHCR. Furthermore, most of my informants have frequent interactions with the police in the process of signing in, submitting petitions and obtaining referrals to hospitals.

I hypothesise that this relationship with UNHCR can be explained in part through their relationship with state authorities prior to arriving in Turkey. Prior experience, I suggest, not only defines perceptions of justices, as argued by Kirk et a. 2011 and discussed earlier in the chapter, but also the expectations from the state. Most of my informants never enjoyed state protection. Some had been irregular migrants all or most of their lives in Iran. Those in Afghanistan lived in a chronically fragile state with fractious powers and limited protection. Only two of my informants explicitly held the Turkish state responsible for the challenges that refugees face in Turkey, but they had slightly different backgrounds from other informants. Farrin's father, who alluded to the 'hundred-year-old friendship between Afghanistan and Turkey' and its failure to take care of Afghans, had been in Afghan politics, for instance. Fahran had spent several years working with Turks and Turkmen Afghans, before applying for asylum. He had been more immersed with Turks than other informants.

Another possible explanation would relate to their prior experience with the UNHCR. My informants did not did not talk about interacting with UNHCR before coming to Turkey. One of my informants talked about UNHCR in Iran, while my informants who were refugees in Pakistan did not talk about the UNHCR presence in their camps. Furthermore, most informants did not know about the presence and services of UNHCR in Turkey before they arrived in Turkey. It could be that Afghans conflate the UNHCR with the UN and international community in general. Therefore their expectations of the UN could be interpreted as expressions of the perceived power and resources possessed by the international community. My informants referred to UNHCR as UN. Before starting my fieldwork, I heard from other researchers working with Afghans that Afghans hold the international community responsible for the security situation in Afghanistan and consider it therefore morally obliged to help the displaced population. I did not hear a similar discourse from my informants, except for Farrin who, after complaining about how the UNHCR had been keeping asylum-

seekers waiting for long periods of time, said 'UN ruined Afghanistan, they have destroyed it, where should people go to?' Similarly, a couple of my clients from before I started my doctoral studies had said that they were applying for asylum because the UN owes them support.

A final reason could be that, as asylum-seekers in Turkey, Afghans do not feel comfortable being overtly critical of the government. During my fieldwork I did try to get my informants to talk about the Turkish government. I found that many of my informants admired the then Prime Minister and current President of the Republic Erdoğan as good Muslim political leader. They thought that Turkish state had to first take care of its citizens. During the country-wide anti-government demonstrations in the summer of 2013, many of my informants posted pro-government messages on their Facebook profiles.

Perceptions of Fairness in RSD decisions

Informants who explained their reason for applying for asylum often began by making statements such as 'we sought shelter at the UNCHR'. Their understanding of someone who is 'legally deserving' of refugee status was someone in need or someone fleeing war or in need of humanitarian assistance. The word for refugee in Dari used in literature on Afghan refugees is *muhajir*, which refers specifically to religious refugees (e.g. Centlivres and Centlivres 1980). Only one of my informants used this term to describe himself. In Iran refugees are called *penahende,* which is also the term used by UNHCR and NGOs in their Farsi translations. My informants often used the Arabic-derived Turkish word *mülteci* to describe themselves. Therefore the common understanding of who is a refugee was based on a state of suffering or deprivation rather than a rights' violation. In contrast, for instance, some Iranian asylum-seekers and refugees I spoke with defined their claim as being more legitimate because they came to Turkey for political reasons as *siyasi mülteci* (political refugee). The association of being a refugee or an asylum-seeker with a lower status or a particular kind of poverty was also evident in interviews with irregular migrants. When I asked some informants why they did not apply for refugee status they told me that they are not 'like those Afghans' who apply for asylum. One

informant suggested that those who applied for asylum were more desperate than they were and he 'did not have problems like them.'

Most of my informants did not explain to me their reasons for leaving Afghanistan and those who did asked me not to talk about the specifics of their claims. The majority said that they had left because they had *dushman*—an enemy. These claims often refer to family disputes over land or *namous* (honour) and are difficult to substantiate coherently because stories of family feuds are complex and may span generations. These claims involve family members who change their relationships to each other through new kinship ties and in an evolving political landscape. In the RSD process all adult members of the family are interviewed and therefore have to provide coherent accounts of the dispute. If family members recall certain events differently or have different perspectives on the dispute it can harm their credibility. In the absence of supporting documents, testimony is of crucial importance to these kinds of claims.

An example of this is that one of my informants and his wife were fleeing because of their *dushman.* They were rejected by UNHCR because their claim was found not credible and their accounts were contradictory. My informant's wife was also his cousin. When they were describing the nature of their connection to the *dushman* each gave their account based on their kinship ties to the *dushman* with whom there were multiple connections between the extended families of both informants. To complicate matters further, my informant's father had several wives. After his father's death, his mother was then kidnapped by some other distant relatives. Therefore, my informant and his wife could trace their kinship ties to a member of their family both through different relatives of their own, but also through multiple relatives. Furthermore, the kinship relations changed over time through marriages and death. Therefore it is very difficult to provide an account that is accurate over the course of time. For instance, a cousin can become a sister-in law over time. In addition, the *dushman* they were fleeing had changed political affiliations over time. They had been mujahideen and the Taliban in the 1980s but were now affiliated with the government. Finally, blood feuds like the one my informant was fleeing sometimes pre-date the lives of the people that are currently affected. As a consequence, events

are recalled and reconstructed to suit the interests of the different parties. My informant's mental health was poor and he found it very difficult to concentrate on keeping a timeline and explain these ties as they changed. He relied on his wife to remember details such as these. As neither was literate, they began to make a family tree and a timeline with the help of one of their sons to clarify their cases. In such situations without case support and, even, any warning it is very difficult for asylum-seekers to articulate the complexity of disputes that cause displacement.

Another problem relating to the kind of claims may be that it is difficult for asylum-seekers to speak about issues concerning *namous*, particularly if there is any element of sexual assault or rape concerned. This issue may arise if the interviewers or the interpreters are male for instance. Some informants did not understand that fleeing generalised conflict may not qualify them to be refugees, whereas fleeing land disputes or having survived sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) might.

The official guidance, which UNHCR uses to assess who may be considered a refugee from Afghanistan, has also changed over the years. It was, for instance, the case that in 2007 and 2008 claims based on blood feuds and some gender based claims were considered weak claims but as UNHCR changed its policy, these became grounds for applying for refugee status. In the summer of 2011, I found out by coincidence that I had been the legal advisor at the HCA to one of my informants in 2008. He reminded me that I had told him before his interview that his chance for a claim was weak because he was fleeing a family feud. He was rejected soon after and contacted HCA. Another member of staff at the HCA gave him similar advice based on his reasons for rejection by UNHCR and closed his file at the HCA. He did, however, lodge an appeal claim, which was successful over a year later. He told me that it wasn't 'even a special recognition'—he was accepted as a refugee in the definition of the Refugee Convention as fleeing persecution and not generalised violence. We gave him this advice because 'blood feuds' were emphasised as a reason for being a refugee in UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Afghan refugees in 2009.[54]

[54] UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *UNHCR's Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Afghan Asylum-Seekers*, 31 December 2007, available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/477ce70a2.html [accessed 26 February 2015]

Granting ‘special recognition’ exclusively to Afghan refugees negatively influenced the perception of the asylum system. Informants held the sense that the ‘normal’ recognition was a superior form of refugee status than the former. When special recognition was ‘cancelled’, informants told me of their pleasure at their special recognition status being ‘changed’ to normal recognition. Nevertheless many asylum-seekers did not understand why they received special recognition and what it meant both in terms of the nature of their claim and in terms of the protection they were entitled to. Even after Afghans were no longer issued with special recognition, I was asked on numerous occasions what it meant. In one of the English language classes I attended at the ‘UN School’, for example, I gave a brief impromptu presentation on the refugee convention and the special recognition. In a private English lesson, the students, who were all young children, asked me in the final lesson what special recognition meant. They said that they heard about it from their parents and grownups all the time but did not understand it.

In contrast to the view on refugee status as outlined above, some informants as asylum-seekers had the view that they were ‘not like’ the Afghans in Istanbul who lived irregularly because they were refugees and had sought help from UNHCR. Unsurprisingly, some informants though that the decision they had received was unjust because UNHCR did not ‘accept’ them or that they had accepted the wrong people— those who had lied, or, in one instance, well-off. I address this in greater detail in the following section.

Mistrust of Interpreters at the UNHCR

The use of Iranian interpreters by UNHCR and the police was a source of frustration. Informants did not trust Iranian interpreters and found their behaviour towards them disrespectful. Many informants had experienced ill-treatment in Iran before arriving to Turkey. Given the fact that many Afghans perceived Iranians to receive better treatment in the RSD and resettlement procedures, the power that Iranians are seen to hold over Afghans’ access to services is especially resented. The problem with interpreters was particularly pronounced in Van. Informants who wanted information on their cases or wanted to see if they could get financial assistance would sometimes

approach the gates of the branch office, where they would be met with one of the Iranian interpreters. As Farrin explained:

> Iranians have problems with us, because there are many Afghans in Iran and they don't like us. (…)Why do the UN and police only have Iranian interpreters, and no Afghans? Why do interpreters at the UN gate turn you down? Why can't we see anyone inside? It is always Iranian interpreters who are ruining things for us. They take Iranians quicker and keep us waiting.

Interpreters were also relied upon to ascertain whether asylum-seekers who claim to be from Afghanistan are from Afghanistan or whether they came from Iran. Sometimes interpreters were reported to question the veracity of the interviewee's claims—possibly unbeknownst to the legal officer. Asal's account of her interview at the UNHCR is typical among my informants:

> They were very bad. [The interpreter] said to us you haven't come from Afghanistan. He would come to us and shout 'why are you lying?' I would say why should we come if we didn't have any problems?

A second source of frustration is that some informants were not able to understand the interpreters or feared that interpreters did not understand what they were saying because of language differences. Iranian interpreters spoke Farsi whereas Afghans speak Dari, which is a dialect of Farsi and also differs across regions in Afghans in the way it is spoken. Afghans who had spent time in Iran, perhaps even attended schools in Iran, could understand the language spoken by Iranians and could communicate with interpreters more clearly. Whereas those who had not, found interpreters difficult to understand. One of my informants who understood Turkish said that she intervened during her interview when she noticed that what she said was being mistranslated by the interpreter.

Refugee Resettlement: 'This is Your Third Country'

NGOs and UNHCR staff were concerned that Afghans in Turkey had hopes of being resettled that were not going to be filled because the quota for resettlement for Afghans was very small. Therefore, they would advise asylum-seekers that they

should find a way of integrating into the Turkish system, by for instance, ensuring that their children went to school and that they learned Turkish. Staff would tell asylum-seekers 'Turkey is your third country', a description which was then adopted by informants.

As explained above, countries of resettlement prioritised refugees from neighbouring countries who are seen as being under a greater threat of deportation than refugees from further afield such as Afghanistan and African countries. Very few Afghans were resettled each year. Therefore as Marwa put it: 'It's always Iranians who go, Afghans don't go.'

Informants felt not only discriminated against, but also mislead by UNHCR. This is how Kamal articulated his frustration:

> In Van, UNHCR gave us a brochure: if you are refugee, if you are recognised you go to another country. We all went to UNHCR Ankara, there is no answer. We go to Ankara, we pay the bus ticket. They tell us no country to accept Afghans, if this is the case then why did you say we can go to another country?'

The fact that asylum-seekers, regardless of their status with UNHCR, are afforded such minimal rights in Turkey, imbuing their daily lives with struggles to survive, and the prospect of there being no end in sight, causes informants extensive emotional and physical stress and a sense of hopelessness.[55]

Lengthy Waiting Times

The perception of unfairness of UNHCR's treatment of asylum-seekers in Turkey also came from the length of time that it took to process the claims. There are three main causes for the frustration with the length of time that the RSD takes: one is that it takes a long time for the claims to be processed, sometimes much slower than the claims of other nationals, notably Iranians. The second dimension is the psychological toll that waiting, and the associated uncertainty. Finally, there is a potential economic cost or opportunity cost to the waiting.

[55] I will explore the health consequences of this policy as a form of embodiment in Chapter 7.

At the inaugural conference of the Young Refugee Union of Turkey, held on 18 December 2010, an Afghan minor read out a speech drafted with his friends. Part of the speech captures the resentment towards UNHCR and the dilemma of applying for asylum :

> We escaped war and death in Afghanistan. When we came here UNHCR told us not to go to Greece because it is dangerous. We have friends who have gone to Europe and they have documents. We are stuck here waiting for UNHCR to send us to America or Canada. Some of us have been waiting for 5 years. We have no rights here and no life. We are always waiting. We wonder whether we should have gone to Europe with our friends. (…) What does UNHCR expect us to do? To commit suicide?

Waiting times

Waiting starts from the moment that asylum-seekers present themselves for registration at the UNHCR. They may be registered immediately or may receive a later date for registration. After registration they have to wait for an interview date, which may be changed or given at short notice, and then wait for a decision. The relevant information can be obtained from the UNHCR Turkey results webpage, which gives some basic information. Sometimes it was through UNHCR's implementing partners that asylum-seekers found out their interview dates. In order for UNHCR to reach asylum-seekers the office has to have their up to date contact information. It was however common for informants to change their numbers and addresses regularly and it was a source of stress that UNHCR would not be able to find them if there was a change to their status or interview dates. If an asylum-seeker is a 'no-show' for an interview, they may be assigned another date or they may have to get in touch with UNHCR themselves, which is very difficult.

The length of time these steps take depends in part on the staff capacity of UNHCR and the strains placed by unexpected displacement trends to Turkey. During the time that I was conducting fieldwork, UNHCR had received a sizeable but temporary boost to its staff numbers, which meant that the waiting times went down considerably. Some legal officers at UNHCR had reputations among informants for having a large case backlogs.

It has been suggested that UNHCR also uses the length of time for waiting as a way of managing flows of Afghan migrants. For a period of time in 2007, UNHCR allegedly suspended processing asylum applications from Afghans. Afghans I whom I spoke with who arrived around that time reported long periods of waiting. From 2012 until UNHCR suspended the processing of asylum applications in the summer of 2013, Afghan asylum-seekers were given up to a year's waiting time just for registration whereas for other asylum-seekers was significantly less.

Therefore the waiting times for the asylum procedure with UNHCR varied greatly. Those who had been waiting the longest had arrived in Turkey in early 2006. They had only been accepted as refugees in May 2011. They got their letter of rejection in 2008, one year and ten months after their first interview with UNHCR.

Cevapsızlık

One of the main complaints put forward my informants was *cevapsızlık*, which can be translated as the condition of there not being an answer. Informants often talked about *cevapsızlık* alongside *belirsizlik*—uncertainty in Turkish. I had never before heard the word *cevapsızlık*, and I am not aware of its use in another context. Informants used it specifically to refer to the lack of an answer from the UNHCR. *Cevapsızlık*, not only applies to the time for waiting, but the fact that it is also very difficult for informants to reach staff at the office. Therefore it is difficult for them to check whether UNHCR has received their letters or additional information they submitted to aid their case.

The opportunity cost of waiting

The time it takes for the RSD process carries an opportunity cost. The first milestone to reach in waiting is to get refugee status and the second is to be resettled. Many informants who had been in the asylum system for a long time evaluated the time they spent waiting in terms of imagined loss of potential and cost. Young men particularly compared the time they spent waiting in Turkey with time they could have spent getting an education and professional skills, and even citizenship at another European country. Fahran, for instance, arrived in Turkey when he was 14. He was initially irregular and then applied for asylum. Reflecting on his time in Turkey, he said that he

was unable to attend school in Turkey for six years, therefore had been unable to learn to read or write. Another informant, also one of Fahran's friends, told me about the letters that he was writing to UNHCR to ask for them to resettle him to another country. He said that in the letter that he was writing at the time he was telling UNHCR that he has been in Turkey without education or being able to 'improve' himself and therefore had lost a lot of time. As he was already 20 years old, he was getting old and feared for his future.

Atash who came to Turkey with his family 6 years before we met said that many of his friends who had obtained refugee status before him had been resettled. They kept in touch with Atash. He said that had the UN recognised his family in the first instance six years ago rather than the summer I met him, so he could have been going to college abroad like his friends. Instead he was attending a high school where he was not being taught well. He said: 'Our life is passing. I say we have time, but it is passing. My siblings in Van don't learn anything. How long are we going to stay here for?' His mother, Afshan, had similar views. As they had received refugee status after a six year-long wait she asked repeatedly 'why wait this long to accept us?' She thought that had they been accepted earlier their lives would have been much better.

There is also a financial cost to waiting. Until 2010 all asylum-seekers had to pay for residence permits in addition to cost of living while living in cities such as Van, which already have very high employment. One informant said that when he arrived in Van he could not afford to pay for the residence permit, so he had to go to Istanbul to earn money to come back. Some informants who were irregular migrants also cited the length of time it takes to process the claims as one reason for not wanting to apply for asylum, alongside limited work opportunities in the satellite cities. It was too expensive to apply for asylum.

5.4.2 Perceptions of Civil Society

This section addresses what informants thought of the NGOs and the different associations they interacted with. In my interviews and conversations with informants and other asylum-seekers I tried to gauge the awareness they had of different

organisations, how they viewed the services offered, how often they approached the organisation and the level of trust towards the organisation.

Perceptions of NGOs

A child in Van whose parents were waiting for the decision of their appeal gave me a parody of what different organisations say to asylum-seekers when they call them on the telephone: 'UN says "wait wait", İnsan Hakları says "this is your third country" and Helsinki [HCA] says "we can't help you".'

For asylum-seekers, the perception of NGOs varied across different cities and among informants generally. Informants' perceptions varied from being very thankful for the support they received from NGOs to being frustrated that they did not have power to do anything for them. The situation in Kayseri was slightly different. Afghans in Kayseri did not trust ASAM because of one social worker of Iranian origin there, who was believed to favour Iranian clients over Afghans and to adopt a hostile or dismissive attitude towards Afghan asylum-seekers. My informants further intimated that she misused her power to help Iranians, giving them more information or active assistants. Informants claimed that she was negligent in her treatment of Afghan clients; she would not return their calls or inform them duly of important changes to their status. The summer following my fieldwork, she opened her own office above the ASAM office, offering support exclusively to Iranian asylum-seekers and refugees in Kayseri. My informants feared that it was because of this member of staff that ASAM had informed them too late about developments with their case too late or had not provided them with full counselling. One informant said that all the donations to ASAM go to Iranians first.

A couple of informants who received help from the IHH were both grateful and frustrated with them. One informant said: 'We get help from IHH, they brought the TV, everything, fridge, carpet etc. They bring food, pasta, tomato sauce for cooking, salt, sugar, beans. But it is never enough'. Another was frustrated because she thought the decision of what support to give was arbitrary. When another informant was talking about the aid her family received, she interjected and said with sarcasm 'it's

because [the head of the program] knows who has money and who does not.' This informant's assistance had been cut during Ramadan because her younger brother had been in employment. She also found it discriminatory that families were offered assistance but not single men.

HCA had a mixed reputation among asylum-seeking informants. Some found that the HCA had been supportive of them and were grateful for their representation, while others found HCA's support to be insufficient. There were three principal sources of dissatisfaction. Firstly, the services offered by HCA fell short of the expectations of their clients, who had been expecting full legal representation, whereas the HCA offers full representation in few and very specific circumstances. Secondly, some were frustrated that the service they received took too long. This could be caused by delays for the UNHCR in their delivery of the assessment forms or a queue among the clients of the HCA. For those who were waiting to write their appeals it caused some anxiety and some said that they wrote a letter while waiting for HCA to get back to them. The HCA has an agreement with UNHCR whereby their clients are not subject to the one-month deadline for applying for asylum. Furthermore, as a former staff member I knew that submitting an appeal letter before being counselled by the HCA may prevent HCA from representing them. Finally, some were never taken on as clients. This may have been because they were not in the right stage of the asylum procedure, perhaps because they had appealed their rejection already. This dissatisfaction was interpreted in a broader context of disillusionment and frustration with the asylum system as well as the suspicion that Afghans were treated as lesser asylum-seekers.

In order to maintain clear boundaries around my identity as a researcher in the field, I refrained from explaining to informants the possible reasons for their dissatisfaction with the HCA, as I have done above. Observing how information about the services offered by NGOs can be reinterpreted and distorted by their clients was useful for understanding how perceptions of gatekeepers form.

Perceptions of Ethnic Associations

Some informants living in Istanbul approached ethnic organisations. There were many different ethnic associations in Zeytinburnu established by ethnic groups of Turkic origin in Afghanistan and other nationalities that live in the area. Fahim, who is not a Turkic Afghan, said:

> The associations don't help much. I went to the Afgan Türkmen Derneği, I saw two men speaking in Farsi, they were Afghan. When I said that I was there to get help for *ikamet* [residence permit], they spoke with me in Turkish, they said that this was Turkey. My Turkish wasn't good and they would not speak with me in Farsi. There was another association where you give 100 USD for *ikamet*. The Ozbek association wants someone with an *ikamet* to help.

As his experience illustrates, these ethnic associations prefer to help co-ethnics. The requirement for someone with an *ikamet* by the Ozbek association is a way of asking migrants to bring in a naturalised Afghan who would most likely be of Turkic origin. Nevertheless there was one association that seemed to help migrants with obtaining residence permits and other such documents. Most informants referred to the organisation by the name of the man who runs it or simply as *dernek*.

Zehra was referred to this particular association by one of her children's teachers who said that the association could obtain a permit that would allow her children to go to school legally. She described the association as follows: 'Some Afghan people opened the office to help Afghan people here if they have medical problems, financial, residency problems.' The organisation did give her youngest children identity documents in return for money. She also paid them to get a residence permit, but she had documents for her children to go to school. She also claimed that she had also paid the organisation over 600 TL for a residence permit. She was told that the residence permit was ready, but she had not received it. As an asylum-seeker she should have been resident in her satellite city where she would have been able to get documents for herself and her children. She did not want to leave Istanbul because she had heard bad things about other cities, such as unemployment. She chose to pay this organisation, although she expected it would deceive her. She once said to me that she knew that the organisation took money from other Afghans to deliver to Turkic

Afghans and that she would likely never get her permit, yet she felt she had no choice but to take her chances with it.

As one of my informants who chose not to go to the association explained: there was a common understanding that the *dernek* only provides support to 'Turks' — Afghans of Turkic origin. This was a common assumption about the *dernek* among several informants including students and those living in satellite cities who never used them. One of my informants lived with two other men who had used the association — one was in the process of was in the process of trying to get a residence permit while the other had applied for residence through them in the past. Nevertheless the picture appeared to be much more complicated. A Tajik informant in Kayseri told me, for example, that she trusted the association but that 'There is a problem with [the head of the organisation]. You got for *ikamet*, he never replies. He gives food aid to Ozbeks, but never to us.' Similarly, Fateh, an informant of non-Turkic origin living in Istanbul said: 'Everyone has applied to the associations, but I haven't. Because I was thinking I didn't apply, I thought if I did they might sell my name to someone else. They take money. When you leave he sells it onto someone else for 1000 lira.'

The association seemed to promise people citizenship in five years. Fahran, who was Turkic and, as even he pointed out to me, had a very typical Turkish name approached the association when he first arrived. He said that the organisation had told him to 'wait five years for Turkish citizenship.' He said, however, that by giving excuses such as 'election time politics, they keep you waiting for months.'

Another informant who was in the process of trying to get a residence permit was unclear about the application process. In fact, it seemed that he did not understand what he was applying for. Both he and his housemates spoke about getting *sigorta* (insurance), referring to the equivalent of a national insurance number so as to be legal employees. They were constantly losing jobs that paid well, following police raids, because they did not have insurance and were told by employers that they were not hiring anyone without insurance. He told me that he had recently been to a police station with a staff member of the association. He did not know how long the process would take. He told me that somebody from the organisation would get in touch with

him before each step of the process. It is not clear to me whether or not, as an irregular resident only possessing a passport, he would automatically be arrested if approached by the police. One of my informants suggested that the association just puts unnecessary middlemen in place, and charges their clients for these services.

When I was in Istanbul, a rumour circulated that the association had distributed 3000 residence permits in the March of 2011. I never met anyone who had such a residence permit. I enquired at the office that was charged with establishing the new Migration and Asylum Directorate in Ankara, but the staff there did not know of any such practice. I was unable to obtain statistical information about the issuance of temporary residence permits or citizenship that might explain the basis for the rumour. I later on heard a rumour that the Foreigners' Police Department had distributed temporary residence permits to approximately 5000 Afghan residents in Zeytinburnu. It was alleged that the *dernek* had somehow obtained 3000 of these to distribute to the applicants. As some of the original applicants had left, the remaining permits had been distributed to other Afghans, for a price. When the police got wind of this irregularity, they suspended the distribution of the remaining permits and did not renew the permits that were already distributed. While this appears to be a plausible, I do not understand why the police would have had to rely on the association for the distribution of the permits in the first place.

The effectiveness of these residence permits also seems doubtful. An informant explained:

> The residence permits get cancelled later on. Some people said that they took their residence permits and then the police cancelled them if they did not have children at school. There are categories for the residence permit, and if it is 'C' it gets cancelled and/or not renewed. There was a family in [X] they got the *ikamet* after applying and got deported. There was a man who got a permit but his wife didn't and they got deported. I know a family living in [Y] with a child. They applied and paid for it, and they were not given their permit.

5.4.3 Perceptions of the Police

Informants' perceptions of the police were varied. Informants living in Zeytinburnu were not intimidated by the police there. They would sometimes be stopped and asked for ID and then let go when they showed an Afghan passport—even if the Afghan passport was out of date or did not have the correct stamps on it. Afghans could approach their embassy in Turkey for a passport. An informant said that when the police saw that they were Afghan, they would just let them go. It was generally felt that police in other parts of Istanbul would deport them. Therefore many of my informants did not venture outside of Zeytinburnu.

Most of my informants' interactions with the police took place in detention and while signing in at the police station in satellite cities. Informants' experiences in detention were poor. The stories of Masooma, who was held in prison with her child and husband while her son was in hospital for several days, and Rasoul, who was badly treated in detention, are discussed in greater detail in the previous chapter. The police are also said to be hostile towards asylum-seekers who claim to be under the age of 18. Two of my informants reported being slapped around to pressure them to claim that they were older.

On the days informants signed in they had varied interactions with the police. Some police officers would be friendly and accept petitions more easily, while others would be more resistant. Some of my informants worked with the police and cultivated positive relations with them. Informants did not make generalisations about their perceptions of the police or the treatment they received from the police.

5.5 Negotiations with Gatekeepers

This section looks at the different kinds of decisions that informants took in relation to the state and other gatekeepers as a means of managing risk. As stated at the start of the thesis, the term 'decision' denotes an action taken within the migration system and 'decision-making process' refers to the evaluative process leading to decisions.

Javid's story about arriving at his decision relating to what information to disclose, and what bureaucratic path to choose, includes common themes covered in this section. Crucially, for the purpose of this thesis Javid's decision illustrates the importance of the social and emotional context of the decision. What is at 'risk' in Javid's case was his father's health and happiness and the possibility of a family life, rather than the attainment of a particular bureaucratic status. The definition of risk used for this thesis emphasises that something of value must be at stake and the outcome uncertain. What is at stake in Javid's decision-making process was not his migration status in and of itself, but what he thought the migration status would achieve for his father and for himself. When what it appeared that his asylum claim may not lead him in that direction, he changed his course.

5.5.1 Javid's Story

Javid was living with his father who was the only surviving member of his immediate family. Javid told me that he and his father had lied about several aspects of their case. He said that they had not told the truth because it would bring shame on the family, so they had told UNHCR a story about leaving Afghanistan that was based on general insecurity. He told me what he called 'the true story' for leaving Afghanistan confidentially. This version of events, if found credible, would enable him to get refugee status because it would prove that he was facing persecution on political grounds. As he was not fleeing 'war', he had thought that he would not qualify as a refugee. Like many other informants, he thought that UNHCR only protected individuals who were fleeing conflict and war, and not, targeted persecution. UNHCR rejected their case on the grounds of credibility. Javid now had to decide whether to appeal the rejection by admitting that they had not told the truth and asking for an opportunity to talk about the real reasons they had left Afghanistan.

In arriving at the decision about whether to tell UNHCR the truth Javid was considering several factors. Firstly, he thought that since they had not told UNHCR the truth the first time, there would be no guarantee that UNHCR would believe him the second time. Secondly, he had told UNHCR that he was a minor so that he would remain under the same case file as his father. The events that had forced them to flee Afghanistan were due to his political profile and not his father's, and in correcting this

error he would risk being separated from his father. Finally, his father had mental health problems induced by stress, which had caused him memory loss particularly relating to their life in Afghanistan. His father's recollection of his interview with UNHCR was also fading. Javid had taken on the responsibility of pursuing the case. He had been trying to argue that his father's mental health had contributed to the inconsistencies in the interview both with UNHCR and with an NGO that was helping him. He was running around hospitals and doctors to get his father's condition certified for his case file with UNHCR. In doing so he had sought help from different NGOs in his city and had spoken to several doctors. Because of his father's fragile mental state, Javid was also trying to think of a solution that would cause his father the least stress and that would allow him to stay with his father to take care of him.

When I spoke with him, he was constantly wavering on what action to take. He made appointments with the NGO but did not call them at the specified time because he was undecided. In the end he decided not to change his story. What settled the decision, however, was that his father decided to get married to a Turkish woman, which opened the possibility for both of them to obtain a residence permit through his father's marriage. Javid encouraged the marriage from the start, thinking this would bring the greatest amount of happiness to his father. Javid himself also dreamed of having a family again as well as getting married and having children himself one day. The marriage would mean that for his father at least it would no longer be necessary to pursue the stressful asylum case.

In order to get married, Javid's father had to move to another city. This required him to convince the police to write to the MOI for permission to change cities. As his father did not speak Turkish and was not well enough to do the long trips to the police station to submit the petitions and try to convince the police, Javid also took on the responsibility of communicating with the police and following up on the petition to change satellite cities, which was successful in the end.

5.5.2 Narratives

The first important sphere of decision-making relates to what to tell authorities: what information to disclose, to whom to disclose it, and, crucially, what not to disclose. The information that asylum-seekers choose to disclose is therefore a key decision for managing the asylum system. At registration with UNHCR, asylum-seekers have to provide a very brief statement of why are afraid to return to Afghanistan. By this stage informants have received information from competing sources of knowledge such as smugglers, other asylum-seekers, friends or their own assumptions. What informants told UNHCR were not full-truths in several aspects, such as city of origin in Afghanistan, length of time spent in Iran, the cause of leaving Afghanistan, age and family composition.

Although not directly the focus of this chapter, it is also worth noting that decisions relating to what aspects of truth to disclose also extend to informants' social lives in the broader community. Some informants were open about telling some things to UNHCR and different things to their friends, but others were not. Furthermore, there was always some speculation about what certain people had told the UNHCR and what had *really* happened. Thus these decisions also impacted the ways in which informants socialised. Some informants felt shame or fear about events that happened in Afghanistan or Iran and therefore chose to seclude themselves from the community, as I discuss in the following chapter. In other words, the ability to craft a narrative, as discussed in the journeys chapter, has social, bureaucratic and emotional implications that reach far beyond story telling. Facts about origin, age, and family mean that the past is constantly intertwined with the present in refugee communities in a way that is not the case elsewhere.

Reasons for Leaving Afghanistan

One of the first decisions that informants made was whether to tell the ‘truth’ at their interview. Some informants thought that telling the truth at the interview would get them status. Tabasum, for instance, said that her interview went well because she

'answered all their questions correctly.' It was therefore particularly frustrating when informants felt that they could not convey their stories to UNHCR because the officers interrupted them or because interpreters were not translating facts accurately.

Some informants believed that only Afghans who were not telling the truth were receiving refugee status. One informant said for instance: ' I didn't lie that's why I got *istinaf*.' Whereas other were confident that they would obtain refugee status precisely because they told the 'truth.' The perception that UNHCR did not grant refugee status to those who told the 'truth' weakens trust towards UNHCR.

Some informants talked about acquaintances and family members who had applied for asylum. They were open about how these individuals would buy stories from smugglers when they were in Europe or would make their own stories. One of my informants, who had two brothers in Europe, told me that one of his brothers was not preparing well for his interview while the other, who was taking the asylum application process more seriously, had been working on his story. One of the brothers was in Germany and had told the authorities that was from Ghazne although he was from Kabul, but had not been making much of an effort to learn about the region. The more hard-working brother had been doing research in Denmark about his new province, Kandahar, on the internet, and had been preparing well for his interview.

Age

There are some perceived advantages to being a minor in the asylum system. Firstly, UAMs cannot be deported. This is why smugglers often advise their clients to say that they are underage if they are detained. Secondly UAMs get shelter and limited education opportunities from the state. They will be housed at a children's shelter in Istanbul or one of the satellite cities. Thirdly, UNHCR does not interview minors accompanied by their adults in the RSD procedure and the minors have a case file for themselves.

Because of the potential for getting assistance from the state and the difficulty of deporting them, the police are very sceptical of the age claims that asylum-seekers make. They sometimes refuse to register them with their stated age. One of my informants, who was 16 years old when he arrived, was intimidated and slapped on

the head of the Foreigners' Police Department at Van when he claimed that he was 16. His documentary evidence was rejected and UNHCR did not register him under his real age.[56] Another informant, who was able to register himself as a minor, though with an older age than he was, was also intimidated in a similar manner at the satellite city he went to.

Although state care is an attractive option, UAMs who live in these institutions also have a very difficult time. Sometimes they are moved around different institutions in Turkey. There may be nobody else who speaks their language in these centres or they may have problems with the Turkish children there. Three Afghan boys who were staying at one such facility told me that they locked themselves in their room at night for fear of other children attacking them. One of the children told me that it was very difficult for him when he was alone there. Aziz was my informant who had spent the longest time in care and he still communicated with some children in care. He had been caught by the police when he was being held by his smugglers. Most of his companions had said they were younger, but he said he was older and was thus put in detention. Through the help of an NGO he was released into a state-run children's facility, where he stayed for almost two years. He eventually started working as a translator for the staff at the centre. When he arrived:

> There were two or three foreigners only, two Afghans and one Ozbek. My friend knew some Turkish, and we both knew English. It was very difficult for those of us who did not speak any foreign language. Some teachers knew some English. There was a course we had to attend. I learnt Turkish here.

He also said that the education provided at the centre is limited:

> The Ministry of Education only pays for education until 14, and then they don't accept it. I went to IIMP's English courses. There is a small test to determine what level you are at, you can choose from 3 different vocations. I chose electronics. It continues until you get a job.

[56] Recently an Afghan minor was killed by the police at a Foreigners' Police Office at Van when claimed he was underage and the police officer beat him up. For more information, see the Refugee Rights Coordination's press statement calling for an inquiry into the death of Lütfullah Tacik at the Van Foreigners' Police Department, available at: http://amnesty.org.tr/icerik/2/1373/van [accessed 3 March, 2015].

Being older than most of the other children in the dormitory, he was aware of the behavioural consequences of children being separated from their families at a younger age. He said, they have not been brought up with 'family discipline, so they are more belligerent'. Consequently fights break out between students occasionally. Aziz's experience at these facilities was improved by the access he had to a volunteer group.

When UAMs reach the age of 18 they are released from state care. Given that many arrive to Turkey without any documentation, they cannot prove their exact age. If the police believe that the children are under age they assign 1 January as a birthdate.[57] This means that minors are released from care in the cold of winter and the middle of the academic year. One of my informants who had a similar experience said that he was asked to leave on January 1.

UNHCR cannot resettle UAMs because resettlement countries will not accept responsibility to care for minors. This also creates a dilemma for Afghans who have been accepted as refugees and want to start their resettlement process. I spoke to an 18 year old Afghan man who had been registered as a year younger than his age. The age given to the UNHCR is sometimes referred to as the 'UN age'. As he could not be resettled as UAM he was considering revealing his actual age. He contacted me through a friend and laid out the pros and cons of the situation. On the one hand he could not be resettled, while on the other hand, if he revealed his age, he might be able to join a friend whose file had already been sent to a third country for resettlement. In addition, he was also an athlete with national acclaim in Afghanistan and he was able to train and access to some facilities as a UAM. If he lost his place in the facility for children in care, he would have to go on the streets to work and would lose access to train in these facilities. He said that he kept weighing the options in his head and could not decide what to do.

Informants talk about their real age versus their 'UN age'. One of my informants for instance had given a younger age to UNHCR so that, as a minor, he would not be

[57] See for instance Sieff, K (2013) 'In Afghanistan, Jan. 1 is everyone's birthday' in Washington Post, 13 December, 2013, available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/in-afghanistan-its-everyones-birthday/2013/12/31/81c18700-7224-11e3-bc6b-712d770c3715_story.html [accessed 3 March, 2015]. In addition, some refugee advocates advise Afghan minors to give June as their birthday so that they can at least complete school and be released from care in the summer.

interviewed separately and would not have a separate case file. The coherence of statements from different family members is an important element in determining credibility in the RSD process, the fewer interviewees there are the more coherent it would be. When I asked Javid what his age was, for instance, he told me his 'real age' and then his 'UN age'.

Family members

Making family members appear younger is one way of constructing families in front of UNHCR by keeping unmarried adults within the family for the purpose of the case files. Some informants described their relationships with relatives differently to UNHCR thinking that it would be easier for all the family members to fall under one refugee claim, rather than making independent claims. One informant, for instance, told UNHCR that her husband's brother was her son so that she could claim he was part of the nuclear family fleeing the same *dushman*. In her case, her husband's brother had been under the threat of the *dushman*, but had not had the same confrontations the rest of the family had because he was living in a different city.

NGO staff and informants told me that Afghan women sometimes claimed to be single although they were not because it was thought that single women get priority in resettlement and some support from NGOs or UNHCR. Similar rumours about single women circulated among some of my informants. One, for example, said: 'They have husbands and they go to UN and say they don't have husbands, then another country takes them, and their husbands get different files.' These women, my informant said, intended to get resettled to a third country and then bring their husbands under their visas once they resettled. None of my informants were hiding their husbands. The single women I met in the satellite cities had all lost their husbands either in Afghanistan or in Turkey. Nevertheless, women who were single, including those among my informants, faced scepticism because of such rumours.

Journeys and Places of Origin

As mentioned in the previous chapter, some informants believed that they would be prejudiced if they said that they had been living in Iran. Until 2007, UNHCR defined Iran as a safe country for asylum, therefore it used to be the case that asylum-seekers would have to explain not only why they cannot go back to Afghanistan but also why they were threated in Iran. Since Iran started deporting Afghan refugees, however, this practice changed. Another reason why spending long time in Iran may be seen to undermine the asylum claim, is that the longer time spent away from Afghanistan makes it harder for asylum-seekers to convince UNHCR that they still have a well-founded fear of persecution in Iran. It may be suggested for instance that a family feud or political dispute may be settled over time or that the *dushman* of the informants are no longer looking for them. Finally, some Afghan asylum-seekers have never been to Afghanistan or left when they were very young, and therefore may not be faced with a threat of persecution that would that qualify them as refugees if they went back.

My informants did not explain why they thought it might be a good idea to tell UNHCR that they had spent less time in Iran. I did have informants who claimed to have passed through Iran, but had probably stayed there for a long time, not least in the case of one informant who was married to an Iranian woman but had told me that he had only been there for five weeks. I found out that his wife was Iranian when my interpreter told me, as they were family friends. On a few other occasions my interpreters told me that they thought the family had been in Iran for a longer time, either because they knew them or because of their accents and, sometimes, the fashion sense of the informants.

5.5.3 Self-Advocacy

Decisions about advocating for the case constitute the second important sphere of bureaucratic paths.. ‘Self-advocacy’ in the bureaucratic context may entail, for instance, seeking assistance from NGOs, lobbying the state authorities, petitioning UNHCR or staging a protest. For the purpose of this thesis what is important is the varying degrees frequency and intensity with which informants advocated for

themselves and the ways in which they did so. While some informants did not advocate for themselves at all, others were relentless in their pursuit. Advocacy is considered a decision in the context of this thesis because of the cost in time, effort and resources that it carries and the significant change that it can bring about in the situation of the informant.

Interactions with UNHCR

Informants most wanted to contact UNHCR to get information on the progress of their asylum application, to ask for a speedier assessment of their case and to ask for financial assistance.

The most common way in which informants sought to advocate for their case with UNHCR was by writing letters. While some informants wrote letters themselves others sought outside support because of insufficient literacy levels or because they thought they did not have the expertise. Some thought that there was a particular way of writing letters while others thought that the letter should be written in Turkish or English so that the recipient at UNHCR could understand it. Getting someone else to write the letter, particularly in a different language, can result in miscommunication. I understood that there were some individuals who charged for writing letters, but none of my informants told me explicitly that they paid anyone. Even if not paid, writing letters for others carries authority. The wife of one informant, who was highly regarded in the community, wrote letters for some asylum-seekers.

Informants were aware that UNHCR may not read their petitions, and may therefore resort to other ways of communicating with UNHCR. One of my informants told me that her legal officer: 'speaks well but she doesn't help. She says everyday they get 1000 petitions, which one should I read?' One alternative communication strategy way was to call UNHCR's phone line for Farsi speakers on Thursdays. Although it is very busy, some informants persistently called the line. Given that the line services all Farsi speakers, including Iranians, it was rare for my informant actually to speak to anyone from UNHCR. Calling the line, however, was costly both time-wise and financially, as informants said that the called required them to have credit on their mobile phones.

Informants would check the UNCHR results webpage to find out about their case. As many did not have easy access to the internet, and some had never used a computer before, this means of monitoring the results is not a tool for self-advocacy as there is no way of writing to UNHCR from the website. However, it is crucial to be informed about a change in status to be able to act quickly and follow up effectively. This is particularly so, given that informants may lose touch with UNHCR as they change their addresses and telephones, even if they communicate these changes to the UNHCR.

Another way in which informants tried to reach UNHCR was to go directly to the office. This was frequent and easier in Van, which is the only satellite city in which UNHCR had an office. There were always asylum-seekers waiting in front of the office in Van asking to speak to someone inside. The interpreters and a staff member acted as gatekeepers—literally and figuratively. According to the informants, they would determine who would be allowed in and whose claim would be heard. Everybody agreed that the process was haphazard and that Afghans were met with hostility. One informant told me that she thought one of the staff members only admitted women he found beautiful, which included her. Rasoul went to the UNHCR office every week, sometimes more than once a week, for three months to get his refugee certificate. When he went to the gate he would be sent away and told to come again, or just be told to wait. His pursuits cost him his IT job.

Some informants, especially those outside of Van, went to Ankara to speak to someone from UNCR. The office in Ankara does not admit anyone without a prior appointment however. Informants who went there would have to get permission from the police if they wanted to ensure that they would not get into trouble for travelling without authorisation and pay for their own tickets.

Sometimes there were protests or gatherings in front the UNHCR in Van or Ankara, which were either organised or spontaneous. I witnessed what looked like the tail end of spontaneous protest. The asylum-seekers had gathered on the grass across the road from the entrance to the office and had been chanting while the staff were asking

them to leave. Informants in Van told me that when they protested on one occasion the police were called to escort them. One informant claimed that all those who had protested were later sent to different satellite cities. Several of my informants had returned from Ankara after a protest when I met them. One of them said:

> We went to Ankara to go to UNHCR and tell them the will of all of us, we can't return to Afghanistan, there is no other way. We posted a lot of letters, called UNHCR none of them replied to us. There is no organisation to help us to transfer our problems to UN. Yesterday I came back after 12-13 hours by train from Ankara. This is my problem. They asked me why did you come. I said I am here for 4 years, there is no way to communicate.

It should be clear therefore that the RSD process, although decided by UNHCR, may not be a stagnant period of waiting. Some informants would devote their time to trying to reach UNHCR undeterred by the lack of response. Asal, for example, a single mother of three children who was awaiting the outcome of her appeal interview, commented: 'There is no response from UN, we keep calling, we write every week, there is no reply. We write letters all the time. We call UN, we call them from morning to night they never answer.' UNHCR does not acknowledge the information it receives so that, for informants, with each letter sent the cloud of uncertainty surrounding the RSD process intensifies.

Informants who were active in lobbying UNHCR credited the positive outcomes in their situation to their persistence. Kamyar, for example, said: 'I got accepted eight months after the interview, the interpreter said I wouldn't get accepted. I did everything. I got accepted on the fifth month of 2008 and got my certificate on the first Month of 2009. I had three interviews for financial assistance in 2007, 2009 and 2011. [A UNHCR staff member] says [the result] hasn't gone up on the internet, that he will write for sure. [A UNHCR staff member] is terse in his responses. They don't help, they don't write.' He thought that 'doing everything' was why he was accepted, despite being told by the interpreter that he would not be. Kamyar was one of the informants I knew who had several interviews for financial assistance with UNHCR. This is unusual given that he is a young single man with no health problems, therefore has obvious vulnerabilities for getting assistance.

Interactions with the police

As explained earlier, asylum-seekers had regular contact with the police because of the obligation to sign in regularly in the satellite cities. The police were also gatekeepers to state services such as education and healthcare and were responsible for supporting asylum-seekers in obtaining identity documents and residence permits. The police intimidated some informants but not others. In addition to communicating with the police, informants also had to communicate through interpreters who worked with the police if they could not speak Turkish. Some police officers were resistant to accepting and processing petitions. Much of the negotiation with police officers revolved around convincing them to accept and process petitions, and keeping informants up to date with the decisions issued by the MOI. Farrin's experience with the police, for instance, was one of the more negative ones: 'The Foreigners Police Department has interpreters, they either listen to us or they don't. If we write a letter to MOI, they threaten us. Some people wrote, they were threatened so we all stopped.'

In Van, informants seemed to know the names and have opinions about the characters of different police officers— who for instance was more grumpy or more likely to accept petitions. They would try to hand petitions to these officers. Some worked for the police, often (but not always) unofficially. These informants were able to forge better relations with the police and get support from them. Two of my informants eventually obtained paid employment with the police as a result of these efforts.

To ask for or demand the cancellation of an order to change satellite city was a main reason for informants approaching the police. As Van was becoming very crowded the MOI was assigning asylum-seekers to new cities. The director of VAKAD said that they were advocating on behalf of some of their clients who would be removed from their sources of support that they had in Van. Most of the informants in Sivas and Kayseri had been in Van. Informants in Ağrı were sent to different cities due to the harsh conditions in Van, particularly during the winter months. Informants tried to change their cities because they thought there were better work opportunities or living conditions in other cities, or to be able to be with friends or family members. As

Morad, one of my informants who had been trying to have his city changed, explained:

> My mother cannot sleep until the morning. We were sharing this house with another family. My mother thought of their daughter as her own. She would take care of her and befriend her. The family had to leave because of an honour issue with a Kurdish family. They were moved to Antep for her safety. We also want to go to Antep for my mother's sake, so she can be with this family. We have written to the police. (…) The police are alright but you have to really push for the petitions to be accepted.

Sometimes informants lobbied to have their cities changed, were successful and then had to advocated for the issuance of a new decision from the MOI. Asal, for example, had struggled in her first city. She asked for her city to be changed and was successful. When I met her in her second city, she was very unhappy because she had not been able to find employment. Therefore, she had been lobbying the police to get her city changed. Gulbahar had asked for a change of satellite city for safety reasons and lobbied the police with the support of NGOs. As time went on she built networks and felt more secure in the city where she was residing and did not want to leave. Therefore, when she obtained permission to relocate, she started lobbying the police to reverse their decision. The police in her city treated her as nuisance and refused to take action, resisting accepting her petitions to the MOI. She mobilised several advocates to act on her behalf. For example, she brought the governor of her district with her to get the police to accept her petition. When she went by herself the police would ask her where her husband was, implying that, as a woman, she should be accompanied by a man. She told me that she retorted at one officer telling him: 'Why do you ask me where my husband is? Do I ask you where your wife is?' Gulbahar's perseverance with the police was uniquely creative and forceful among my informants. Her interaction is an example of how it might perhaps be possible for a person in her situation to advocate for herself in front of the police.

Approaching other state institutions

Schools and hospitals are the state institutions that informants are in most frequent contact with, apart from the police. In the event that informants do not have the

correct documents or police referral, they may have to negotiate with authorities in schools and hospitals to gain access to them.[58] While some informants never approached any state institutions beyond what was required of them, others sought out different information and pursued their claims. One of my informants, for instance, found out through research that the municipality has funds for people with disabilities. Since his father was paralysed from the neck-down, he went to the office of the municipality, explained the provision and sought assistance from them. He went there repeatedly because, as an asylum-seeker, the staff could not decide whether he should be entitled to this service. In the end, he was not deemed eligible because the guidelines made provisions for refugees (in the sense of Turkish law including only Europeans) and not for asylum-seekers. When he was pursuing his claim but going to the office, however, he had to give up the opportunity to work.

Informants who did approach state institutions for help were also met with hostility: 'We go to a state building, they say 'how much money do you get from the UNHCR?' They say Iranians get 400USD, they insist on it.' Her husband then added: 'During Nevruz they say are you from PKK that you celebrate?' The lack of knowledge and a hostile approach towards asylum-seekers makes it harder to negotiate.

I accompanied Daoud to the Governorate building because was trying to help an Afghan UAM get permission from the institution he was at to go Ankara for his interview. We first went to the institution where the child was staying and talked to a senior official. He said that for Afghans it was optional to go to their RSD interview, but that we should get permission from the Municipality. We then went to the Governorate. Daoud had met one of the members of the staff before. We sat and had tea. They told me that they would not give permission for the child to leave because it was 'just an interview to go to America.' They thought that the child could just stay in Turkey. One of the men then explained to me that he knew several Bosnian children who were recognised as refugees and they would approach UNHCR because they wanted to go to America. He was referring to the 1990s when Bosnian refugees arrived in Turkey. They were eligible for citizenship in Turkey as refugees under Turkish law and for being of Turkic descent. I then explained to them the significance

[58] Education and healthcare in Turkey are discussed in greater detail in chapters 6 and 7, respectively.

of the interview and that, unlike the Bosnian children, the child was not a refugee under Turkish law because he was not European. We later got the document to take to the police for permission to leave. Daoud had previously told the staff member what I had told them, but had not been taken seriously. The child did not have enough Turkish or understanding of the system to be able to do it himself, so he had asked Daoud. The institution whose care he was under was clearly failing in its duty towards him. In the end an officer from UNHCR came to do the interviews in person because the police insisted that the child, as a minor, would have to be accompanied on his journey by another officer.

Approaching NGOs

While some informants were very aware of civil society organisations others were not. Moreover, while some accepted the decisions of NGOs, others questioned their sincerity, purpose and ability to fulfil the informants' demands of them.

Given the absence of interpreters some informants who had learnt Turkish and gained the trust of the police or NGOs were able to become interpreters themselves, while others acted as interpreters for Afghans in a less formal capacity. These informants would also refer others who needed help to these organisations and explain what the NGOs did. Much of the services available spread through the word of mouth.

Some Afghan asylum-seekers formed an association to help raise awareness of the situation of Afghans and to bring about change in their treatment. I met members of this association in all the cities I went to. They were later on active in leading the 40-day long protests in the spring of 2014 in front of the UNHCR Ankara offices.

5.5.4 Choosing a Bureaucratic Path

Most of my informants were committed to the asylum system and were not invested in other options. Fewer informants were evaluating their current situation, whatever their legal status, in the light of other options —imagined or experienced. Few informants pursued multiple bureaucratic paths at the same time. Fahran for instance, while diligently pursuing his asylum application, had also been arranging to leave

Turkey with a smuggler. Zehra, for instance, was applying for citizenship through the *dernek* while also pursuing her asylum application. This section explains how informants with similar situations pursued different bureaucratic paths, and how some informants pursued multiple paths or changed paths.

Most informants found out about the possibility of applying for asylum from smugglers, other Afghans or friends, while they were either in Turkey or on their way to Turkey. Zehra's interview illustrates how she came both to apply for asylum and to live in Istanbul, in light of the other options available to her, her husband and her children.

> Author: You told me that when you came to Turkey you learnt about the asylum system through friends?
> Zehra: Yes.
>
> A: When you learnt about it, did you go to Ankara and to the police?
> Z: Yes, because my son wanted to go by boat to Greece, so one of my friends said don't play with your life, don't do anything like that, go and register with UN and so we directly went to Ankara.
>
> A: And did you ever go to Van to register with the police there?
> Z: I went to Van, to the UN office there, they told me that it doesn't relate to us, go to the police, the police said that we had to stay there for 5-6 months and then we ask to change the city. I saw that we would have many problems there, so I said that I cannot stay there.
>
> A: When you went to Van, did you go yourself?
> Z: I was alone. I just asked one of my friends who did not know Turkish well, because I did not know the language I could not insist for them to help me.
>
> A: It seems like you have done a lot of the running around…
> Z: I have tried many things and I have had many problems. One of my son's friends, who is Iranian, didn't go to the city that the police told them, they are accepted to the US but they cannot go. If I knew that we would get accepted I would leave my daughter who is sick here. (…) Even UN sent me to a clinic and they gave a report for my daughter…

Zehra's story illustrates the path that led many informants to apply for asylum. She and her family had arrived irregularly to Istanbul. When she found out that she could apply for asylum she did so, evaluating this in the light of the options of irregular travel. Another consideration for her was that her daughter is ill and was receiving treatment in Istanbul through an NGO. Given the uncertainty of the outcome and the living conditions in Van, which Zehra perceived to be poorer than Istanbul, she decided for the family to stay in Istanbul and pursue the application from there, even though she is clearly aware that her family's chances of resettlement are undermined by not being resident in Van.

While Zehra made her decision in favour of applying for asylum, others thought that the lack of employment opportunities and the lack of certainty associated with the asylum system were more dangerous. Importantly this applied to informants who thought that they may have viable asylum claims in Turkey because they were afraid to return to Afghanistan. Therefore the decision of whether or not to apply for asylum was not always related to whether informants thought of themselves as refugees or not. Hadi, for instance, said that he left Afghanistan because of his job in the government and could not go back there because he would be punished. When asked why he did not apply for asylum he said:

> (…) we had thought about it, after we came here we learnt that if we apply we would have to go to another city, and we thought that it would be very difficult to work, so we didn't go. We didn't have anywhere to stay without working, so we decided to stay here.

Similarly, Rashid, who had fled Afghanistan because of Taliban threats to his family's life because of his father's position within the state and who had relatives with refugee status in Europe said he would not apply for asylum in Turkey because 'everybody has been waiting for 4-5 years, even if they are accepted or not. So nobody is very keen on it.' One informant who claimed that he was a refugee because, as a well-known journalist in his city, he had been receiving threats to his and his family's lives said that he would not apply for asylum in Turkey because it takes too long and the outcome is uncertain. He left Turkey within a short period of time and

was eventually recognised as a refugee in Europe. Therefore, the time and financial costs of the asylum system deterred asylum application even for those who thought that they may have an asylum claim.

Zehra decided not to travel irregularly because she received advice that it would be too dangerous. Some of the younger men told me that they had been discouraged by friends, because of the dangers of travel. Rasoul, for instance, had been detained before after his boat sank off the coast of the Aegean, was afraid of traveling onwards. He told me that a friend of his went to Denmark two years ago and that he now became a citizen, 'but when you see the danger [of the journey] it is better to wait.' Rasoul said that he would lie at night thinking about the dangers of crossing on the one hand and the difficulties of staying in Turkey with the passing of time on the other. He was part of a friendship group of about ten, who would get together and evaluate whether or not to leave Turkey. Another member of this group, Fahran, was also discouraged from travelling irregularly because his friends would not let him. 'I tried crossing but my friends didn't let me. I sometimes wish I had tried it back then, at that time I could have gone.' Now, it is more dangerous for him to travel onwards because the borders are better controlled. Nevertheless, there may come a point when Fahran decides to go travel irregularly: ' If I don't get citizenship, I have to go *kaçak* [illegally]. There is nothing to do for the future.' Like Fahran, Rasoul would also think of missed opportunities, that had he gone earlier he would have already been settled with citizenship like his friends who had gone earlier. Therefore, for Rasoul and Fahran, the dangers of possible future travel were evaluated in the context of the successes of acquaintances who had left earlier. This was brought to the fore especially when one of their friends, Farrin, left unannounced.

I met Farrin in June, shortly before he left. He had been pursuing his asylum application relentlessly while working two jobs. It was nevertheless clear that he was feeling frustrated with the asylum system, which he viewed as being deeply unfair:

> All the NGOs we go to say they don't know, they can't help us, we don't have any information. UNHCR says why did you come here in the first place, you have no right to be here. They threatened me at the interview: they shouted at me. He said I could have continued living in Afghanistan, I shouldn't have come here. (…) I told

[the legal officer] that anybody could kill me, everybody has a right to do so, but he won't believe me. (…) We don't have protection from the state or the police.

I so far haven't seen anyone get the rights they deserve. (…) When we go to the door of UNHCR, the interpreters say that we should do whatever we want to, they don't care. We are *muhajir*[refugees], we deserve better treatment. We go to Foreigners' Police to protest, but they don't let us. They say that if we protest they will send us away and that we should take our problems up with UN.

There a hundred year old friendship between Afghanistan and Turkey. Why do we come here and left to the mercy of Kurds? They hide us at their houses, get the phone numbers of our relatives and threaten them into giving money. If you get arrested you stay at the deportation centres until you can pay up 500 USD. I never stayed at the Foreigners' Police, but I have heard from friends who have that they are treated very badly by interpreters. I want to get my rights, but we are told that we don't have right to appeal. They say that we can be here for 10-15 years, that they could deport us. This is what interpreters say to us. If things continue like this, and we are forced to return, we will take guns and go back, and things we get worse for Afghanistan.

My father (…) was an important man, I have letter to prove it, if I go back I will be in great danger. I did write an appeal letter to UN but the interpreters just tear up the letter. I write four to five letters a month and there is no response.

The police always say to us, 'you shouldn't have come here'. People drown at sea to escape Turkey. What should they do? They have waited five years to get a response from UN! UN ruined Afghanistan, they have destroyed it, where should people go to?

When I arrived in Turkey, I went to UN and I said my purpose is to go to France but I have come to you for your help. They told us that we could only stay for about 3-4 years, that perhaps nobody will accept us in the end. I waited two years, and I got an appeal. This isn't only my problem, but it is everybody's problem.

From our conversation it is clear that Farrin saw nothing to hope for in the asylum system. Although he did not talk about being hopeless directly, many other informants talked about having hope in relation to their decision-making processes. Rasoul told me that soon after we met Farrin left Turkey. In September, nobody had heard from

him. Farrin and Rasoul wondered whether he had made to it Greece or if something bad had happened to him. I heard from Farrin in December. The Turkish police had detained him on his attempt to go to Greece. In detention he found out that he his refugee claim had finally been recognised. He was sent to Van in October, only to arrive shortly before the big earthquakes. When I spoke with Rasoul in December, Farrin did not want to talk to me but told Rasoul that he was very happy now that he had refugee status, despite living in freezing temperatures in a tent while still suffering from the aftershocks of the earthquake.

For some informants getting recognised was enough of an incentive to continue with the asylum process. One informant said for instance: 'We had been thinking of travelling illegally, or at least going to Istanbul, before we got recognised, but now that we are recognised I don't have any plans like that.' However, getting refugee status for some was not enough to keep them in Turkey. Kamyar, for example, also in the friendship group mentioned above, had been recognised as a refugee for some time. When I asked him about whether he thought about going to Istanbul and then to Turkey, he first said: 'There is the thought of going to Istanbul, but I am used to it here.' He elaborated: 'I like Turkey, I want to stay here. I would definitely not return to Iran. Anything can happen in [Iran]. The police is very bad. I am thinking of going to Europe. I have problems in Afghanistan, I cannot return.' He later said: 'When your situation is uncertain to you can take on anything' and then went on to talk about himself and his friends: 'Our biggest problem is to go.' The friends he had come with had all left. There are only a few people left who arrived with him, some of whom the 'UN sent to their third country.' He then said: 'We have to do something. We are going to stay for another year, and then we will go.' This is perhaps the kind of thinking that inspired Farrin, who had arrived at the same time as Kamyar, to leave.

The Importance of Financial Resources

Money was a key determinant for some of my informants' choice of bureaucratic path. As discussed above, the perceived financial cost of living irregularly versus claiming asylum is an important factor in choosing one over the other. Moreover, some informants said they arrived in Van, or Istanbul, because that was as much as they could pay for, while others said that they could not travel further because they

did not have the money. Kamyar, for instance, said 'I went to Istanbul but my money wasn't enough. I applied to the UN because I didn't have enough money.' As discussed in the 'Journeys' chapter, some informants ended up in their current cities because they had been robbed by the smugglers, therefore could not invest in any further travel, or had been caught by the police. Osman said: 'We wanted to go to Greece, the police decided, we ran out of money, and we ran out of work.'

Jamila told me that when the special recognitions came, families who could afford to leave did so. She said that if she and her family had the money, they would leave as well. Similarly Morad, for instance, said: 'We don't have the money to go forward, we have to wait, there is no other choice for us. We are under tremendous pressure now, the situation here, my mother in law…' For informants such as Jamila and Morad, the lack of financial resources was holding them back, perhaps from migrating to another country, yet finance alone does not explain the situation. Whilst the cost of irregular travel is undoubtedly a major constraint, social connections and employment also offer possibilities for creating an opportunities for further travel. Farrin, for instance, was also in a very difficult financial situation but was able to finance his journey through employment in Van and the possibility of work in Istanbul. Jamila and Morad were also constrained by their obligations towards their families as caregivers and providers as well as their desire to be with them. While Morad said that he wanted to leave with his mother, he had also decided to get married and taken on the responsibility for his wife and her family. Jamila, for example, had a small child and became pregnant when all her friends were leaving. Having a family or caring for people who have health problems that prohibit particular kinds of irregular travel adds to the cost of irregular travel and therefore may be prohibitive for many. This nevertheless doesn't mean that people never choose leaving over caring for someone from their family. The brothers of two of my informants, for instance, left their families, which included poorly parents, to go to Europe. The role of relationships of care and family as well as health problems will be discussed in greater deal in Chapter 7. Finally finances did not explain why one path was chosen over another. While informants who were residing irregularly in Istanbul, for instance, said that they thought the asylum system was expensive, some asylum-

seekers said they applied for asylum instead of staying in Istanbul because they did not have money.

Much of the discussion in this section has so far focused on the dichotomous choice of applying for asylum or being irregular. In the remainder of this section, I discuss the question of seeking citizenship or obtaining student visas. There are no objective advantages and disadvantages of either. How informants thought of these options was determined by how they perceived the risk associated with each option. As Osman said when I asked him about whether he considers going to Istanbul again, having been both irregular and an asylum-seeker: 'It is like being behind the door of a toilet, everybody wants to be on the other side of it.'

Pursuing Citizenship

The students were most likely to actively pursue the prospect of citizenship in Turkey. However, irregular migrants and asylums seekers sometimes also tried to pursue citizenship. An informant who had been living in Istanbul said that the *dernek* had told her that if they wanted to become Turkish citizens they should not 'apply to the UN'. Like Fehran and Zehra, Masooma had also heard that if you live in Turkey for five years it would be possible to apply for citizenship so long as two Turkish citizens who worked for the state were your guarantors in the application process. Masooma had also been advocating this idea among her friends, some of whom also told me that they would apply for citizenship once they had been in Turkey for five years. This idea is based on incomplete information. While it is true that one can apply for citizenship within five years, this possibility is not afforded to those who have been resident irregularly or with an asylum-seeker's permit, which was the case for both Fahran and Masooma. Fahran had been irregular for years and Masooma for almost one year. In fact Fahran thought that the time he spent in Van as an asylum-seeker was now 'wasted'. Masooma told me that she knew a lawyer who was working with an asylum-seeker applying for citizenship so I enquired about this claim with my former colleagues who said that this would not be legally possible.

Under the previous legal system, people who had completed higher degrees as foreign students in Turkey were not entitled to apply for Turkish citizenship. One of my

informants told me that the only way he could stay was by marrying a Turkish citizen, and was considering approaching his friends to arrange such a marriage. Arash married a Turkish woman when he completed his university degree and eventually got citizenship. I heard of other students who had married Turkish citizens during their degrees. In the early 2000s Turkey made it harder for foreign nationals married to Turkish citizens to apply for citizenship, in order to curb trafficking. Therefore there are restrictions placed on employment after marriage and citizenship is not automatic. Under the new law, however, students who have completed their education may apply for a short-term residence permit.[59]

Extending student visas

Two of my student informants who would have to go back to Afghanistan upon completion of the university degree both because of limitations on their visas and because of the terms of their scholarship, extended their degree by spreading their coursework out. They would either take the minimum or below the required number of classes and exams. This kind of stalling technique is also common with Turkish students who try to put off their military service. The Ministry of Education regularly issues amnesties for students who would be considered to have failed their degree because did not complete their degrees on time.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has three key conclusions about how risk can be conceptualised with regard to migrant decision-making processes and how to understand different approaches to managing risk. The first conclusion that is that there is no decision with regard to migration status that inherently carries 'risk'. It is only by looking carefully at the context of the decisions themselves that we can understand that is at stake for informants, and how they seek not to compromise what is at stake for them in the decisions they take. This was most clearly illustrated in the case of Javid who made decisions about his asylum claim based on his care and concern for his father and his

[59] Article 22 (1)(ı)

desire for a family. His decisions changed with the passage of time and with changes to his circumstances. Furthermore a decision that was seen to be too dangerous, such as irregular travel, could then become a more desirable option in the face of lack of change in predicament, lack of trust towards gatekeepers and changing attitudes with the passage of time.

This conclusion also leads to the assertion that illegality or irregularity is not a 'risk' in and of itself. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, irregularity was not seen as a moral failing and was therefore not a risk in the sense that Douglas portrays risk as a moral transgression. This does not mean that informants were not 'predisposed to cooperate' with authorities .The fact that my informants rarely had regular immigration status, and came from a chronically fragile state that offered no protection, may have shaped their interaction with state authorities in Turkey. Even those fleeing persecution were targeted not by agents of the state, but by powerful individuals or collectives, such as family or the Taliban, from whom they were not able to get protection. This may also explain, to some degree, why my informants and Afghans in general — as evidenced in the recent protests against UNHCR — expect UNHCR to deliver on rights and services that others would attribute to the Turkish state.

Moreover, some informants who had lived in Iran from a very young age or from birth described achieving a successful and comfortable life, despite having no legal status. Therefore, irregular status is not necessarily a condition of 'abjectivity' as described by Gonzales and Chavez (2012) in reference to irregular migrants in the USA. Some of my informants were for instance able to go to school or set up their own businesses. Some of my informants had similar achievements in Pakistan and Dubai, as well. Therefore by the time they came to Turkey they were perhaps better able to cope with the challenges that irregularity carries. Through the absence of a strong state in their lives, they were perhaps not conditioned to view legal status as a moral or ethical issue. Therefore there was no clear moral dimension in their weighing of options when making a decision about the migration system. Furthermore, a few of my informants who had regular statuses as asylum-seekers described their lives as being *kaçak* (illegal).

Some informants viewed irregular status as more advantageous than seeking asylum. Some informants who had asylum claims but did not pursue them because they thought they would receive worse treatment, as asylum-seekers, than they could achieve for themselves by living irregularly and maybe trying to move on to Europe. This is an indictment of the asylum system in Turkey because the support and protection that asylum-seekers receive is so minimal as to make irregularity a comparable option to seeking asylum.

The second conclusion to this chapter is that how informants perceive risk accounts for the variation in their decision-making processes with regard to the choice of bureaucratic paths. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1 and 3, there are two key components to the risk: there must be an event that places human value at stake and the outcome of the event must be uncertain. Understanding how my informants perceive risk is, therefore, understanding what is at stake for them and how they evaluate the uncertainty associated with it. Informants decided on bureaucratic paths based on what was at stake for them, such as education for their children, healthcare or employment, and their evaluation of the uncertainty associated with different outcomes. Some chose different paths because of the different ways they perceived risks. Caring for sick members of family were an important part of what was at stake for Zehra, Javid and Fahim. Both Zehra and Javid applied for asylum in part to access healthcare and a better quality of life, while Fahim chose not to apply for asylum because he thought he would not be able to meet the healthcare needs of the family in a satellite city. Zehra chose not go to her satellite city, and to stay in Istanbul, so that she could take care of her daughter, whereas Javid followed the residency requirements, and all other regulations, carefully. Fahim thought that, while it might be cheaper to access hospitals in satellite cities the income the family made staying in Istanbul would enable them to meet the costs of the healthcare and to have a better quality of life. Even after he was detained in Istanbul and faced the threat of deportation, his family continued to stay in Istanbul and to not pursue their asylum claim. This variation in the decisions and decision-making processes of my informants I argue is accounted for by their perception of risk.

The third conclusion is that, it is not only the way informants perceived risk, but also how they managed it that accounts for the diversity of their migratory decisions. In order to illustrate the three different ways in which informants managed risk with regard to their migration status, this section draws on the experiences of three informants — Marwa, Asal and Gulbahar — to exemplify each of the categories. All these informants are single women with children in Turkey. This chapter has already included quotations from all three of the informants. I have presented the cases of these three women to illustrate how informants who were similarly situated in Turkey had different ways of managing the risks of being asylum-seekers in Turkey. Furthermore, the selection illustrates how the typology transcends class, education levels, and gender.

Resigned: Marwa

Marwa has two teenage children. When I met her she had been in Turkey for almost a year and a half. She applied for asylum because she was fleeing *dushman* in Afghanistan. She did not have any money to take her further than Van. She was settled in her satellite city. As a single woman with children, one of whom has a health condition, an NGO had housed her, on her arrival, in a shelter, which she shared with another single woman. The same NGO also appeared to help get her ID documents for her registration with the police. I asked her about her interview, she said: 'I couldn't explain what I wanted her to.' Because of her son's condition she was able to get some assistance from UNHCR. She said: 'I got accepted to financial aid once, but I don't want help I only want to go.' Then she added 'my biggest problem is my son and the *cevapsizlik.* ' She said she is waiting for an answer from UNHCR. She did not talk about going to UNHCR, writing petitions or anything similar to accelerate the process. She does not seem to leave her house much, because she is afraid of her *dushman* from Afghanistan finding her. She said that she cannot work. She does not send her son to school and she sent her daughter for a while, but no longer does so because of her fear for her enemies. She gave me the impression that had she not received any support from the NGO and some other women who took pity on her, she would not have been able to support herself or her children.

Restless: Asal

She was first sent to the city of Ağrı. When she arrived at Ağrı she approached the SYDV but 'there was nothing left' for her. She nevertheless got some food help and financial assistance. She said she wrote petitions with outside help and got money. She wanted her youngest daughter to go to school and got a local government official to write a letter for her daughter to be admitted to school without having to pay for any fees. When it was time for her interview at Van, she had to find the money for the bus ticket there and back herself. 'UN called the police and said this family is coming. Once we wanted to go to Van, we got permission with great difficulty, but we went anyway.' At her interview, she says that her interpreter accused of her of lying and not coming from Afghanistan. She said: 'he would come to us and shout 'why are you lying?' I would say why should we come if we didn't have any problems?' She asked for financial assistance at Van but 'they said go away.' When she was waiting for a reply from UNHCR about her asylum claim she would persistently petition and call UNHCR: 'There is no response from UN, we keep calling, we write every week, there is no reply. We write letters all the time. We call UN, we call them from morning to night they never answer.' She lobbied the police Ağrı and UNHCR for satellite city to be changed: 'I wrote to Ankara about our living conditions, the police came and looked at our house and they sent us here.'

She did not like her new city, because she was told that she was too old to work, which she thought was nonsense. So she kept going to one of the NGO offices and the police asking for the city to be changed. In the meantime she was in touch with other NGOs to help her with her asylum case. She did not want to live with other refugees so she found a house in a different neighbourhood and managed to negotiate a good deal on rent from a Turkish landlord. Despite receiving very limited support and struggling to find employment, she managed to send her younger daughter to school. Her older daughters worked from home and helped her.

Asal had no formal education and was illiterate. She could not understand Turkish. Despite these hindrances she continually petitioned authorities, approached them in person and argued her case in the face of great adversity. Moreover, she attributed the positive developments to be brought about through her actions. She for instance,

claimed that her satellite city was changed because of her petition, whereas many asylum-seekers were resettled to other cities at the time. Nevertheless, her persistence with key gatekeepers did bring about change to her situation.

Asal, like Marwa, fled some very powerful enemies in Afghanistan. She had three daughters with her and feared for their safety. She kept away from the community of Afghans in her satellite city because she feared gossip. In contrast to Marwa, she was proactive in every area of her life. In Afghanistan she had lived a very restrained life and challenging life. She had not been allowed to leave her house after a forced marriage at a young age to a powerful man. In Turkey, however, she was very proactive in every sphere of her life to change her circumstances and secure a more stable living for herself and daughters. She said that her asylum claim had been rejected. Within the space of the ten months that I was in touch her, she was at first trying to appeal the asylum decision, she then changed her satellite city, and then got interviewed by UNHCR, recognised as a refugee and was offered resettlement in Europe.

Unlike Gulbahar, the next case, however, she isolated herself socially. She chose not to meet other asylum-seekers in her satellite cities and did not have any Turkish acquaintances. Therefore, she did not assume a prominent social position.

Resilient: Gulbahar

Gulbahar also had three children who were younger than Asal and Marwa's children and were all in school. When I met Gulbahar she was in the process of opening a new file with UNHCR, having separated from her husband. This chapter already includes some examples of what Gulbahar did in order to bring about change to her situation, for instance by going to the police to ask for her satellite city to be changed and then once achieving that going back to get it changed to her original city with the help of a local official and different NGO staff.

What distinguishes Gulbahar from Asal and Marwa is that she was not only proactive in bringing about getting information and bringing change to her own situation but also created information and spread it to others. When I spent time with her, she

would visit houses and tell her neighbours what she had managed to find out about UNHCR, NGOs, what's going in different cities and tell everyone of her experiences. She would for instance advise one of her acquaintances that the legal officer assigned to their case had a backlog, so they should request a new one, or that they should go to a certain NGO for help. She seemed to know what stage the asylum claims of her acquaintances were at, and had opinions about whether they had been telling the truth and the outcomes.

A second attitude that makes Gulbahar stand out is the creativity of her solutions to her problems. She for instance got a job as an interpreter for one of the NGOs from which she had been getting help, despite the fact that she could not speak Turkish well. Therefore she took her daughter to the NGO with her when she needed to. She had serious health problems for which she could not get free prescriptions. She therefore took all three children to Istanbul to a government office and convinced the officer to give her a book of vouchers that can only be given to Turkish citizens in need. She then distributed these vouchers to others in need around her. Through her negotiations with different gatekeepers she positioned herself as an authoritative figure, if not a leader. This, in turn, enabled her to get protection from her abusive husband who, at the time of the interview, was missing but had threatened her. She thought that now through her social networks she did not need the support of the police of the protection of a camp to survive in Turkey.

As the stories of these three women illustrate, the different ways in which they manage risk associated with their migration status in Turkey manifests itself in other areas of their lives. Marwa, for instance, did not send her children to school although she had the means to, whereas Asal sent her youngest and Gulbahar sent all three. Asal and Gulbahar heavily relied on their children who went to school and were able to speak Turkish when they were getting around. All three women had fears about being in Turkey, but managed these very differently. Asal and Gulbahar were in employment. One of Gulbahar's jobs gave her further security and information regarding her asylum claim. These interactions also affected what these women wanted out of the system. Whereas Marwa and Asal wanted to leave Turkey, Gulbahar wanted to stay and apply for citizenship. She thought that her daughters would not

become immoral and abandon her in Europe, whereas Asal's daughters thought that the only way they could help their mother was by going to Europe.

Chapter 6

Daily Life in Turkey: Social Life, Employment, Housing and Education

6.1 Introduction

This chapter opens out the scope of analysis from interactions with bureaucracy to how living conditions—past, present and projected— shape informants' decision-making processes. Risk theory emphasises the importance of understanding the context of decisions. In the previous chapter, through the narratives of migrants such as Javid, I showed how decisions relating to the choice of legal status, for instance, were intimately bound up with decisions about family and personal aspirations. This chapter situates the decision making process within the socio-economic conditions of my informants' daily lives. Furthermore, for some informants how they manage their lives in Turkey is how they manage risk with regard to the migration process, because what is at stake in the migration decision may be related to an aspect of the daily life, such as securing employment or accessing education.

Although the majority of the material in the chapter covers life in Turkey, some material about informants' past experiences, especially as refugees in Pakistan and Iran, is also included. This is because many informants referred to their past as points of comparison and explanations for their levels of satisfaction with their lives in Turkey, and as a basis for their decisions regarding their future. Furthermore, the diversity of the ways in which they managed their lives in Turkey was mirrored in their past.

The chapter is divided into sections on social life, housing, employment and education. The primary reason for this grouping is to reflect the way in which conversations with informants took shape. Informants often made connections between different topics covered in the chapter such as education and employment, housing and employment. Under the legal framework for human rights, this grouping corresponds also to basic socio-economic rights such as education, shelter and adequate living standard. Right to health is normally included under this grouping, but

because issues of health and wellbeing cut across so many other issues I discuss them in a separate chapter (Chapter 7). Given the very weak support from the state and civil society in Turkey and similar situations elsewhere, social relations are instrumental in determining the quality of life for informants. Although constrained financially, legally and socially, informants carved different lives for themselves in Turkey. How social connections were formed and used sometimes accounted for this diversity.

This chapter situates the decision-making processes of my informants in the context of their daily lives— where they live, what they eat, how they spend time and with whom, and how they earn a living. This context however is not a merely a backdrop to their migration decisions. Education, employment and housing are all part of the calculation of decisions relating to migration, if not at the heart of it. As I will show in reference to past decisions, even if my informants were fleeing their *dushman* or insecurity, and therefore were experiencing an immediate threat to their survival, their past needs or desires relating to employment, education or shelter shaped the migration process. Ali, for instance, whose circular journey was discussed earlier on, fled Afghanistan due to a threat to his life. What he did afterwards, however, was shaped by his employment, which secured him funds for travel, his social networks that gave him encouragement, support and different opportunities and his desire for a better quality of life. Ali is one of the informants whose story will be discussed in greater detail below.

6.2 Social Life

The section of the chapter looks at the social lives of my informants including relations with other Afghans, migrants and Turkish citizens in the cities of residence. The section highlights the common patterns and issues that arise in this regard and the different attitudes of informants in their social lives. The subsequent sections will illustrate the significance of social relations in access to employment, housing, education and healthcare. This section is also important because it relates to the category of 'sociality' as a mode of engagement relating to managing risks. I will provide examples of how different informants managed risks through the ways they formed and maintained social relations. The spheres of social relations that this

section focuses on are relations with other Afghans, with other migrants and with Turkish citizens in the cities where informants resided.

6.2.1 Relations with Afghans

In all the cities where informants lived there were communities of Afghan migrants, but these communities differed from each other with respect to size and the statuses of migrants. As discussed in Chapter 2, this diversity is one of the reasons that guided my choice of cities for fieldwork. Istanbul has the largest and the most diverse group of Afghan migrants, which include migrants of different ethnicities, immigration statuses and histories of residence in Turkey. Kayseri, Sivas and Van are all satellite cities, where Afghan asylum-seekers and refugees are directed by the MOI to take up residence. At the time of my fieldwork Van was host to the largest number of Afghan asylum-seekers, with an estimated population of 2000. Kayseri and Sivas hosted significantly fewer Afghan asylum-seekers. Some Afghan students attended the university at Kayseri.

Neighbourly Relations

In all the cities, it was common for people to visit one another's houses frequently both during the day and at night, particularly in the satellite cities. I did not witness many night-time visits, but I would regularly see informants visiting one another when I walked around the neighbourhoods where they lived. My informants would also talk about visiting or hosting others. The importance of these visits in my informants' daily lives was driven home to me by an informant who was resettled to a Western country as a refugee. He expressed his utter surprise to me when he was told during his reintegration program that it is not good to drop into other people's houses without a prior appointment. He was told that this was because everybody there is busy, therefore people see each other less and do not spend time with each other. He was confused by this as everybody in Turkey he knew was also busy, working very long hours in physically challenging and exploitative jobs, yet they all found time to visit each other in the evenings.

Most informants knew who the other Afghans living in their neighbourhoods were, and could point out houses randomly, sometimes even providing details about the previous Afghan owners of the house. Others' houses were used as markers of location. When I would arrange to meet someone somewhere, particularly in Van, I would be told to go to the street where a particular person lives, for instance, and then to take a turn in another direction. The informants I am in touch with now but who have since moved, or been displaced because of the earthquake, refer to other Afghans in relation to their former neighbours. If I cannot remember who they're talking about, they tell me who this person lived next to, to whom the house used to belong to or its proximity to another person's house.

Despite the busy social scene, not everyone was equally sociable or aware of their neighbours. Some informants chose to isolate themselves from other Afghans in their cities. This was particularly the case when there was a fear that their *dushman* would pursue them from Iran or Afghanistan to Turkey. This fear also led to decisions of choice of satellite city. Nasime, for instance, said: 'I don't feel safe because of the *dushman* in Afghanistan, I always worry but I haven't heard anything about their coming to Turkey.' She did not want to join any of the activities organised by other Afghans in Kayseri, including lessons or games. I was introduced to Parwin and his wife through a common acquaintance. It was very difficult for us to arrange our first meeting, however. Although they were expecting me to call them, they were not answering their phones. Later on, they told me that they had been afraid when they saw my number because they had not recognised it and had assumed that their *dushman* from Iran was calling them to threaten them, fearing that they had been found. They were living in Istanbul and refused to go to their satellite city because, they said, that other Afghans would be able to identify them to their *dushman* should their *dushman* come looking for them. They had fled Iran because of their inter-faith marriage, as Parwin was Sunni and his wife was Shia and they were afraid that they would be targeted for that reason in the community too. Even among those who were friendly with each other, there were some informants who paid attention to the management of their image. Gulbahar, for instance, was very careful both with her Turkish neighbours—as discussed later— and other Afghans about disclosing different aspects of her life. She nevertheless relied on the support she had from other

Afghans to help protect her from her abusive husband should he ever come back again.

Some informants also kept in touch with their friends as they moved to different countries, although this was not always possible. Keeping in touch with others who have left framed the decision-making processes of my informants. As discussed in Chapter 5, for those who remained, hearing about the lives of the friends or neighbours who left Turkey led informants to imagine what their lives could have been had they left as well. Sometimes friends who left provided important sources of information about the situation abroad, although the portrayal of their status was not always reliable. Two of my informants who went to Europe gave me misleading information about their asylum statuses, for instance. Informants who left often kept in touch with their friends in Turkey. One informant tried to obtained sponsorship through a friend of his who left Turkey and got asylum in Scandinavia.

Religious Gatherings

Religious practices and rituals played an important role in organising social relations. A majority of my informants were Shia. Turkey is a majority Sunni country with a history of intolerance towards believers of other branches of Islam. Shia informants therefore felt that they had to be discreet in their religious practices. In Zeytinburnu, Afghans preferred to attend the Azeri mosque to be able to pray as Shia. In the satellite cities, however, those who were Shia would pray at Sunni mosques as if they were Sunni, by using Sunni physical gestures during prayer. In Van there was an Ehl-i Beyt Association that hosted prayer meetings and Qur'an readings on Thursday and Sunday evenings. They also helped newcomers for a couple of days. Most of my male informants went to those meetings. They were not very forthcoming about what happened at the meetings but I understand that it was very important to some of my informants to attend them regularly.

Informants would also meet at each others' houses on certain religious occasions. Part of my fieldwork coincided with Ramadan. The municipality, the governorate or religious NGOs would sometimes distribute food or offer *iftar* dinners for breaking the Ramadan fast. During Ramadan informants also visited each other's houses to

break the fast together and to hold prayer sessions on important dates. Daoud, for instance, invited Afghans in his neighbourhood over to his place for the gatherings on the significant nights of the month of Ramadan. The important nights in Ramadan are different for the Sunni and the Shia, therefore they could not go to their local mosque to mark these nights. This was also a way in which Daoud exhibited leader-like qualities in the community. Men and women gathered separately in his house to pray throughout the night. On one such night he told me that he even invited one of his Turkish neighbours who was curious about the gatherings, although he was a pious Sunni Muslim. It turned out, however, that the neighbour was also an admirer of Ahmedinejad— the then-President of Iran. Many Afghans, however, do not like Ahmadinajad because of their poor treatment in Iran. Daoud told me that, out of politeness, they felt unable to challenge him.

Women gathered in each others' houses for prayer meetings. I was invited to a couple of meetings in Van, but was unable to attend. After Halima's mother passed away the first day that they arrived in Van, an Afghan family took Halima into their house. The Afghan community helped Halima perform the appropriate religious rituals for death with the help of another one of my informants whose family was Sayed —descendent of the family of Prophet Muhammad. This informant's family home was therefore a location for the gathering for women to read the Qur'an and to meet on religious occasions.

Outdoor Activities

Afghans gathered outdoors to play football or other games in all four cities. Young men often supported different teams abroad and talked about them among themselves frequently. In their Facebook profiles, many post about football and have pictures of footballers as their profile pictures. Therefore it is not surprising to see that they were also dedicated to playing football when the opportunity arose. In Van the men only played football on Sundays when they rented the municipality's pitch for a few hours. They would also play against locals. In Zeytinburnu there were two astro-turf football pitches adjacent to one another by the sea. Whenever I went there, whatever the weather, there were Afghans playing football there. I was told that Afghans form football teams according to ethnicity and nationality and depending on numbers. So

sometimes people would group under an Afghan team, if they were playing the team of another country, whereas on other occasions they would split according to ethnicity, one team usually being composed of Ozbeks. Some of the Afghans who played would only be in Turkey for a very short time —maybe a matter of few weeks— while others had been in Turkey for much longer. Playing football allowed for people to intermingle, exchange information on migration related topics and to find jobs.

Afghans gathered at urban parks or outdoor spaces in their respective cities. I met several of my informants at a park in Van. When I was talking to my informants, they would often say hello to others they knew. When I was there I would often run into other Afghans, some of whom would introduce themselves to me having heard that I was doing research. In Kayseri, all the Afghans gathered at the park regularly at night to play dodgeball. In Istanbul, some Afghans spent time around the parks surrounding the football pitches in Zeytinburnu.

Inter-ethnic Relations

Ethnic divisions are often considered a defining characteristic of social and political life in Afghanistan and among the diaspora. The largest ethnic groups in Afghanistan are Pasthun followed by Tajik which make up around 40% and 30% of the population, respectively (Barfield 2010: 24, 26).[60] Hazara constitute 15% of the population while Turkmen and Ozbek Afghans form 10% of the population together (*Ibid: 26-27).* The distribution of socio-political influence in Afghanistan reflects the size of the ethnic populations. The Pashtun, for instance, are considered to be most powerful ethnic group in Afghanistan. It is difficult to obtain a reliable picture of the ratio of different ethnicities in Turkey. There are however two characteristics of ethnic relations in Turkey: the majority of asylum-seekers appear to be of Hazara ethnicity, and Turkmen and Ozbek Afghans are in a relatively more powerful position in Istanbul.

The ratio of different ethnic groups in Afghanistan is not mirrored among asylum-seekers in Turkey. A majority of the people I met in the satellite cities were of Hazara

[60] These estimates vary, particularly as a result of refugee and migrant flows to the country. I have chosen to use these statistics provided by Barfield (2010: 24-31) as rough indicators because they are representative of the timeframe for which I was carrying out my fieldwork.

ethnicity. While there are no statistics accessible for asylum applications according to ethnicity, a UNCHR staffer estimated that roughly three quarters of Afghan asylum-seekers were of Hazara ethnicity. The Pashtun asylum-seekers I spoke with also confirmed to me that they met few Pashtun asylum-seekers. This may be because the majority of Iranian refugees in Iran are of Hazara ethnicity, due to both the proximity of the Hazara inhabited areas of Afghanistan to the Iranian border and to the fact that Iran is a Shi'a majority country. None of the irregular migrants I spoke with were Hazara. Although there is no way of knowing the ethnic distribution of irregular migrants, this begs the question of whether ethnicity played a role in the choice for applying for asylum over other options.

In the satellite cities, therefore, the majority of Afghans I met were Hazara. Most informants in the satellite cities said that their relations with Afghans were amicable. The tensions they had with each other seemed to be more personal rather than due to ethnic differences. The Hazara are not only a persecuted minority in Afghanistan but also have many problems in Iran, where they're subject to racism, and in Pakistan, where they're targeted for being Shia. Some informants, as a result, felt that life was harder for them because of being Hazara. One of the first things that Jamila said to me, for instance, was that one of her biggest problems in life was being Hazara because 'being Hazara is like a second place'. However, none of the informants told me much about being Hazara among other Afghans in Turkey. It did appear that the Hazaras played an important role in two Afghan associations that I encountered during fieldwork. There was an active student association for university students, which seemed to be run by Hazara students. These students also helped asylum-seekers. The Afghan Refugee Association is founded by Hazara asylum-seekers and was dominated by representatives of this ethnicity when I was doing my fieldwork. I heard that among Afghan asylum-seekers there was some resentment of the prominence of Hazara activists in the refugee association.

It is generally thought that the more powerful ethnic groups in Istanbul are Afghans of Turkmen and Ozbek ethnicity. Recently arrived Afghans with Turkic ancestry may be able to form relations with the established Afghans with Turkic community. They can communicate with Turkish citizens more easily. Furthermore, Turkic ancestry may

confer the possibility of regularising immigration status. Arash, who is Pashtun, said that when he went to Zeytinburnu as a student, he did not 'have many contacts there. As they are Ozbek and Turkmens they think of themselves as being different.' Fahim, a Tajik, said that Ozbeks in Zeytinburnu would communicate in Dari with Afghans if there was a problem but would pretend not to speak Dari under different circumstances. One Ozbek man went to Fahim's work place and pretended not to be able to understand what Fahim was saying to him. When I asked him why this may be, Fahim said that 'the Turkmen and the Ozbeks were marginalised in Afghanistan, so they think they have priority here.' Another informant maintained that Ozbek and Turkmen Afghans felt special because they were revered in Turkey for their Turkic ancestry.

The chief source of grievance towards the Ozbek and Turkmen Afghans in Zeytinburnu was, however, related to the preferential treatment by staff at the ethnic associations in favour of clients with the same ethnicity. It was understood and accepted that this would be the case, but informants also resented not receiving the services they paid for. This inequality sometimes came to light within friendship groups. I met three Afghan men in Istanbul who had been travelling and working together for years. They had been in Iran, then in Dubai and were living together in Istanbul. Two of them had Turkic ethnicity and therefore were able to use the services of the association, while one of them could not. He would say that it is easier for his friends who are Turkish.

6.2.2 Relations with Migrants of Different Nationalities

Relations with refugees and migrants of different nationalities differed widely across the four cities. The other migrants with whom my informants came into contact most frequently were Iranians. In Van there was a small but sizeable population of Iranian asylum-seekers and in Kayseri Iranians were the largest nationality of asylum-seekers. In Sivas, in contrast, Afghans were the only group of asylum-seekers. One of the reasons for my choice of these three satellite cities was to see whether relations with Iranian asylum-seekers had any impact on the experiences of Afghans, either positively in the form of additional networks and support, or negatively as a source of competition. In one of my earlier visits to Van in 2008 when there were considerably

fewer Afghan asylum-seekers compared to Iranians, I had been told that some Iranian asylum-seekers were informing Afghans about the asylum system and about the most important NGOs, for example. I found that while many of my informants were openly critical of the resettlement policy whereby Iranian refugees were resettled automatically and swiftly as well as their discriminatory treatment in Iran, they did not voice any hostility directly towards the Iranian population in Turkey.[61] This may be because the two populations did not come into contact with one and other frequently. None of my informants had Iranian neighbours, for instance, or mentioned working with other Iranians. The apparent lack of contact is indicative of weak social bonds between the two groups of asylum-seekers.

In Kayseri, where the largest number of Iranian asylum-seekers resided, the main source of tension was with an Iranian staff member of an NGO who did not treat Afghan asylum-seekers fairly and seemed to favour the Iranian clients of the organisation. Some informants were frustrated with the assumptions by the local population that Afghans had access to similar resources and an eventual right to leave Turkey for another Western country. As discussed in the previous chapter, my informants thought it was unfair that Iranian refugees would be resettled so quickly while for many of them Turkey was their 'third country'. Finally, it seemed that Iranian asylum-seekers received more support from UNHCR despite also being better off than the Afghans. An informant joked with me that Afghans 'are jealous of Iranians, because they have clothes and we don't.' Informants who had lived in Van and had undergone part of their RSD procedures at the UNHCR Van office were hostile towards the interpreters and staff members of Iranian background because of the hostility they had encountered from them. These frustrations, however, never seemed to be targeted at individual Iranian asylum-seekers in those cities.

My interactions with a few Iranian refugees in Van, however, gave me a different perspective on situations where there was close contact between the two nationalities. In Van I met some Iranian refugees who were seeking asylum on account of their political activism in relation to gender rights and freedom speech, typically as

[61] Iranians, in turn, faced discrimination and hostility in Van partly because there has been a steady presence of Iranian asylum seekers since at the least the 1990s in Van but also because the Iranian tourists who visit Van are seen to be fairly wealthy which leads locals to assume that the asylum seekers in Van must be wealthy and therefore have no reason to apply for asylum.

students. They were also working to help Afghan asylum-seekers. I became friendly with some and spent time with them socially. One of the sources of tension I gleaned from these interactions was that these Iranian activists thought that Afghan refugees were not as badly treated in Iran as the Afghans themselves thought. The only Iranian student in a class of 30 Afghan students told me in class that Afghan refugees are treated well in Iran because they are Shia, for instance. Another issue was that as a majority of Afghan asylum-seekers were not seeking asylum for political activism, their asylum claims were seen as less important. Thirdly, I gained the impression that Iranians considered Afghans to be dangerous. When I told them that I was going to spend my afternoon with Afghan families, for instance, they would tell me stories of how Afghan families kidnap and behead women in Iran, and urge me to be careful. Finally, I also encountered negative stereotyping of Afghans such as their supposed naiveté or the lack of importance they place on education. I assume that these attitudes towards Afghans were representative of common attitudes towards Afghans in Iran as well as a product of class differences.

It is unclear how representative these attitudes were, or Afghans themselves were aware of them or thought they mattered. There were occasions, however, that these tensions surfaced. One of my informants had close ties with a couple of the Iranian refugees that I was friendly with in Van. One of them called me on my mobile phone to see if we could meet up while I was with my informant. Without wanting to go into too much detail I told my friend on the phone that I was busy but would call him later. My informant was immediately relieved and thanked me for not telling my friend that I was with him. He would not explain why he did not want me to tell our friend in common that we were together, except to say that it was better this way. From then on I was careful to keep my interactions separate.

In conclusion, I was left with the impression that there was some tension in the air between the two nationalities but that relationships with Iranian asylum-seekers and refugees, did not carry significance in terms of migration decisions. Although there were some Iranians who worked with Afghan asylum-seekers, their relationships did not translate into networks or sources for the exchange of information as I had suspected they might. The preferential treatment of Iranians in the asylum-system or

the problems Afghans had with Iranian staff and interpreters working at NGOs and UNHCR did not translate to open hostility either.

6.2.3 Relations with Other Neighbours and Locals

There are advantages of having good relations with local neighbours, particularly in cities such as Sivas where there are few asylum-seekers and foreigners. Blocks of flats and sometimes, entire streets in most areas I visited were inhabited by Afghans. Some neighbourhoods were more mixed. Sometimes informants commented that their neighbours who that took pity on them gave them some household items. In Van some informants and NGO staff said that there were incidences where Kurdish neighbours had been especially sensitive because they could empathise with their predicament as refugees. When I asked about relations with their neighbours, hardly anyone had anything negative to say. This did not only extend to other families living nearby, but also to shop owners, for example. It was mostly with some landlords and employers that my informants reported having problems. I address these issues in subsequent sections of this chapter.

The more problematic relationships were with Turkish citizens, or locals, who were strangers. As Fawzia said: 'The neighbours are normal. But on the street people are quite rude, they won't speak to you. They are also so curious, they always ask questions, why did you come here?' One of my informants claimed that they suffer prejudice because UNCHR does not do a good job in explaining the predicament of refugees in Turkey:

> UNHCR can't introduce refugee to society, if we go shopping, hospital, everybody tells us you are refugee, you are under UNHCR flag, they pay you a salary, you shouldn't ask for money. They were not able to introduce us to society. I want to buy glasses for my children, they see that we can't pay. It is hard for a person to always be asked, all the time, it is very hard.

I was told of very few incidences involving violence. Two informants found themselves in the midst of a pre-election political protest with their two young sons. A protestor slapped one of the children thinking that my informants were supporting the

opposing political party. The men felt that they could not do much to protect their children. Another informant was beaten up in Van while walking on the pavement. An officer of the gendarme who was passing by came to help and cautioned against reporting the incident lest it causes more trouble for the asylum-seekers. Some informants were verbally harassment in the street for various reasons. Locals in Van sometimes harassed Afghans thinking they were Iranians. An informant of Hazara ethnicity said that passers-by frequently called out comments on their physical features to her and her children mistaking them for Japanese tourists. She also said that sometimes people who knew that they were Afghan would accuse Afghans of being members of the PKK— the Kurdish Workers' Party, an internationally designated terrorist organisation— during Nowrouz (the Shi'a new year), because it is mainly the Kurdish population who celebrate Nowrouz in Turkey. In Van the local population in the especially poor and disadvantaged Kale area, were not welcoming to Afghan asylum-seekers. My informants were afraid of the locals, but especially children. Local children would throw stones and allegedly threaten passers-by— including adults— with knives.

The level of hostility that my informants suffered in Turkey was much less then what a majority claimed to have experienced in Iran where they were commonly insulted and harassed on the streets and buses. The situation in Iran is particularly difficult for Hazara informants more easily identifiable as Afghans because of their physical appearance. Hadi and his family, which consisted of his wife, two sons, daughter-in-law, grand-son and nephew, had been living in Turkey for around one year when I met them. They had a Turkish landlord and mainly Turkish neighbours in his block of apartments. They liked their neighbours, the shop-keepers and the community at the mosque. Their neighbours and acquaintances at the mosque had given them almost all the furniture they owned, including upholstery and the TV. They proudly pointed out all the furniture to me telling me who gave it to them. Nevertheless, they were stretched financially, particularly because of the cost of healthcare for caring for several members of the family. Despite his financial struggles, lack of documentation and difficulty accessing healthcare, Hadi compared his life in Turkey favourably to that in Iran with comments that echoed what many of my informants said, that there was a sense of ease in Turkey that they did not have in Iran:

> The biggest advantage is that at least we have freedom, we can go anywhere, nobody insults us, they treat us very well, you don't feel like you are in a foreign country. I couldn't send my children to school in Iran, here we go to free Turkish courses.

It was rather rare for my informants to mention having any friends among the local population. Those who had employment working with local population had some Turkish friends. Gulbahar, for instance, had Turkish friends from her previous jobs. They would sometimes come and visit her at her house. She also had a male Turkish friend who supported her in various ways, helping her with rent and her children's schooling. Although she lived with her brother who was in regular employment, and she herself was able to find employment fairly regularly, she would probably not have been able to support her children and live at such a spacious location without some outside help. She was quite secretive about her friendships, especially with this particular Turkish man because she feared gossip. Her Turkish friends knew her by a different name. Gulbahar's landlady, who lived at the adjoining house, was very curious about her comings and goings. She would drop in unannounced and ask intrusive questions that would frustrate Gulbahar.

6.3 Housing

In all cities, informants mostly had accommodation of poor quality, but within a range that varied across and within the different cities. The quality of accommodation depended not only on price but on informants' ability to negotiate, and to use social connections to find houses. Some informants shared a house to reduce costs. In Sivas and Kayseri some informants acted as 'pioneers' in leading others to settle in similar neighbourhoods. While some informants avoided living in areas with other Afghan migrants for fear of safety, other chose to live in the same areas other Afghan migrants.

Informants who lived in other satellite cities after living in Van told me the accommodation in Van was the worst. Given the demand on accommodation the landlords overcharged. The worst accommodation I saw was in Van. Some of the asylum-seekers were living in Kale, the poorest area of Van near the Van Castle. As I

have mentioned above, there were instances of crime, which scared my informants, and especially the children. The housing in this area mostly consisted of 'barns', where my poorest informants lived. These 'barns' were concrete boxes with a few partitions inside and without foundations. Even in the heat of summer the floors were very cold. Some houses had no doors, so people used carpets to cover the entrance. The windows were few and of thin glass. This meant that in the cold winter climate in Van, with temperatures as low as −30 Celsius degrees, it was very difficult to heat these houses. Furthermore, my poorest informants could not always get coal for their coal stoves in the winter. Even in better houses, the main doors did not always fit, letting in cold from the outside. Accommodation near the neighbourhood referred to as Iskele (the pier) and the centre of town was better. They were usually one or two story houses in these areas. Some informants lived in blocks of flats of two or three storeys that looked like they had not been fully completed. It is common to see buildings in Turkey that appear incomplete to evade planning regulations. The houses near the Kale area tended to look much less complete. After the earthquake in 2012 the few refugees who had remained in Van were the first to be removed from the tents to be put in houses.

In Istanbul the interviewees I visited stayed in apartment blocks, often in basements. Most flats had two or three rooms, one of which was used as a living room during the day but converted to bedrooms at night. I took it as a marker of wealth whether it was a basement flat or not. The landlords were often Afghans or Iranians who had regular status or local Turks. For the better flats landlords would ask for a guarantor with Turkish citizenship to guarantee the payment of rent. These are the kinds of apartments where Afghans students studying in Turkey may also live.

In Kayseri, Afghans lived in flats very close to the city centre and the condition of the flats seemed to be much better than what I saw in Van. Most of my informants lived within the range of a few streets and were neighbours. When I was walking with one of my informants she was able to point out to the houses of most Afghans living in the city within a ten-minute walk. The housing market was supposedly tough for Afghans, however, as the Iranian population was said to have increased the prices of housing. Some Iranian asylum-seekers had support from Christian and Bahai communities

abroad who helped them with their rent. This led to a perception among Turkish landlords in Kayseri that asylum-seekers must be able to afford houses at a higher price.

In Sivas my informants lived in an area of about 15-20 minutes bus ride from the city centre, some in houses and some in two or three storey apartments. Most of the Afghans lived in this area. It seems as most of the community settled around the first couple of families to arrive at Sivas. Even so the accommodation varied. Daoud and his family lived in large basement flat and had access to a garden. All their neighbours were Turkish. Down the road from him, there were smaller houses or bungalows that were an improvement on the barns, but nevertheless looked fairly basic. Some of the houses' external walls consisted of brick or peeling paint while others seemed better maintained. Most had access to gardens.

Single men found it difficult to get houses in cities outside of Istanbul because landlords and neighbours thought single men would behave immorally. Therefore, when single men found houses they had to pay even higher rents. An informant told me that when he was enquiring for houses he would always be told 'no housing for bachelors!' Another said 'it is very difficult [to find a house] because we are single. You have to go after houses. There are houses but they don't give them to us. It takes one or two months. They want the money upfront.' Four of my informants lived together in a storefront with a broken window and paid as much as they would have done for a regular house in the area.

Homelessness was a big problem particularly in Van and Istanbul. In Van, a covered passage which was re-named 'Afgan Pasajı' (the Afghan passage) because many Afghan men slept there at night. I was warned not to go there by myself and I could not convince anybody to take me there at night. Afghans also slept in the parks in Van. Some informants were dropped off at these parks by their smugglers when they arrived. As the Afghan population was smaller in Kayseri and Sivas, it seemed that Afghans helped newcomers. In Istanbul there was also homelessness. My informants who made it to Zeytinburnu usually found somewhere to live soon after arriving, usually by living temporarily with other Afghan families. Daoud, however, was not

dropped off at Zeytinburnu in Istanbul and he did not know about the Afghan community there. He hid at a storage space for 250 YTL a month with his pregnant wife for four months so as not to be homeless.

6.3.1 Housing Negotiations

The type of housing to which informants had access not only depended on what they could afford but also on what they could negotiate with landlords and find through their networks. Landlords had much discretionary authority. My informants who were irregularly resident rented illegally because they did not have the necessary documentation. In Istanbul I heard stories of landlords taking rent from the their tenants, who were all in Turkey illegally, and then reporting them to police to get them deported. Given the uncertainty of income and period of residency for asylum-seekers and irregular migrants, few landlords wanted to rent to them, so those landlords who were willing, were able to charge above market prices for accommodation in poor condition. It was nevertheless possible to negotiate with landlords to bring the price down or to be tolerant of delayed payments of rent. Some of my informants who were irregular found Turkish citizens of Afghan origin or Afghans with residence permits to guarantee their accommodation. Some would rent under the name of and Afghan migrant who had a residence permit.

Most commonly, informants found houses through their acquaintances or through other Afghan families when they arrived. People also moved houses when previous tenants left. Jamila, who had one of the nicer flats that I visited, found her flat through friends and then negotiated the price down. The flat had three rooms (two of them large), a bathroom and a nice kitchen. She had been there for ten months:

> We first came and stayed at a house for 25 days with Turkish friends. An Iranian friend left, we took his house. They sold the contents of the house for 700$, there was nothing. The rent was expensive, we went there because the rent was better. There were many neighbours, it was small and all the neighbours were foreigners. It wasn't a good place. We give 200TL, it was 300TL but the landlord reduced it. I was always looking for a house but there wasn't one for a good price.

Another strategy to get better housing or to live more cheaply was to live with families. Tabasum, for instance, lived with a family and a young single man. Amir had lived with single men before, but decided to move in with a family. This way he was able to also enjoy a family life as well as getting better accommodation. Sometimes families who travelled together moved in with each other, while at other times they would move in with new families. As I discussed in the previous chapter with regard to Morad's mother's anguish at their neighbours leaving, bonds formed between families that could become very strong. Informants who were students also shared houses, sometimes with other Afghan students and other times with families.

Although it would have probably been financially impossible for the majority of my informants, living alone was also not socially acceptable or desirable. When the wife of an informant was visiting some family members for a week, he decided to go and stay with his friends who have a much smaller space. He was both surprised and concerned that I was staying by myself at a hotel. Gulbahar also said that one of the reasons why she did not want to go to Europe is because children in the family leave the house when they grow older and live by themselves. She thought this to be morally unacceptable. My informants were always amused and confused by the fact that I was either staying by myself or with friends who were single.

6.4 Employment

With the exception of the informant who was a Turkish citizen, none of the informants (including students) had a permit to work.[62] All irregular migrants, students and some of the asylum-seekers had jobs. Many of the asylum-seekers and irregular migrants take on exploitative jobs for little pay, but there was much variation in the types of jobs that informants found. Some informants, for instance, were able to get jobs that were commensurate or beyond their level of skills, while others took jobs for which they were over-qualified. As one informant put it: 'everywhere it is a negotiation: those can't get on with, they pay you late, pay little and work you for less'. Since employment was the primary means through which informants secured

[62] The new law permits students may apply for a work permit after their first year in education, which allows the student to work up to 24 hours per week (Article 41 (a)).

their living, in the absence of social welfare, the employment situation was an important determinant of their quality of life in Turkey. Furthermore, employment opportunities were important determinants of the bureaucratic path that informants in Turkey. Potential asylum-seekers were deterred, for instance, from applying for asylum because the job prospects in the satellite cities were perceived to be poor, and asylum-seekers thought job prospects combined with the cost of living were worst in Istanbul.

The types of jobs available to informants differed across the cities but were generally based around construction, catering, auto-repairs, textiles and translation. Women had less diversity in their employment options, working mainly in the service industry, domestic work and textiles. In Van my informants tended to work at the part of town called 'Sanayi', which is the so-called 'organised industrial estate' — an area designated by the government for the establishment of light industry.[63] In Sivas some men worked at the stone quarries as well as construction and various factories. In Kayseri, men tended to work in construction or manufacturing. In Istanbul men tended worked in construction or in the production of shoes and leather clothing *kargah*— small workshops, in the basements of houses in the Zeytinburnu district. While my informants lived at home, it is known that younger children also lived and worked in these *kargah*.[64] Students tended to work in translation with NGOs and IOs in the migration field, and in companies that required their language skills. Informants who worked as interpreters, however, tended to do more than suggested by their job titles indicated taking on pivotal roles in establishing relations with Afghan communities and becoming points of contact for the clients of the organisations they worked for.

As employees, informants were often treated worse than Turkish citizens. Most informants complained of being paid poorly in relation to their skills and what

[63] The website for the Organised Industrial Estate in Van: http://www.vanosb.org.tr/index.php

[64] Alixandra Fazzina visited some of these worskhops for her project titled 'The Floweres of Afghanisatan'. When I met her in Istanbul she described to me how children slept on beds above the machinery they were working on in rooms that had very little or no light coming through the windows. This blog entry about her project includes a photograph of one such workshop alongside the story of her interviewees, available at:
http://theflowersofafghanistan.com/2012/01/23/danesh-no-one-nowhere/ [accessed on 3 March 2015]
I also heard from various sources that children were enslaved in these workshops on occasion to pay their debts to smugglers.

Turkish citizens earned. Furthermore it was common to receive less pay than had been promised or not to be paid at all after having completed the work. Zehra's son and husband, for instance, had worked a refrigerator factory in Istanbul for a month, but had not been able to get paid. They, therefore, had to resort to collecting paper from the streets and selling it to be recycled. Asila was not paid for one her jobs for which she worked for one month as a seamstress. When she called the company to ask for her payment the telephone number of the company was no longer in use. Informants also reported working long hours. One informant said that he worked between 12-15 hours at restaurants in Van, and 12 hours in construction. I rarely met anyone who worked for less than 12 hours. They would often only have Sundays off work. This would mean that if an informant was in employment for a week they would work for 72 hours. To put this in context, the working week for Turkish citizens is 45 hours and there is a cap of 270 hours a year on extra work.[65] Furthermore, the wages informants received for working at these jobs would often range from between 200 and 300 TL. This is less than half the net minimum wage in Turkey, which was 658 TL a month in 2011.[66]

The fact that Afghans were paid less than the local population also created tensions and resentment among their fellow employees. Kamyar's response to my question about working encapsulates many of the problems that asylum seekers and irregular migrants face in the work place:

> Where we work doesn't give us permission. We tell them from the start that we need to go to signing. Van knows that refugees have to sign. So we work for half the pay. We are forced to work for half. The refugee is obliged, he has to do everything. Different people come, one of them says traitor to your country, he doesn't know the situation of the Afghans. He says you have taken our work, you work for half the pay. There are many problems with the workers.

As explained in the previous chapter, employers also dock the payments of asylum seekers for signing in with the police. This is particularly a problem in Van where there were several hundreds of men who had to queue to sign two mornings a week.

[65] The Law on Employment (Law no: 4857), Article 41.
[66] See, for instance this webpage for the minimum wages in 2011: http://muhasebetr.com/2011-asgari-ucret/ [accessed on 10 March2015].

This was the case even if they did not queue for long and returned to their jobs early in the morning. Furthermore the jobs informants undertook could be physically dangerous. One informant injured his eye while he was painting walls. He was in pain for four months and had to take medication for it, which he had to pay for. He was collecting old furniture from the streets —an *eskici* — and he was always worried that something would fall on his head. He said he had 'lots of injuries to arms and to hands, but there is no other choice.' Other informants told me of workplace accidents, such as a death in a cement factory.

6.4.1 Comparison with Past Employment Experience

When informants spoke about employment opportunities, and the associated quality of life, they did so with reference to their past experience, and especially in relation to their jobs in Iran. Jobs were important because they determine informants' standard of living but also because of the potential they offered. It was important to my informants to have a job that was secure and could lead onto better opportunities or where they could rise in the ranks.

While in Iran all of my informants struggled with discrimination, changing legal status and the declining economic situation, there was variation in their employment situations. Fahim's family, after being displaced from Kabul, first went to Pakistan as refugees. They found the situation there to be too bad and then moved to Iran. In Iran his older brothers learnt making shoes and they eventually owned a shoe business with two *kargah* jointly with an Iranian partner. The business was not in their name, however, because Afghans are not allowed to own a business. Furthermore, they came to an agreement with an Iranian landlord to pay a large sum of money for house on the understanding that it would be their house, although they were not permitted to buy property. When they left Iran they sold the business and the house. The family's success allowed Fahim and his sister to go to school. With his language skills and other qualifications, Fahim was able to get a very good job in Istanbul. He was the highest paid informant. He worked behind the counter at a shop, so he did not have to do any physically strenuous activity. Both of his brothers were able to pay a smuggler to travel to Europe. In contrast, Hadi and his family who arrived in Iran around the same time as Fahim's family did, had a much harder time. He was never able to send

his children to school and suffered from health problems as a result of working in a chemical factory. They made a meagre living in Turkey, which they preferred to living in Iran. In contrast, Fahim saw greater opportunity for himself in Iran than he did in Turkey: 'We came here to improve our lives, but there is nothing to do to improve our lives. In Iran it was possible to improve our lives, but here not.' He said for him it did not matter so much, but it was harder for his parents and siblings. He added: 'You would have met people who said that Afghans were badly treated, that is true. It happens. But it is not everywhere.' Not only did informants achieve different life standards in Iran while facing similar constraints, it seemed that their positions were mirrored in Turkey as well. In addition to Fahim, Daoud and Ali also had good relationships with their bosses in Iran and got good jobs when they were in Turkey.

Parwin, Amir and Arash talked positively about the freedom of living in Pakistan because as refugees they were allowed to work. Parwin compared his life in Turkey to his life in Pakistan:

> Turkey is better but life in Pakistan is very cheap. Refugees are better treated in Pakistan, you have full rights at your job, but life is better in Pakistan. In Turkey you have no rights to work, no permit, no job, no money for life. They take the job rights when you become refugee. We were all working there. Here it is very hard. No right to study, work, small business, no sources to support refugees. (…) I did elementary school, high school, university, everything there. Pakistan, now it has problems. In Ankara we only get money once. There are no organisations in Pakistan [that help refugees] but no problems because everyone is working there. In Turkey there are organisations but they are not helpful.

Not having a work permit and being forced to work in jobs that were not commensurate with his qualifications were a major source of frustration for Parwin. Parwin, his wife and his father lived in Istanbul, although they were asylum seekers. Their satellite city was nearby. Parwin thought that life was too expensive there, and they would face many difficulties as the only non-Turkish citizens. He also had the chance to go to Van, but did not take it, similarly because he thought that he would not be able to get a job. Therefore he pursued his asylum application and resettlement procedures from Istanbul. This meant, however, that he put his exit visa that would

allow him to be leave Turkey in danger as he had to show that he had resided in Turkey regularly.

The irregular migrants I interviewed or met in Istanbul similarly complained about not having the right to work or not having *sigorta*— insurance in Turkish — referring to social insurance which is necessary for employment. In fact most informants in Turkey spoke of *sigorta*, rather than a right to employment. From the perspective of these informants Turkey was problematic because it required *sigorta* to work. These informants were never legally employed in any other country they had been to before but it was only in Turkey that it was a problem and where they had to worry about trying to get *sigorta* or *ikamet.*

6.4.2 Employment Decisions

Choosing a Bureaucratic Path

Irregular migrants and asylum seekers moved between different cities in order to ensure that they can find better jobs. Fahran, for instance, worked first at Istanbul, then in Çanakkale and then Izmir before seeking asylum. Zehra and Parwin, for instance, did not go to their satellite cities because they feared that they would not be able to get employment and therefore not have enough money to get by with.

The choice was more commonly between living in Istanbul or applying for asylum and moving to a satellite city. Perceived employment opportunities were therefore a key determinant in the choice of bureaucratic path. As alluded to earlier, job opportunities in satellite cities were universally seen as being poorer than in Istanbul. Therefore informants made frequent comparisons between Istanbul and satellite cities, and this, in some cases, determined their decision of whether to apply for asylum or not. Most informants made comparisons between Van and Istanbul. Van, for instance, has one of the highest rates in unemployment in Turkey[67]. Nevertheless in Istanbul, employment prospects or job security are not much better. In fact the unemployment rate in Istanbul is very close to Van. Furthermore unemployment rates in the four

[67] According to figures released by the Turkish Statistical Institute, Van had the third highest unemployment rate in Turkey with 17.2%. Available at: http://www.sabah.com.tr/ekonomi/2011/06/24/iste-il-il-sonuclar [accessed 5 March 2015]

cities were among unemployment rates that were among the highest in Turkey.[68] Most informants in Istanbul were unemployed, or had been unemployed for long periods of time and had the same complaints as those in the satellite cities. Ehsan, who was a qualified welder, claimed that he had a job offer in Istanbul where he could have easily make about 1200 TL a month, whereas in Van he worked for significantly less. Nevertheless, I observed that informants in Istanbul were not paid significantly higher amounts than they were in satellite cities. Fahim's brother and brothers-in-law, earned 450TL a month in Istanbul. Some informants in the satellite cities were paid around 200 TL a month. Furthermore, in Istanbul there seemed to be growing job insecurity. In December 2012 I met three men who were working irregularly in Istanbul for a couple of years. They were increasingly finding it difficult to keep jobs because of police raids and employers refusing to hire irregular migrants. Parwin stayed in Istanbul in part because he though that he would get a better job than in his satellite city. He told me that he found four jobs, one of which paid about 1200 TL, but he was not hired because 'no *ikamet*, no jobs'.

The difference in perceptions about employment opportunities in Istanbul compared to the satellite cities, points to an evaluation of whether wages in a particular city enable a better quality of life than in other cities. It is not possible to come to an *expert* definition of the costs and benefits, and therefore of the possibility of employment, in different cities. This is firstly because the economy in which asylum seekers and irregular migrants live is constructed by landlords and employers who have discretionary control over wages and rents, as well as by constantly changing healthcare policies. The housing single men lived in the satellite cities, for instance, was poorer quality and more expensive than that given to families for cultural reasons. In bigger cities like Van and Istanbul there was a broader range of rental options, which were in part negotiated through landlords with the aid social connections or personal persuasion skills. Another issue is that while some informants had access to better paid jobs, they could lose them quickly they would then have to rely on what they have saved or their friends' support when they were unemployed, whereas some informants who were paid less had better job security. Secondly, migrants themselves

[68] In 2010 the unemployment rate in Istanbul was 14.3%. It was the 9th highest rate of unemployment in Turkey. Available at:
http://www.sabah.com.tr/ekonomi/2011/06/24/iste-il-il-sonuclar [accessed 5 March 2015]

were able to shape the conditions of the cities they lived in to some extent, through the use of networks, their working skills or through luck (as discussed below)..

Women's Decisions to Work

One of the key decisions that I talked about with my informants was related to women's decision to work. Some of my female informants had jobs when I knew them or had worked before. Most of these women were single, although a couple of my married informants took occasional employment such as cleaning houses. As I discussed in the previous chapter, harassment is a serious problem for asylum seeking women at the work place and on the route between their work and home. My informants who worked, such as Asal and Gulbahar, risked facing prejudice from some members of their community but they also risked workplace harassment. Two of my female informants reported being subject to inappropriate advances by male staff, which led them to quit their jobs. It is the possibility of this kind of harassment that creates prejudice from some other Afghans in the area. Gulbahar, for instance, tried to keep her work life separate from her social life among Afghan friends and neighbours. She went by a Turkish name among her Turkish friends she met while working and said that she did not want to tell anyone that she had been working restaurants and shops. When she was working at a restaurant her boss approached her and she tried to shrug him off repeatedly. While some women did experience prejudice, or were afraid of experiencing it, it seemed that many women found their jobs through friends or relatives.

Some women said that they could not work because they had children, so they would try to get their children to work or would try to work around the families. One informant — a single mother four children — said: 'I don't work, if I were to work, who would take care of my family? I can't leave my children at home!' She received aid from UNHCR as a recognised refugee but the aid was not enough. She was three months behind in paying rent and was worried that she could not send her children to school. As her youngest was only four years old, she could not leave the house. So she tried to get her oldest son who was 17 years old to work. 'My eldest son refuses to work, he doesn't listen to me. He sometimes paints houses, but there isn't any work for him. He doesn't have money and he wants to play.' Tabasum was single and had

three small children. She could not go out for work. She therefore worked from home sewing blankets. She was paid 10 TL per day that she worked. Her being a single parent created greater difficulties for her than finding a job because she could keep her job and pursue her asylum claim at the same time. She had been accepted for financial aid but had not received it due to series of bureaucratic failings on the part of UNHCR and a Turkish bank. She therefore had to take some time out to go to UNHCR and make calls. On these days she was not able to meet her blanket-sewing quota and therefore had to forgo a day's work. Jamila, who had a baby and a toddler, worked as a caretaker for an old woman, which allowed her to be with her daughter. She had to leave the job when her youngest was born. Another informant who was a single mother of three teenage children sent her children to collect paper, which she would sell, and occasionally she got jobs cleaning inside apartments.

Types of jobs

Although a majority of my informants, apart from students, were in blue-collar jobs, some were able to find white-collar jobs, which typically offered higher salaries and better treatment. In Van one of my informants had a night shift at a bakery, one worked for an IT company briefly, one taught, one worked as a live-in caretaker at a hotel, one worked as a swimming instructor while another worked as an assistant at a tourism company. Similarly in Kayseri one informant worked for an architect's office. Although he worked at a level beneath his university qualification with lower wages, his job secured him a higher income than any other informant in Kayseri. In Sivas an informant worked for the municipality serving tea to staff. In Istanbul an informant worked at shop that sold Turkish pottery.

In addition some informants had the specific skills required for certain jobs, while others did not. This meant that some informants had to learn new skills. Informants who had worked making shoes or clothes in Iran, for instance, sometimes continued along the same employment line in Turkey, while others moved into construction. Within construction informants may acquire new skills such as working on electricity or welding without any prior specific knowledge. Secondly, some informants shifted from blue collar to white collar employment, or vice versa. Rasoul, for instance, despite having only minimal education, started working for an IT firm, although he had been working in construction previously. Amir, on the other hand, was a high

school graduate, had qualifications in IT, was fluent in English and had a highly paid job with various in NGOs in Afghanistan, yet was working at a bakery after having tried working in construction.

Some informants created jobs for themselves. As discussed in the Chapter 4 on journeys, Fateh started working for his smugglers. Some offered their services as interpreters and became staff members. This is especially clear in the case of Rasoul and Daoud. Three of my informants also taught English in their satellite cities. Aziz, for instance, learnt to speak Turkish when he arrived in Turkey. When he arrived in his second satellite city, he was one of the first Afghans to come there. He ended up becoming friendly with the police as they relied on his knowledge of the new arrivals and he liaised with them about their needs. This eventually led to a job as an interpreter with the foreigners' police department. He spoke some English and therefore started to teach children English. Rasoul had been interpreting for the police unofficially and for his friends or acquaintances who went to the police or local NGOs. Javid, for instance, taught English at a school but also ran classes for children from his home. Language abilities therefore enabled certain informants to be able to create jobs for themselves that positioned them as respected and authoritative figures among local asylum seekers.

6.5 Education

Education is highly valued among most Afghans, and is a good indicator for understanding a person's life prior to arriving at Turkey. Levels of educational attainment can provide clues as to their displacement, socio-economic status, and personal or familial aspirations. Some of my informants' statements led me to believe that education was culturally important to Afghans. Arash, whose story is described below, believes, for instance, that education is very important for Afghan families and that there are families who give everything they have so that their children can go to school. This may be partially also fuelled by the frustrations of parents who missed out on getting education due to conflict, poverty or gender-based prejudices, and who want to ensure that their children get access to education. Not everyone made use of the available, albeit limited, opportunities for education in the same way. Some parents, for instance, sent their children to work or considered it unsafe enough to

send their children to school. There was also diversity among adults in their desires to access education. Occasionally adults taught classes themselves. Discussions about education revealed its importance as a driving aspiration for migration, as a facilitator of migration through networks and skills, and as an intermediary migration status.

Children of asylum seekers were allowed to access education, although their choices at high school level and beyond were more restricted. Children of asylum seekers joined ordinary state schools. Sometimes, because they could not speak Turkish they would be placed with much younger students in class. This was frustrating for the parents and the children who may also get picked on by other students for their age or size. Both my informants and staff at NGOs told me that Afghan students were regarded as being successful at school. There were also educational opportunities for adults. In some satellite cities and Istanbul, my informants could register for municipality-run adult literacy and language classes. Some also took English lessons and obtained IT qualifications.

Most informants had very little education, perhaps between three to four years, or no education at all. The university students I interviewed had all had been educated up to university level in Iran or Afghanistan. Only two informants were university graduates, one of an Afghan university and the other from a Turkish university. Informants who remained in education beyond high school diploma level had either been educated in Afghanistan or had been refugees in Pakistan where refugees can access training courses in IT. In contrast, informants who had been in Iran usually had either limited or no education. This image contradicts the general impression that Afghans in Iran are better educated than in those in Pakistan. This may be because of the socio-economic status of the Afghans in Iran whom I interviewed but also because of their age — since 2004 Iran has significantly scaled down educational opportunities for Afghans. It is perhaps also an indication of the resourcefulness of the informants who had been educated in Pakistan and their ability to make use of their degrees. Two of my informants who had been educated in Pakistan returned to Afghanistan to well-paid jobs with international organisations.

I attended classes in all satellite cities. In Van I spent several days going to classes at the 'UN School'. This is a misnomer, because it actually had nothing to do with the UN. It was a school run by a foundation providing education to underprivileged students in Van. They ran two streams of classes, one geared towards children who lived in deep poverty in Van and the other towards asylum seekers and refugees. The majority of the students in these classes were Afghan while the majority of the teachers were Iranian. I attended the English, mathematics and IT classes in this school. The English classes had students from all ages. Some of the students were children and they came with their mothers. All the adults I met at these classes were women. The mathematics, IT and art classes were all attended by children. I also attended the English classes that Javid taught in Van and another informant taught in Kayseri with the support of an NGO.

6.5.1 Educational Decisions

The Stories of Arash and Hamid

The stories of Arash and Hamid stand out because of the significance of their educational aspirations in shaping their migration experiences. Their stories also shed light on the role of education in other informants' decision-making processes. Given the war and ensuing insecurity in Afghanistan as well as the discrimination in education that students suffer in Iran and Pakistan, informants' decisions with regard to education were frequently intertwined with migration. Arash and Hamid's accounts also illustrate the levels of negotiation, mobility and financial hardship that students in similar situations have to endure. Finally, pursing their desires to be educated, often through their own initiatives, and overcoming the struggles encountered in the process also gave meaning to the migration process.

Arash came to Pakistan as a refugee when he was 7 years old. He said that until he came to Pakistan 'school was poisoned' by war. When he was finishing his primary education, he realised that he would need to go a school for Pakistani students, and not at the refugee camp, if he wanted to go to university: 'To go to a university in Pakistan you need to have gone to a high school in Pakistan'. He decided to submit a petition to the authorities to get authorisation to attend middle school.

> In order to go to first class of middle school I went to the Ministry of Education in Pakistan. I found the minister at a Friday prayer, and took him a petition. He looked at the child's determination [referring to himself] and sent it to the lower bureau. I went to class. I didn't know any Urdu. The best student in the class was also Afghan, I sat next to him. The students had been in that school since 1st year of primary school. I finished high school second in the year. Two foreigners, we got into the school that everybody wanted to go to. (…) My friend is now a surgeon in Islamabad. (…) There is nothing impossible, I struggled a lot at school, it was *nasip* [kismet].

Arash was eventually accepted to study medicine at Lahore, in what he described as one of the most prestigious programs in Pakistan. He completed one year there. When he heard about the scholarship offered by the Turkish Government for students in Central Asia, he decided to apply for it. His family was poor and he thought having a full scholarship would lift the financial burden off them. 'Getting the scholarship was an honour, it would mean that my costs would be met and I would experience a new country and culture. I thought it would be easier to study here.'

The application process was very competitive: 5000 students applied, 1000 took exams and 'less than 22 qualified'. This process was riddled with many challenges. First, students had to come to Kabul to sit the exams. When they were in Afghanistan, however, in 1992, war broke out and therefore the students could not leave the country to take up their positions. They were not able to secure passports. He and his fellow students lobbied the Turkish Embassy and flew a plane from Peshawar to Turkey accompanied by the agents of the Turkish secret service.

After arriving in Turkey following a 'five-six month-long struggle', Arash felt cheated by the treatment that the students received and regretted abandoning his study in Pakistan. When they arrived in Turkey, he realised that nothing had been arranged for the students.

> It was March during Ramadan. We landed in Ankara. We didn't know anything. They collected our passports and put us on two buses. 12-14 hours later we arrived in Gaziantep, but we don't know that, none of us speaks Turkish. It was frustrating not

> knowing the language. We knew English but nobody else did. When I had to get my hair cut or go to the hospital I signed it. Whatever price was given at the shops that's what we would pay. We didn't know anything. In Gaziantep we went to Higher Education Credit and Dormitory Directorate(?), it was a building what had been empty. It was old, they gave it to us. There was no food, nobody who speak the language. They said you are going to go to Ankara TOMER [a language school]. Then they said a course is going to start that is attached to TOMER [but in Gaziantep]. They said your scholarship is going to start, we trusted them and our money finished. There is no money, we couldn't eat. We used to get up late so we wouldn't have to have breakfast. We managed. There were some who work in construction. Some people had relatives in other countries who helped them. We used to walk to the course, we used to hide so that nobody would see us [because there was fighting on the streets]. (…)There were also Kazak, Ozbek, Turkmen and so on, maybe about 500-600. There were some disputes and some of their brothers had fought with Russians. We ended up at the police station. (…) We took over the Governorate [to protest the conditions]. We said 'we want to study in Turkey, this is appalling! The press came. I used to study at Peshawer, everybody was very intelligent. You are the ones who wanted us!' Immediately we started receiving our stipend. But then there was devaluation of the Turkish currency. Our 100$ became 45$. They used to give it to us in TL. We couldn't get anything.

Furthermore, he wanted to study medicine and was promised that he can study whatever he wanted in Turkey. When time came to apply for courses he was not permitted to apply for medicine and had to choose a branch of engineering, which he was not that interested in. He had been at a high-ranking university in Pakistan whereas the universities that admitted students in Turkey were amongst the lowest ranked. He has looked his former high school friend up on the internet and appeared envious of his friend's success and position.

> [The cities of] Adana, Samsun, Eskisehir, Trabzon, X, these were our choices. According to entry points it was the lowest of all and it was the worst. 20 of us got on a train and went to see the Embassy, it didn't help. They had told us we will give you whatever department you want, apart from 4-5 of us, we all wanted medicine. I regretted coming here later. In other cities it wasn't like this, there was an exam. They kept us in X, the same question the same answer. It was January, we were waiting with nothing to do.

His scholarship money was meagre and could not afford to live on it in the summers. 'In order to stay alive' he went to Istanbul in the summer to work. To add to the problems, due to an administrative error at the university his scholarship was terminated. He was then 'left without a place, without any money'. He stayed in dormitories run by different organisations for students. The first dormitory he went to belonged to the Gülen Movement.[69] Here he paid no rent and got three free meals a day. In the following years he stayed at another dormitory that was run by a conglomerate known for its affiliation to the Gülen Movement. He said that his 'needs were met.' He then married a Turkish student, after which things got better for him. For several years he worked for the same holding that ran the dormitory as a businessman. He now runs his own private dormitories for university students.

Arash's struggles in getting an education and his academic achievements were a source of pride that defined his identity. For Hamid, like Arash, education plays an important role in the migration decisions. For both these men education was the primary goal in migration decisions, but also a means of achieving goals such as residency. Hamid was displaced from his hometown with his family in 1992 when he was six years old, following the establishment of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. His and his family's subsequent migration history, which spans Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, is intimately tied up with the securing of educational opportunities.

In 1992 his family relocated twice within Afghanistan to find a safe place to live and for their children to go to school. In 1996 the 'Taliban came, stayed for 6 months, left and came back.' Due to Hamid's father's political affiliations the family had to escape. At the end of 1997, they stayed in Kabul for two months. Hamid was able to enter a boys-only private school. His sister, therefore, could not go to school with him. Hamid's older brother had already left to go to Iran to go to university. His father had asked him to go because he was afraid that he would get conscripted to fight in Afghanistan. Hamid's family thought of moving to Iran but their decision was

[69] The Gülen Movement, also called the Hizmet Movement, is a transnational Islamic and social movement headed by Fetullah Gülen. The movement is renowned for its schools and dormitories in Turkey and internationally in the USA, Central Asia and Afghanistan and some African countries.

complicated by the fact that Hamid had been enrolled in this school. Furthermore, Hamid's other brother had been at university but had not been able to visit his family because of the distance. The family moved to Iran in 1998. Hamid, only twelve years old, convinced his uncle to take him back to Afghanistan with his cousin to continue going to school there. Hamid said that he did not want to stay in Iran 'because of the education'. This was the first migration decision he took that was brought about by his desire for education.

In 2001, in anticipation of a US attack, everything was 'shut down everything for a few months.' Hamid, his cousin and unclear were afraid of the attacks, so they went to Pakistan. They stayed there for three months 'trying to go to school' and took English classes. In 2002, Hamid returned to Kabul. It was still not safe, so he went to Iran to be with his family. He stayed there for seven months, and took computing classes. His education, however, was 'messed up' and he 'had to leave Iran'. He repeated 9th grade. He then graduated at the end of 2004. He took the university exams for Afghanistan and got into a university. As he spoke English, he was also offered a job with a Turkish firm in Afghanistan who worked with Americans. Through them he found out about the university exam for foreign students set in Kabul. He took the exam and gained a place.

Education is much more than an aspiration that drove migration for Hamid — it is what was at stake in when he was migrating between different countries. Education, therefore, was what is at *risk* in his decision making process and migration is how he managed this risk. The migration decisions he took did put him in the way of harm. As a twelve-year old he migrated back to a country which his parents did not deem safe enough for him to live in. The irregular border crossing to Pakistan was dangerous. He was able to cross the border safely because he was smuggled across the border in a UN car with his cousin. He then travelled irregularly to Iran. When weighed against the possible harm to his education, the potential harms were worth it.

In his pursuit of education Hamid gained autonomy from his family. Although he is still close to his family, and a very worthy son, he has also been able to resist pressures he does not agree with. He gained skills and contacts, which aided him in

different stages of his life. He has friends from his high school that he is in touch with and works with in Turkey. He has brought two of his younger siblings over to study in Turkey, because he thinks they will have a better life in Turkey than they would in Iran or Afghanistan. Because of his education and his experience traveling he is able to speak five languages, all which he puts to regular use through his work as interpreter. He views his education as instrumental in securing residency in Turkey. He stretched out his studies as much as possible to enable him to stay in Turkey and do things that he is interested in, gain work experience and support his siblings. He also uses his status and skills to advocate for others in Turkey, which he sees as moral obligation. He has extended his education because he relies on his student visa to stay in Turkey.

The Importance of Education for Adults

It is perhaps not surprising how important a role education played in the lives of my informants, such as Hamid and Arash, who came to Turkey as university students and had therefore that a large proportion of their lives are spent in education. Education, however, also shapes migration decisions of informants who are not in similar positions to Hamid or Arash. For some informants education represents the possibility of self-development and is part of their imagined future abroad. Informants such as Rasoul, who were waiting to hear from UNHCR, would write letters asking to be resettled as soon as possible so that they would not be too old to go to school if resettled.

Many of the parents placed great importance on their children's education viewing fulfilment in their children's lives as taking priority over their own. Informants such as Gulbahar and Fawzia said they had no ambitions of their own and that everything was for their children. Education was one of the ways in which such informants evaluated the quality of their children's lives, alongside healthcare they received. Kamal, a father of four, spoke to me after he had taken his children and wife to Ankara to protest in front of UNHCR and to demand that they be resettled. He spoke about the poor healthcare his children received, particularly because they were not able to buy glasses even for one his children. He then said:

> The world knows the conditions in Afghanistan. Many people in Afghanistan cannot read and write, and we don't have the opportunity to send the children to school to get a profession, to go to university. We appreciate Turkish authorities and people that help us, but we have common problems. We cannot work, go to school, young life is destroyed, kids can't get professions. Our life is pitiable here. Kids go to Turkish schools, they learn Turkish then they start from the beginning. Our lives and children's lives are getting ruined.

What Kamal means when he says that his children do not get educated is that it is difficult to get education at high school level and for older students to be integrated at school. He also thinks that the education they received in Turkey will not lead to jobs. Not all my informants were able to send their children to school, however. Aatifa could not send her daughter to school because the girl was too old to register for high school. Aatifa's son was going to school but she was worried that, as parents, they did not how to support him with his school-work. Some parents, like Marwa, did could not their children to school because they were afraid for their safety.

Some of my informants took classes in their satellite cities. Rasoul, Daoud, Kamyar, Hadi, Hadi's daughter-in-law, Zehra, and Ali, for instance, took Turkish courses. Rasoul also obtained some IT qualifications while Ali attended Javid's English lessons for children. Aziz received education in Turkey as an unaccompanied minor in a children's facility. He said that the Ministry of Education would only fund their education until the age of 14. He then went to some language classes offered by an NGO. As a minor he managed to continue his education. He obtained the necessary paperwork to allow him to stay at his city after he turned 18 so that he could continue with his education. He convinced the director of the facility to allow him to stay on after he turned 18 to enable to him to undertake vocational training while preparing for the university exams. He prepared for university exams by himself and got into a highly regarded university. Informants such as Hamid and Parwin came from families that were educated. Their fathers and siblings were educated to university level. Therefore, it is not surprising that they would place so much importance on education. Other informants, however, pursued educational goals independently of any family history of education or strong family support. They were therefore able to pursue their educational aspirations in Afghanistan and Pakistan respectively. The family

members of informants such as Arash, Aziz and Amir, their parents were not that well educated, but these informants nonetheless pursued their educational ambitions throughout their lives as migrants.

Education for Young Asylum Seekers

Some of the young boys I met at had high educational aspirations. In Van, there was one student who was about twelve years old who would follow me around asking me for advice and telling me how he is going to get into university to study subjects such as engineering or physics. He had a false Facebook and Linked-in profile with educational qualifications schools such as MIT and CalTech. He would ask me questions about how to be accepted in Oxford or Cambridge or one of the Ivy League schools. While attending an English class, I was asked to help the teacher read something and then to clarify some grammatical discussion. I hesitated in my answers. One of the students said to me, in front of the class, that he could not believe that I was a student at Oxford, if he were in my situation he would be very confident and would show off at every opportunity.

In the classroom the teachers were encouraging of these students' aspirations, but also tried not to give them false hope. In one maths class I attended the teacher asked the students what they wanted to do. As I had expected these high school students said that they wanted to go to Canada or the USA. It often transpired that children wanted to go to the USA but their parents wanted to go to Canada. Then they would explain that they would go to a school like Harvard or Stanford, become rich and live in Los Angeles or New York. Their teacher said that if any of that were to happen they would have to work hard when in Turkey. He said that the students thought that once they had gone abroad they would just be able to go to any university they wanted and become successful. The teacher explained to me that he thought the students put minimal efforts into their education in Turkey, on the assumption that they would be resettled, upon when they would gain access to education and become successful abroad.

Educational aspirations and practices differed by gender. Boys spoke more in the classes I attended. Girls often looked at the desks and only spoke with the

encouragement of their teacher. This was an observation that was also shared by teachers, and was especially clear with regard to older students in the middle or high school range. On one occasion I witnessed a teacher insist rather forcefully that his female student speak up at a mathematics class. He put her on the spot and she only looked at him with great difficulty. In this sense the Iranian teachers at the UN school also seemed to see their roles as being transformative. There were other barriers to the female students' participation at class. One girl I met had to take turns with her older sister to go to the UN school and to the extra English class. I was told this was because her father and brothers did not want her to go to school. Furthermore, adult women I spoke with aspired for their children to go to school but rarely had any desires of their own, although some of them attended some language classes. In contrast, the men I spoke with, some of whom had children, wanted to go to school in the future. Daoud, for instance, said that he when was resettled he wanted to go back to school, and to go to university if possible. He also wanted his daughter to get a good education. His wife however did not express a similar desire. As they grew older some boys had to get jobs to support their families therefore could not attend school. The son of one of my informants was in primary school but had to go working shining shoes and collecting rubbish. As a result he got picked on at school. His mother was upset about it, but they needed his help. In contrast, I met two boys in Van, both teenagers, who were envied by their peers because their father let them go to school and not work. Javid would always say that they were very lucky because their father worked to put them through school even though they were old.

Classes also offered a form of relaxation for younger students. This was particularly the case for the classes run by asylum seekers. Parents told me and their teachers said that they sent their children as a break. The classes in Van often involved an element of a more traditional language lesson where the students were set homework and had to answer questions from a text book, but there was always some time built in for fun. The classes would end with students singing. We would all have to look at the floor, because the students were embarrassed to be seen. They would then sing songs by singers like Celine Dion, Alicia Keyes or more recent popular songs. They would often memorise the words to these songs, but not know the meaning, which they would ask their teacher or me. There was also quite a bit of banter in the class

between the students. Similarly in the class in Kayseri, though adults were more serious, there were a lot of moments of teasing one another over friendly competition and laughter. In the summer the students and their families all met up at the park after the classes to play outside.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I describe the daily lives of my informants focusing on their social lives, jobs, educational opportunities, and their housing situation. Many of these aspects can be taken as indicators of my informants' quality of life in Turkey — with the exception of healthcare which I discuss in the next chapter. This chapter reinforces the central argument of the thesis in three ways. Firstly it demonstrates that the informants perceived the risks associated with the migration in relation to many of the aspects of their lives as discussed in this chapter , and that the perceptions of risk accounts for the diversity in their decision-making processes.

Secondly the chapter illustrates the importance of understanding the broader context of migrants' lives for understanding decision-making. In Chapter 3, I argued that risk is a useful analytical tool for understanding decision-making because it situates decisions within their broader socio-cultural and subjective contexts and it is only within this context that we can understand decision-making. Just as many scholars of risk in the field of medical anthropology (e.g. Lock and Kaufert 1998, Day 2000, Sobo 2005, Shaw 2009) demonstrate that medical decisions are not just about physical health, migration decisions are not just about migration. Perhaps more than any other chapter in this thesis, this chapter demonstrates the complex considerations that inform the decision-making processes and decisions of my informants, and that migration may be an outcome or vehicle of these considerations. I have shown, for instance, that Arash and Hamid's decisions to migrate were rooted in their desire to obtain education. Therefore, it was the opportunity for education that was *at stake* in their decisions to move between Iran, Pakistan, Turkey and Afghanistan. Getting an education also enabled them to acquire residence and pursue their ambitions to obtain residency in Turkey. For many other informants it was a combination of many aspects of their daily lives that contributed to their quality of life, which was *at stake*. I demonstrated that informants decided on applying for asylum in part based on their

assessment of employment opportunities and the cost of living in a satellite city versus Istanbul. While informants such as Fahim and Hadi thought that in Istanbul they could achieve a better quality of life, informants such as Fahran and Daoud thought that it was better to apply for asylum and live at a satellite city. Zehra and Parwin lived in Istanbul although they were asylum seekers, therefore not complying with Turkish law and putting themselves in the danger of arrest and being denied an exit visa if resettled. They did so because they thought they would earn better wages in Istanbul, be safer and, in the case of Zehra, get healthcare for her daughter. In contrast, Ehsan thought that he could earn higher wages in Istanbul, but preferred to stay in the asylum system because he feared the police and wanted to pursue his asylum claim in Van. As an asylum-seeker he had been able to get some medical support his father and education for his children.

Thirdly, the chapter demonstrates the diversity of the ways in which migrants managed the risks associated with the migration decisions. Here I illustrate the three different modes of managing risk with reference to informants mentioned in this chapter.

Resigned: Ibrahim

Ibrahim was living with his two children and his wife. Before I met him he had been living in Van with his two brothers. He said he had no job there, but survived with the help his neighbours and his brothers. He was particularly grateful to his neighbours who were all from Van. This led me to believe that rather than building networks, he had been fortunate that his neighbours had been kind. He was active in pursuing his asylum claim, he wrote letters to UNHCR and was pursuing his appeal case seriously. In other areas of his life, however, he seemed resigned. He did not have the network in his new city that he had in Van, which had provided him with a cushioning. He was not employed, but did not mention seeking jobs either. He survived on the financial support he received from elsewhere— probably his brothers— but this was not enough. He implied that as he was a shoemaker and he could not work legally, he could not work in Turkey. One of the main reasons they left Iran was because he could not send his children to school there. When I met him he was struggling getting the documentation to send his children back to school in Turkey. He was also afraid

that their *dushman* would come after them, even though they had been living in Turkey for over three years, and there was no sign of the *dushman*. Ibrahim had pinned all his hopes on his asylum application with the UNHCR, but had been neglecting to build durable support networks and financial security for himself while in Turkey, despite knowing that the recognition of his asylum claim was unlikely to bring resettlement.

Restless: Amir

Amir was able to negotiate relatively good living conditions for himself in his city. He had initially been living with single men. He moved houses three times in a short period of time because it is difficult for single men to find housing. He then moved in with a family to a better house where he had more support. Amir was one the most qualified in his city. He had completed high school and had qualifications in IT before coming to Turkey. Furthermore, he had been employed for four years by different international development organisations in Afghanistan. He was fluent in English and Turkish. He went to a Turkish course to learn Turkish fluently. He did not have a job that would utilise any of his skills. He was previously employed at a state institution laying down computer cables and was paid a third of what he was promised. He then left his job and instead he worked 14-hour night shifts at a bakery, which was a very physically demanding job. He recently fell ill when he was at the bakery, and had to be hospitalised which cost him a lot of money. His working hours also isolated him from other Afghans. I was surprised that he was not teaching at the UN school or working at an office, where his work would be less physically tiring and isolating. He was as qualified as the refugee staff at NGOs to do that kind of work. While he had friends, he lived with a family and helped some other asylum-seekers, he was more secluded than informants such as Rasoul, Gulbahar or Daoud. I always saw him walking by himself. I never saw him play football or sit at the park. His parents did not want him to put himself in danger to go to Europe, so he abandoned his initial plan to go to Germany. He hated living in Van and did not want to stay there if he had to stay in Turkey. He had been waiting for his country of resettlement to be assigned for over a year and a half. He did not mention doing anything like the others do, like writing petitions, going to UNHCR offices or using other contacts to bring about resettlement.

Resilient: Daoud

I characterise Daoud as resilient because of how proactive and able he was in negotiating all the challenges he faced with regard to different aspects of his life in Turkey, and his creation and use of social networks in doing so. Daoud was one of the first asylum-seekers to arrive at the satellite city he was living in. When he arrived he took a job making and serving tea at the municipality. This is already surprising because as a state institution it would be difficult for them to hire a person who does not have permission to work. He was paid decently compared and treated well at this job, compared to the jobs that many others took in the city. He and his family rented a beautiful flat with access to a garden they rented from a Turkish landlord. Many Afghans who arrived after him settled in the area around him. He held religious gatherings at his house. He started teaching English classes at his house. He had limited education prior to coming to Turkey as he had to leave Afghanistan at a very young age and had worked as a shepherd in Iran. He had learnt English there and had been teaching English classes in his previous city. With his language skills and initiative he started interpreting for the police and going to state authorities to negotiate various issues on behalf of other Afghans in his city. He was especially supportive of unaccompanied children. He eventually got a job as a translator to the Foreigners' Police. He also pursued representatives of different NGOs in his city, some of which had never worked with refugees before in order to secure some support. He took great care of his only daughter and was determined to secure her a good future.

He was forcibly displaced from Afghanistan first, and then Iran— he had been made a refugee twice by the time he was 20 years old. He secured a resettlement opportunity through sponsorship through the relatives of a researcher, which did not work out. During the process however, he continued to secure support for himself and his family in his satellite city while preparing for the resettlement interviews. He thought that his life chances abroad for getting more education and better jobs were increased abroad, but he was not as desperate to get out of Turkey as some of my other informants because he was able to carve himself and his family a comfortable life.

Chapter 7

Migration Embodied: Health and Wellbeing in Decision-Making

7.1 Introduction

When I met my informants there were two things most of them wanted to talk about right away: difficulties with accessing healthcare, and the state of hopelessness and despair arising out of the uncertainty of the asylum system. These two problems defined the daily experience of most of my interviewees. In many cases, my informants and members of their families were ill with a range of chronic conditions such as type II diabetes, heart conditions and mobility problems. Some were suffering from these health conditions in their 20s and 30s—therefore at much younger ages than would be expected for these usually late-onset conditions.

My informants' health and wellbeing shaped the migration process in several ways. As I discussed in Chapter 5, the accessing healthcare was one of the main spheres of interaction with state officials and other gatekeepers. The desire to obtain healthcare is a motivating factor for migration and, sometimes, constitutes the central source of risk in migration decision-making process. Furthermore, ill-health and the desire or inability to access healthcare had several consequences for migration. It constrained or guided the choices that migrants made. Caregiving roles shaped family and social relations, and shaped the migratory strategies of informants. Beyond issues of accessing healthcare, migration was embodied at different levels: through the anxiety and hopelessness that characterises the waiting for legal status, through injuries received during journeys, and through the lack of healthcare as a result of (il)-legal status.

I suspect that I met some informants because they understood that being a doctoral student meant that I was a medical doctor. On a few occasions informants handed me their boxes of medicines and prescriptions as I walked into rooms to conduct interviews. When I was trying to decide who to interview, I was often offered options

such as ‘the man without a leg’ or ‘the woman with cancer’, which I presumed was because the people arranging the interviews had an interest in showing me the most vulnerable Afghans. It was quite common for my informants to know about their neighbours’ ailments and be able to describe them. Health, particularly ill-health, was always a topic of conversation, especially in the satellite cities.

In the migration literature there are two hypotheses that address the impact of health on migration: the ‘healthy migrant hypothesis’ and the ‘salmon bias hypothesis’. The ‘healthy migrant phenomenon’ refers to three characteristics of migrants: that ‘migrants represent a positively selected group of individuals with respect to health, relative to the general population in origin societies’ (Lu and Qin 2013: 41); that migrants are ‘often healthier than native-born residents in their new countries of residents’ (Fennely 2007:3) and that migrants’ health declines dramatically over time (Ibid.). Given the stresses associated with migration it is thought that healthier individuals are more likely to migrate, and to be encouraged to do so in their societies of origin, than unhealthier individuals (Lu and Qin 2013). The declining health of migrants in the country of residence is attributed to conditions such as poverty, stress, poor nutrition, substance abuse, changes in lifestyle and lack of healthcare (Fennely 2007). The salmon bias hypothesis is a form of selective return migration and stipulates that ‘unhealthy migrants or migrants who experience deteriorating health have a greater tendency to return, or to move closer to, their origin communities than healthier migrants’ (Lu and Qin: 2013: 42).

Although these hypotheses have been proposed and debated within quantitative epidemiology, their value for this chapter is that they draw attention to the importance of health in shaping migration decisions. Most of my informants had health problems, which in some cases severely hindered their possibility of onward movement. In contrast, I observed that the young single men I met tended not to have any chronic health problems. For the purpose of my thesis, what is interesting is the contrast between those of my informants who are ‘healthy’ and those who are not, and whether this difference translates into migration decisions. Informants who can be described as ‘healthy migrants’, have more advantages than those with ill-health, such as being able to work under physically challenging conditions and not having to spend

emotional and financial resources in obtaining healthcare. Furthermore, being in good health allowed some migrants to cultivate social networks by caring for members of the community such as by taking or accompanying fellow migrants to service providers. However, being physically capable did not necessarily translate into onward migration from Turkey. One of the reasons for this is that some of healthy migrants were caregivers for members of their family, and therefore chose to stay in Turkey to be with their relatives and to continue in their caregiving roles.

The concept of embodiment is a useful conceptual tool for the analysis of this chapter. At its most basic definition embodiment is biological incorporation of 'the social and material world in which we live, from conception to death' (Krieger 2001: 672). A more inclusive definition of embodiment refers to 'patterns of behaviour inscribed on the body or enacted by people that find their expression in bodily form. It thus bridges over from the body as a source of perceptions into realism of agency, practice, feeling and customs, the exercise of skill, performance, and in the case of rituals, perfomativity' (Strathern and Stewart 2011: 389). In this chapter I will demonstrate how migration is embodied— that is, I will show how my informants' daily experiences as migrants in Turkey and their previous experiences as migrants in Iran or Pakistan are manifested through their bodies as illness, feelings and skills.

7.2 Negotiating Healthcare

Afghan students in Turkey have access to the same level of healthcare as Turkish citizens. Asylum seekers have limited healthcare from the state, and regulations governing access are subject to change. The healthcare that irregular migrants and asylum seekers can access, however, is dependent to some degree on their ability to negotiate with relevant gatekeepers. A single visit to the hospital for the patient may thus only be possible after several visits to the police, or to an NGO if the police refuse to accept the petition or to follow up on it (in the case of asylum seekers). Alternatively, a patient may need to make several visits to the hospital in order to gain access, and then will have to negotiate the payment for treatment, and to obtain prescribed medicine and continued treatment.

The regulations governing healthcare for asylum seekers changed twice while I was conducting fieldwork. At first, it was necessary for asylum seekers (and refugees) to obtain letters from the police for referral to hospital. This was one of the toughest hurdles they had to overcome in accessing hospitals. Once in the state hospital system, they could only have part of their treatment, specific kinds of treatment, and certain medicine costs subsidised by the Governorate. In March or April of 2011, asylum seekers were given more rights for access to healthcare, by means of a health card. They could obtain some subsidised medicines, and be treated in the emergency room for a small fee (15 TL). This situation did not meet everyone's healthcare needs, but informants seemed pleased with this development. NGO staff expressed great relief, because the card for accessing healthcare meant that there was some kind of support in place for asylum seekers and considerably reduced the NGO staff's work to do with the petition process.

I was told that asylum seekers enjoyed these provisions because of a misunderstanding at the Social Solidarity Foundation, which is responsible for healthcare benefits. It seems that some state officials had interpreted too broadly the stipulation in a government circular that 'refugees' be given certain rights comparable to Turkish citizens, unaware that 'refugee' in this context only applies to European asylum seekers who are recognised as refugees—and therefore excludes Afghan and other non-European asylum seekers. When the mistake became clear, satellite cities gradually began reversing their policies. Of the cities where I was working, Van was the quickest to react. In Kayseri, asylum seekers were told that their cards giving them access to healthcare would not be renewed again but informants I spoke with had a few months of healthcare entitlements remaining. In Sivas, one of my informants and his acquaintances were re-issued with cards with an expiry date one year after the policy reversal. I found out a few months later that the cards issued to asylum seekers in Sivas had been cancelled. The only guaranteed healthcare access that asylum seekers have is admittance to the Accident and Emergency (A&E), visits to the family health clinic and access to women's health hospitals for women who were pregnant, for a restricted time before and after giving birth.

UNHCR has some funds and means for supporting asylum seekers. Some informants, particularly asylum seekers with health conditions that affect their ability to articulate asylum claims or attend interviews, were able to obtain treatment when they went to Ankara. Sometimes UNHCR offered financial assistance to cover the cost of operations or treatment through one-off financial assistance or through the partner NGOs.

Irregular migrants have no rights to healthcare. In Zeytiburnu, I found that they were able to visit local family health clinics for a fee, in the case of minor health problems. It was not clear if they could be prescribed medicine through the clinics, however. They could access private healthcare unofficially, with or without the signature of a guarantor with Turkish residency or citizenship. Given the diversity in private hospitals in Istanbul, it was not clear to me whether irregular migrants were charged different prices compared with Turkish citizens. Once in hospital, however, the hospital could charge irregular migrants a higher fee than had been agreed upon. Informants thus not only had to negotiate their access to hospitals but also their exit from them. One or two NGOs in Istanbul are in some cases able to offer very limited healthcare provided through special arrangements with local hospitals. Of my informants only Zehra used to take her daughter who has a heart problem to a hospital through an arrangement with an NGO in Istanbul.

As discussed in Chapter 4, one of the main areas of negotiation with the state authorities is gaining access to a hospital. After gaining access, informants would then have to negotiate with medical and non-medical staff in the hospital in order to be seen by a doctor. One of the first barriers informants faced was language. It was common for informants to bring someone who knew Turkish with them. My key informants, and informants I characterise as being resilient, would often take their friends or acquaintances to hospitals. In the summer of 2011, several accidents took place that involved the vehicles smugglers were using to transport their clients. My second visit to Van, in September, came right after one these accidents. There were two Afghan survivors, who were taken to hospital. Rasoul, who was alerted to these accidents through the police, went to the hospital to help the survivors and visited them with his friends, even after his help was no longer required. He would also

accompany his friends to hospitals and NGOs to get help for them. Some informants relied on their children who learnt Turkish through school.

Once in the hospital, informants may not be admitted or given care, even if they arrived as emergency cases. Of the several accounts I heard, Sakine's was the most vivid and detailed. Sakine was a woman in her 40s whom I assumed to be in her 70s when I met her. When I arrived at her house she scattered on the floor in front of me all the medicine that she and her husband took. She explained to me that her husband had several health problems including paralysis and cancer. She suffers from severe headaches and 'ants in her ears', the cause of which was unclear. When I first met him, her husband was lying on the floor. His throat occasionally constricted and he needed access to a hospital so that his throat could be opened to enable him to breathe. On one occasion when he started having trouble breathing, Sakine had managed to get him to the hospital and begged for the staff to treat him. Initially nobody attended to him, and his breathing worsened. By the time somebody started to help, he was breathing with great difficulty and Sakine thought that he would die. Sakine does not speak much Turkish so, as she told me, she mimicked being choked, using her hands to show the staff what was happening. Her demonstration of her husband choking was so vivid that it led me to think that she was choking herself. When he finally received the care he needed, Sakine and her husband had to pay a sum of 15TL for using the A&E. Sakine and her family have to take her husband to the hospital for this urgent condition frequently, and may face this same experience each time. Their story demonstrates not just the difficulty of negotiating access to healthcare for serious conditions, but also the uncertainty this places on patients and their caregivers.

One major gap in the healthcare of asylum seekers concerns the treatment of chronic problems that require expensive therapies, such as cancer medications and surgery. These were the conditions for which UNHCR and NGOs were most frequently approached. In Van, Sadaf's husband was hit by a car. The police initially held the driver, but the driver escaped, and Sadaf's husband never pressed charges, considering this would be futile. Sadaf husband needed two surgical operations on his foot. After the second surgery, he and Sadaf ran away from the hospital without paying the full fees, because they could not afford to do so. Some time after that, the platinum plates

in the husband's foot started to move, so he needed another operation. The couple applied to UNHCR for the cost of the operation, but all three of their applications were rejected. Both UNHCR and the NGOs in Van directed Sadaf to the Governorate for financial help, although one of the NGOs convinced a doctor to carry out the operation. Sadaf's husband cannot go to the hospital without paying the fees from the previous operation, but he could not work due to the pain in his foot. The couple had two or three small children to care for. In cases like these UNHCR and support from the NGOs were often the only ways in which informants could access healthcare, if at all.

Another sphere of negotiation involves getting access to the medicines required for treatment. During the time when they had health cards, asylum seekers could obain subsidised medicine from pharmacies, which was an important support. Nevertheless they were not always able to meet the full cost the medication. In these circumstances, NGOs were particularly useful. Some of the NGOs had funds to buy medicine or were able to use their networks to obtain medicine at discounted prices. Gulbahar, who had obtained vouchers for medicine normally reserved for Turkish citizens, used to give her vouchers to friends and neighbours in need.

7.3 Accessing Healthcare and Migration Decisions

Seeking better healthcare was never cited as the sole reason for moving to Turkey but was an important expectation of life in Turkey, particularly for asylum seekers who had sought protection with the 'UN'. All my informants wanted to be able to access good healthcare in the future, even those who were healthy at the time of my fieldwork. It should be noted here that Afghanistan, as the 18th least developed country,[70] has very limited healthcare provisions for its citizens, particularly in the more rural areas where there is greater poverty and minimal medical infrastructure

[70] In the 2013 Human Development Report complied by United Nations Development Programme, Afghanistan was ranked 18th in Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI, which also uses health indicators such as adult and mortality rates, antenatal coverage and health expenditure, is a reliable tool for categorising countries according to human development. While Afghanistan's position in the ranking has been improving, it falls within the category of 'Least Developed Countries', which are the poorest and most vulnerable countries in the world. For the Human Development Index country profile on Afghanistan, available at: http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/AFG [accessed 20 January 2014].

(World Health Organisation 2014). Infant, child and maternal mortality rates in Afghanistan have been among the highest in the world (Ibid.) Furthermore, the prevalence of diseases such as the tuberculosis, polio and typhoid are above regional averages (Ibid.). When treatment is available, the high cost of treatment, the long and dangerous journeys to medical clinics, and armed conflict are the most common barriers to accessing healthcare in Afghanistan (Medicins Sans Frontieres 2014: 8).

As the majority of my informants had spent longer periods of time in Iran than in Turkey, they often compared their experiences of healthcare in Turkey to their experiences of healthcare in Iran, while few talked about their experience in Afghanistan. Informants found it difficult to access healthcare in Iran because of the high price of the private medical care and the discrimination they faced at hospitals as Afghans. Fahim joked that if you went in to a hospital in Iran as a healthy man, you would come out a corpse. Fahim's family had several health problems. His father was paralysed, his mother suffered from migraines and had disk problems in her back and his brother had a form of hepatitis. Soon after their arrival in Istanbul, his sister gave birth in a private hospital where they were charged a very high fee. Fahim nevertheless preferred the healthcare he could access in Zeytinburnu as an irregular migrant.

Daoud's story illustrates most clearly the kind of discrimination and hurdles that informants faced when they were in Iran. His experience of discrimination and racism encapsulates the treatment that he received in Iran as a Hazara irregular migrant:

> I was working in Iran, I had appendicitis. The doctor said serum will help you. I waited for long time [in the hospital ward]. I called out for them, they said it was very busy. I ran away from hospital —my boss told me to leave. He took me to another doctor. The doctor asked for 3000$. [He said] it's an emergency, tomorrow first thing you will see the doctor. In the morning there was no one at hospital. The following day the same. Next day a professor came with many students. He pointed at me with appendicitis. He saw all the tests. He said 'Why are you here? Why don't you want to go back?' I said 'If I can get out of hospital, I will return.' He said things like 'What are you doing here?' then he left. He said there is no emergency, no need to go to the Emergency Room. A nurse came and told me 'they will not operate, go to another

> hospital, you are in danger.' I called another doctor in another city. I paid taxi to go to another city two to three hours later. The doctor took me in right away. My appendix had burst. He said five hours later you could have died. I stayed there for about four or five days. It is because it was broken. I don't know why they don't treat us as human. They decided on our race, God saved my life. Doctors day in Iran, I saw it on BBC Persian, this is not good for doctors. It is their job to save life, but my doctor nearly destroyed mine.

Although in this experience Daoud came within inches of losing his life in Iran, his decision to leave Iran was motivated not by discrimination over obtaining healthcare, but because he and his wife had been threatened by their *dushman*. Difficulties with accessing healthcare played a more pronounced role in Zehra and her family's migration decisions. Zehra's daughter, as mentioned earlier, had a serious heart condition that needs frequent monitoring and medication. As a family they had struggled to get the help that the daughter needed in Iran. While what finally pushed them to leave Iran was an immediate threat from their *dushman,* they were already considering leaving Iran in order to take better care of their daughter. Zehra claimed that in neither Iran nor Afghanistan was it possible for her daughter to receive the treatment necessary for her survival. She therefore feared being sent back for her daughter's sake, in addition to her fears regarding her asylum claim. In Istanbul she was able to negotiate treatment through an NGO. As asylum seekers in Istanbul, she and her family were liable to be detained and sent back to their satellite city. Furthermore, they did not have access to any of the limited healthcare provisions available to asylum seekers. Nevertheless, the family decided to remain in Istanbul to ensure that Zehra's daughter obtained the healthcare she needed.

Masooma's story illustrates the complex ways in which ill health impacts migration decisions. As I discussed in Chapter 4, Masooma's family had an accident on their journey to Istanbul that left their son with brain damage and means he suffers from epilepsy. Their younger child experienced episodes of fainting in the prison, and continues to suffer episodes of fainting. All the family have suffered from the psychological impact of the accident and their detention in prison. Masooma's husband's emotional state, which was worsened by his brother death at the accident, meant that their interview with UNHCR went poorly and their asylum claim was

rejected. When I interviewed them, they were waiting the outcome of their appeal. Both Masooma and her husband have health problems. Her husband suffers from rheumatism and diabetes. Having been undocumented migrants in Iran for 15 years prior living in Turkey, they were never able to obtain the healthcare they needed in Turkey. . When Masooma had appendicitis, she was able, with the help of an NGO to have an appendectomy, but she received date-expired medication after her operation and had a bad reaction to it.

> We have health problems. We want to go to America. For how long will we remain without an answer? Iranians, Bahai's, Christians they go. Desperate Afghans, they stay here. [Staff member at the NGO] says to us you are good here, you can't go to a third country. (…) I can't return to Iran, and I don't have enough money to go forward. We are waiting for a solution from the UN, I want to get a good response from them. My husband can't do *kaçak* (run away, i.e. travel illegally) because he can't walk properly.

Since Masooma's husband has rheumatism in his feet, he cannot travel irregularly by taking physically arduous journeys. They cannot save enough money for onward travel by plane, for instance, where his health problem would not be an issue. Masooma sees acquiring refugee status as the 'solution' to her family's medical problems as well as the ensuing financial and emotional problems. While her asylum application is based on her husband's family's persecution by the Taliban, what is at stake in their migration decision is therefore related to accessing healthcare. Furthermore, their lives as migrants have been shaped by health problems, the efforts of trying to obtain appropriate treatments and the consequences of the lack of effective treatments.

As is the case for Masooma and other informants discussed in the Chapter 4, the journey to Turkey itself has many stages that are physically arduous and emotionally draining at a level for which many were fully prepared. The journey out of Turkey, however, is much harder and has become progressively worse, as evidenced by the numerous news items of drownings and accidents at the borders. Unless my informants could afford high-end smuggling when in Turkey, they realised - given the

vulnerability of small children or their elderly relatives - that they would not be able to undertake any further irregular travel.

Hadi's ill-health was one of the instances in which a migration decision was made in direct consequence of the diagnosis of a health problem. Hadi, an irregular migrant in his late 50s, was living in Istanbul with his two sons, nephew, daughter-in law, wife and grandson. Hadi had left Afghanistan as a refugee in the 1980s because of some political problems and had lived in Iran for many years. He had travelled to Istanbul with his family a year before I met him thinking that life as an Afghan migrant would be easier in Turkey than in Iran. When I met his family, his daughter in law was pregnant with her second child. She had given birth for the first time in Istanbul, but the hospital had been very expensive and they had been forced to spend their savings. His daughter in law said that the choice they faced now was between eating or saving for hospital. Hadi had been suffering from stomach aches, among other problems, which he thought were linked to his job at a chemical factory in Iran. He was unable to pay for the treatment he needed in Istanbul. They would not apply for asylum, however, even though Hadi had an asylum claim for leaving Afghanistan, because without the 200TL a month jobs that his sons and son-in-law had they would be unable to afford to live or pay for hospital care in the satellite cities. When I asked him about his future, he thought it would be difficult to go to Europe but he was adamant that he would not go back to Iran or Afghanistan. In fact, unlike many of my informants, he had never returned to Afghanistan after he left as a refugee because he believed his life to be under threat. Shortly after I met him, he was able to obtain some support—partly thanks to the efforts of my interpreter. He was diagnosed with stomach cancer and given a very short time to live. The family decided to return to Afghanistan within days. With the help of IOM, they arranged to turn themselves over to the police and be placed in detention for a night prior to their flight. They returned under the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme. I heard that Hadi died two or three days after arriving in Kabul; only his nephew had remained in Istanbul. His nephew told my interpreter that Hadi had wanted to die 'at home' - despite having earlier asserted he would never return there. The family's journey from Iran and time spent in Turkey had cost them all their savings. When they went to Afghanistan, it is unlikely

that they would have had any financial resources with which to start a life there or to return to Turkey.

Although the overwhelming majority of the people I spoke with or heard about had health problems or were caring for those who were unwell, a few were not in this situation. This then raises the question of how being 'healthy' impacts the migration process. My informants who were in Turkey as single men, without family members, did not report any health problems. They said that they had not been to hospitals, unless to accompany friends. There may be two reasons for their reported wellbeing. Firstly, these informants typically referred to physical health rather than mental wellbeing in the context of healthcare. However, many said that they had emotional difficulties, especially feelings of hopelessness, which may have been associated with mental health problems; significantly, perhaps, other informants would tend to refer to their emotional problems in a medical context. Secondly, it is unlikely that these single men would have been able to make the journey to Turkey, or even to have survived in Iran and Afghanistan, without any financial and social support. Furthermore, these men had previously worked at physically challenging jobs to finance their journeys, in construction or similar types of industry, without insurance and protection, or in sweatshop conditions. It is unlikely that they would have been able to raise the funds to undertake such journeys had they not first obtained these types of employment. Although they did not speak of the advantages of being in good health, their health did mean that their emotional and economic capital was not drained, in contrast to those in poor health. At the very least, I would argue, they had more time to pursue their migration goals.

7.4 Caregiving Roles

As well as caring for members of the Afghan community, caring for family members' health was an important way in which family lives were organised and the migration process gained meaning. So far, I have provided several examples of informants taking care of elderly relatives or children. I have shown that caring for members of the family restricted informants' onwards movement and shaped their lives in Turkey, by taking up their time in doing the official legwork necessary to obtaining care (also

see Chapter 5), and by requiring them to take financial responsibility for their relatives. Through informants such as Sakine, I have shown that being a caregiver takes an emotional toll on caregivers.

Caregiving is also an important way in which generational and family roles are defined. Javid, as the youngest son, saw his primary role as caring for his father. In a family with several potential caregivers, it seemed that one person held the ultimate responsibility. Both of Adeeb's parents had health problems, but his mother in particular suffered from very severe nose-bleeds, for which she required immediate transport to the hospital for treatment. When his mother became sick Adeeb or his brother would stop working in order to take their mother to the hospital straight away. Both the treatment and the transport to the hospital were costly. Adeeb's brother disappeared one day without telling anyone in the family. Later, Adeeb heard — not from his brother, but from someone outside the family — that his brother had gone to Europe. As a result, Adeeb became the sole caregiver. Fahim's older brothers had left to go to Europe, leaving him to take care of his paralysed father. He explained his decision not to follow his two older brothers but to remain with his father and his younger brothers in terms of his filial duty of care, particularly since he was the highest earner in the family. Caregiving duties thus do not determine migration decisions, but may be significant in how families become fragmented as a result of these decisions.

Children also played important roles taking care of their parents, although my informants did not discuss this explicitly. I observed that children would assume the care of their parents in different ways. When Gulbahar had nervous breakdowns her daughters would attend to her, bringing her medicine and water and comforting her. Jamila's daughter was often witness to her mother's fits, and was also the one who called for help. Zehra's daughter was also a source support to her.

7.5 Uncertainty and Waiting

Many interviewees characterised their time in Turkey with reference to hopelessness, despair and anxiety and used phrases like their 'nerves being shot' or 'heads not being

right' when talking about their state of being at the time of the interview with UNHCR. During my fieldwork, I also heard of very complex illnesses that went untreated. Jamila suffered from seizures frequently, sometimes several times a day. She went to the doctors who told her that they could not understand the reason why she had seizures, but it was probably due to stress. I saw one of her seizures happen when a group of us were playing ball outside around midnight one night. Everyone knew what was happening, so they gathered around her. Jamila's three year old daughter was diagnosed with a skin rash that was similarly attributed to stress. As mentioned earlier, Masooma's daughter suffered from episodes of fainting. I heard numerous complaints of serious headaches, which is probably not surprising as an informant said: 'I have one head 1000 problems.'

Suffering sometimes related directly to the UNHCR's decision and uncertainty about the future, as Farrin put it:

> 80% of my worries are related to UN. I can deal with the rest of the issues, but I always wonder about UN, and their decision. The uncertainty about the future eats me up, it is why I have psychological and emotional problems, it is not what happened in the past, nor the situation we are in now, but the future, and its uncertainty.

As discussed in Chapter 4 many informants talked about *cevapsızlık,* the lack of response from UNHCR as being as being a source of consternation. Informants such as Attifa said her psychological problems were related to the entirety of their experience as migrants in Turkey:

> Since I have been living in Turkey, I have had many psychological problems. I am suffering from migraines, a few days ago, my hand started shaking, couldn't move my hand. It is all related to uncertainty because we are under mental pressure. I started suffering from migraine since I came here, because my husband working under hard condition [in the stone quarry], he is suffering from rheumatism and his boss didn't pay. My daughter can't go to school, it makes me suffer, she is without certain futures, she just watches TV. (…) Many problems, very hard, really suffering emotionally, many problems we live with. (…) If UNHCR took a decision, it would be great. It is not clear what will happen to us, we need certainty.

The emotions triggered by uncertainty are important because they are crucial elements of the human decision making process. As I demonstrated in my discussion of the conceptual framing of this thesis, in Chapter 3 emotions can act as tie-breakers between different alternatives. Emotions are part of the subjectivity inherent in perceiving and responding to risk as I have discussed with reference to Fessler (2001) and Shaw and Charsley (2006a; 2006b; Charsley 2007).

The anguish and stress caused by waiting for RSD or resettlement decisions among Afghan asylum seekers in Turkey is similar to *buufis* experienced among Somali refugees awaiting resettlement in the Dadaab refugee camp. Horst (2006: 143-144)'s describes *buufis* as 'someone's hope, longing, desire and dreamt to go for resettlement' and the 'madness that at times occurs when the dream of going overseers is shattered'. Horst (ibid.) identifies multiple reasons for the emergence of *buufis* among Somali refugees in camps, which bear many similarities to the situation of my informants in Turkey. When they arrive at the camps Somali refugees are confronted with multiple challenges. Since there is no way of obtaining citizenship and moving out of camps in Kenya, their only hope for obtaining security and peace is through resettlement, for which there are very few opportunities. Some refugees have personal circumstances, which also increase their sense of isolation from the broader community. The yearning for resettlement is also intensified by their awareness of life as refugees in the West, an awareness that they acquire through transnational networks. Personal circumstances that create isolation may also add to the *buufis. Buufis* then may manifest itself in poor mental health.

It is in this sense that migration can be said to be embodied —that the consequences of being a migrant, such as not receiving healthcare, worrying about the decision of the UNHCR or poor living conditions, manifest as the development or continuation of ill-health whether physical or psychological.

Another sense in which migration could be said to be embodied for my informants lies in the causes for their flight from Afghanistan or other countries, and the continuing implications of these reasons for their exodus, particularly in relation to their *dushman*. Informants sometimes have to re-live the reasons for their flight from

Afghanistan when they are required to remember and provide details of the physical and emotional hardships they have endured, during interviews with UNHCR, doctors and NGOs. As I have already mentioned, several of my informants such Parwin, Ibrahim and Marwa lived in a state of fear that their *dushman* would track them down in Turkey. Safi's leg was broken 'during the war' in Afghanistan. His leg was not set correctly at the time of the injury which meant that Safi could not walk comfortably. He went to Iran to get his foot operated on, but he could not find a hospital that would admit him because he did not have any documentation. He therefore came to Turkey and applied for asylum after learning about UNHCR *en route*. His asylum claim was recognised, but he struggled to survive in Turkey because he could not take on any physically strenuous work, which was the only type of work available to him. When he went to UNHCR Van Office, his requests for a financial aid interview were turned down three times because the UNHCR officer believed that he could walk. This officer told Safi: 'You're young, you can work.' Therefore, the injury that Safi sustained during the war impacted his daily life in Turkey.

Another instance in which migration is similarly embodied is the case of Morad's mother. Both of Morad's brothers were 'martyred' by their *dushman* when they were young. Morad said that after this incident both his and his mother's 'mental health are destroyed'. His mother had several mental and physical health issues. As we were talking during our interview she showed me her sons' pictures and started wailing. Morad explained to me that when her sons died 'she cried so much that her lungs filled with water' and that she still has water in her lungs.

Ill-health, in turn, can affect informants' abilities to articulate their asylum claims and deal with difficulties they face in Turkey. One of the major problems that informants talked about was memory loss due to stress. Parwin's statement captures this predicament clearly:

> Stress causes to memory loss. English is getting worse because of stress and loss of practice, these are all skills. Want to get education, going to lose my mind, stress is number one killer and it destroys everything.

Similarly, both Morad's mother and Javid's father suffered from 'memory loss' during their interviews. UNHCR requested medical documentation from them that would prove the state of their mental health. Javid told me that he was busy trying to obtain such appointments for his father and intended to take his father along to these health assessments, but was not confident that any reports he might obtain would satisfy the UNHCR. Morad said that the doctors he went to about his mother's health 'don't know anything'.

Many of my informants knew about other migrants' health problems. As discussed earlier, they often gave each other support in seeking to overcome their problems in different ways. There were also rumours of unexplained deaths or deaths under suspicious circumstances that circulated, which added to the emotional distress that my informants experienced. Shortly before I was at Van, a young man known to Sadaf's husband was rumoured to have been electrocuted at work. Fearing that he would get into trouble, the young man's boss had left this young man to die in a room in the factory, and had then disposed of the body. Over the summer of 2011 two male asylum seekers had died in their satellite cities. One of them had prior health problems and, having been turned away from hospital, had been unable to obtain the healthcare he needed on time. The other was thought to have had no prior known health condition. The Afghan Refugee Association and others became involved on behalf of this latter, healthy, man, because they were suspicious of the claim that he had died of a heart condition. A car accident occurred close to the border of Greece, involving at least two Afghan asylum seekers. One died on the scene while the other died several days later, after having his leg amputated. I did not visit the hospital, but I was told by informants that it was rumoured that he had initially refused to have his leg amputated because he would not be able to work. He eventually died of sepsis resulting from the delayed decision to amputate. There were rumours about these deaths implicating, among others, a smuggler ring. Throughout my fieldwork I heard quite a few stories about amputations following accidents. None happened to my informants, but amputation was talked about because of its potentially huge impact on the journeys and working lives of migrants.

7.6 Conclusion

Physical health and health in the broader sense of wellbeing was an important factor in shaping my informants' lives in Turkey and the ways in which they reached decisions about migration. Decision-making is an embodied process, so talk about health connects talk about migration decisions to 'the body' more than any other sphere of conversation. Here, I have illustrated the different levels through which migration is embodied: through accidents on journeys, through the difficulties of accessing healthcare as a result of not having legal status, and through the anxiety and uncertainty in awaiting legal status. In its focus on embodiment, this chapter is also about the embodiment of everyday violence suffered by migrants living lives without access to necessary basic rights. Migrants negotiated this embodiment in different ways.

Informants such as Fawzia and her family are among those I classify as *resigned*. Fawzia and her husband had several health problems. They had three sons, two of whom were adults, and a daughter who was married. Her youngest son, who was 13 years old, needed an operation on his eye. They learnt all their information from Gulbahar, who took them to the hospital. They had not written any petitions to the UNHCR, although they had been waiting for several months to hear the result of their appeal and they were in financial difficulty. When I met them, on Gulbahar's prompting they asked me for advice about writing a letter to UNHCR. I told them that I could not write their letter for them, but that there is no one way of writing a letter. I said that if they want to write to UNHCR, they should write and tell all their problems and explain what they need. I heard from one of their sons three months later that they still had not written to UNHCR about their problems. They also had very little knowledge about the system.

The attitudes of informants such as Masooma and Sakine can be characterised as being *restless*. They both pursued support for their healthcare needs by petitioning the relevant authorities and NGOs. They both had information about the healthcare provisions in Turkey. They talked about the health cards and the changing situation.

Efforts in accessing healthcare constitute one of the spheres of interaction defines characteristic of informants whom I classify as being *resilient*. Informants such as Gulbahar, Jamila and Rasoul fall into this category. Rasoul, never had any health problems himself, but accompanied friends and other asylum seekers to the hospital or the NGOs. He was therefore known to staff at NGO and hospital. The police also contacted him in case of emergencies. Gulbahar and Jamila also supported other asylum seekers, in addition to being proactive about their own situation. They were also a source of emotional support to other Afghan asylum seekers. They would always offer comforting words and sympathy during their visits. I believe they both wanted to help me with my research because of the sense of injustice they felt because of emotional and physical toll that the asylum system took on and others.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

The central theoretical question I seek to answer in this thesis is whether social theory can account for the differences in the decisions of similarly situated individuals. I argue that risk is a useful conceptual tool for explaining heterogeneity in decision-making. Understanding how risk is perceived firstly requires identifying what 'the situation or event of human value' that 'has been put at stake' is (Rosa 1998: 28). Secondly, it requires understanding how the uncertainty of securing what is 'at stake' is assessed (Ibid.). Both the process of identifying what is at stake and assessing the uncertainty associated with it are evaluated subjectively within the context of social lives and cultural values. Therefore risk offers a theoretical model for grounding decision-making in its socio-cultural context. I argue that how risk is perceived and managed accounts for diversity within a group of individuals.

My thesis focuses on the diversity in decision-making among Afghans who have recently arrived in Turkey. My research question crystallised when I was working with young Afghan male asylum seekers in Turkey who had very similar life stories — migrants from a young age, who lost family members due to conflict, had disrupted education and experienced poverty. Yet, they differed from one and another in the ways in which they interpreted their predicament in Turkey and their options for the future. When conducting my fieldwork I tried to capture the diversity of migration-related decisions among my informants, which I first narrowly interpreted to pertain solely to their migration status in Turkey and irregular travel. I soon realised the breadth of decisions and scope for negotiation available to my informants. It also became apparent that informants not only viewed what is at stake — the risk— differently, but they managed these risks differently. In the analysis of my fieldwork information I drew the following conclusions:

1) Decisions about migration, such as choosing a bureaucratic path or finding employment in Turkey, can only be understood in the broader context of the decision.

I demonstrate that my informants made such decisions based on their priorities, which may entail caring for family members or personal aspirations.

2) I demonstrate that risk in migration decisions is not only perceived differently, but is also managed differently. I argue that these differences occur because of the different ways in which informants advocate for themselves, position themselves socially and inform themselves or others. I create a typology to illustrate the different attitudes manifested during my fieldwork.

Among the subsidiary themes that emerge from the thesis are:

3) Some informants were able to navigate constraints in their migratory options due to structural factors such as policy restrictions or personal circumstance such as financial limitations. The research on migrant decision-making that focuses on broader trends to explain migration in terms of pull or push factors, for instance, overlooks these variations, which can only be captured by ethnographic research.

4) Irregular status is not always seen as a risk or an undesirable outcome. My informants' legal consciousness of immigration status is shaped by their previous experience of being migrants and belonging to a chronically fragile state with weak protection of its citizens and on-going conflict. Therefore, although predisposed to comply with immigration law, they did not see non-compliance as a moral transgression. This is also an indication of how the risk perceptions of migrants differ from those of policymakers who assume that stricter and more restrictive enforcement of immigration law will deter migrants from living in Turkey irregularly.[71]

5) Decision-making is an embodied process. Migration is embodied through accidents on journeys, the difficulties of accessing healthcare as a result of not having legal

[71] Aydoğan Asar, the Head of the Department for Foreigners in the Directorate for General Migration Management, for instance, stated that the new law and management system were established with 'the principal aim of preventing irregular migration and not to encourage irregular migration' [translation my own] at a special seminar on 17 February 2015 at Oxford Department of, International Development. While this may not be official government policy, it reflects the attitudes of those who design and implement migration policy.

status, and the anxiety and uncertainty of awaiting legal status. Migrants embody the everyday violence of living without access to their basic rights.

The theoretical gaps this thesis seeks to address are threefold. Firstly, the thesis offers a way of theorising within-group diversity in the decision-making processes of migrants. Secondly, the thesis addresses the poor conceptualisation of risk in migration studies. Thirdly, it focuses on the decision-making of migrants seen as in transit rather than in their countries of origin or destination. Addressing these gaps may also have significant implications for engaging with migration policy and public opinion on migration. The recent ferry disasters in the Mediterranean region and the increased numbers of migrants arriving at the USA have thrown light on the 'risks' migrants are prepared to take to reach the shores of western industrialised countries for better lives, often for freedom from violence and poverty. There is, however, little research done to see how these migrants understand their choices and scant focus on the migrants who do not take these journeys. Governments develop policies to control migrant flows with certain assumptions about migrant decision-making. European governments have expressed reluctance to establish a Europe-wide search-and-rescue operation for migrants in the sea, to continue from Italy's *Mare Nostrum* operation that has now ended, for fear of encouraging further migration to Europe, for instance. These discussions are based on the risk assessments of policy makers rather than those of migrants. Such restrictive and ill-conceived policies continue practices that endanger migrants' lives. With more immediate relevance to the topic of the thesis, UNHCR has suspended the registration and processing of Afghan asylum claims, leaving thousands of Afghans under tremendous stress and without recourse to effective international protection. Such policies do not necessarily stop migration because they are based on false assumptions about how migrants perceive risk and danger but instead institutionalise violence against migrants.

I do not maintain that risk perception and management are the only tools for understanding diversity in migration decision-making. In the next section I consider some of the shortcomings to this approach. I will finally reflect on the broader implications of my findings and directions for further research.

8.1 The Typology

The table below (reproduced from Chapter 1) represents my analysis of the differentiation of the different ways of managing risk.

	Information-gathering	Sociality	Advocacy
Resigned	1	1-2	1
Restless	2	1-2	2-3
Resilient	2-3	3	3

Table 8: The typology for managing risk

Where:
Information-gathering:
1: No active information gathering
2: Gathering information
3: Generating and disseminating information

Sociality:
1: Isolation
2: Social engagement
3: Leader-like positioning

Advocacy:
1: Passive
2: Some action
3: Persistence and creativity

When devising this typology, I was first able to identify informants whose attitudes I classified as 'resilient'. These migrants stand out from the crowd, through their social positioning, as repositories of important information, and for their sometimes

innovative, but mostly persistent, effort for self-advocacy or advocacy for others. The characteristic behaviour that distinguishes them is their social positioning in their communities. Informants such as Rasould, Daoud and Gulbahar could have been in a socially marginalised position. Rasoul was a single 19-year-old who had very little formal education and was barely surviving when I met him. Gulbahar was a single mother who had recently separated from the abusive husband she had been forced to marry. She had very serious mental health problems and was the sole caretaker of her young children. Daoud was forced to leave Afghanistan at a very young age because of *dushman* persecuting his family. He was then forced to leave Iran with his wife. He was also young, had very little formal education and was the breadwinner for his young child and wife. Yet these individuals position themselves in leader-like positions. When I met Rasoul last year, I realised that taking time to meet me had cost him a day at work. When I apologised for this loss of a day's wages, he told me: 'When it comes to meeting people I know, I always put them first even if I am working. I was going to go to work the day I met you, I would have made 10 TL maybe that day, but look what happened in the long run.' He had told me earlier on in our conversation that he thought that meeting me had brought about friendships and opportunities that he valued. I do not agree with his assessment. I think that he created the opportunities that he mentions. He views his social relations as being central to shaping his life, however. It is through these relations that he has been able to find employment and in fact to create employment, act as a community representative and support himself.

The category of 'resigned' was also quite easily distinguishable. The voices of these informants were quieter in the crafting of the narrative of my thesis. Compared to those I considered the stars of my fieldwork, their lives seemed stagnant. They appeared to be in permanent position of waiting without taking much action or acquiring further information. They were also socially less visible. The category of 'restless' incorporated those informants who fell in-between the resigned and the resilient. It later became clearer that they were more active in gathering information than the resigned, but less socially-prominent positions in their communities than the resilient informants.

At the end of each ethnographic chapter, I refer to informants who typify each of these categories. The first informant I identify as being resilient is Fateh in Chapter 4, on migrant journeys for his knowledge of the smuggling and immigration system and for how he positioned himself within the smuggling network. In the Chapter 5, on gatekeepers, I demonstrate the typology through three single women with children: Marwa, Asal and Gulbahar, as examples, respectively, of the resigned, the restless and the resilient. I chose this comparison to illustrate how informants who were similarly positioned in Turkey managed risks differently. All these women were primarily concerned with their and their children's physical safety and their children's wellbeing. Whereas Marwa and Asal isolated themselves from the community, Gulbahar played a more prominent social role. Marwa was afraid to send her children to school, whereas Asal and Gulbahar tried to keep their young children in education. Asal and Gulbahar had been able to find jobs and were also more proactive in pursuing their asylum claims. In Chapter 6, on the daily lives of my informants, I identify Ibrahim, Amir and Daoud as the resigned, the restless and the "resilient" respectively. In the final ethnographic chapter, Chapter 7, I list several informants under each of these categories.

Throughout the thesis I also refer in greater detail to informants whose attitudes I do not classify explicitly. Informants such as Arash and Hamid, whose stories I discuss in relation to education, I would argue are resilient. The main focus of their migration decisions was to first achieve a desired level of education and to obtain permanent residence in Turkey. They created and pursued educational opportunities across borders and actively sought to use their skills and education to obtain residence. Furthermore, they were both positioned prominently in their social circles. Javid, Zahra, Kamyar and Fahran, whose stories I discuss in Chapter 5, were restless. They were knowledgeable about the asylum system and state policy, and pursued their bureaucratic paths, changing paths when it did not suit what was at stake in their in their migration decisions. They were socially isolated and somewhat suspicious of other people. Therefore, they were not as well socially positioned as the resilient were.

Informants in the restless and resilient categories also typically had stronger narratives about their lives. The longer stories and quotations that I include typically belong to

these informants. Narrative construction is both a skill that has advantages for navigating bureaucracy (as discussed in Chapter 4) and is an important coping strategy for adversity. Literature on psychological resilience and efficacy (as discussed in the next section) makes frequent reference to narrative construction.

The typology, however, does not reflect psychological states. As I demonstrate in Chapter 7, the majority of my informants suffered from poor mental and physical health, which I conceive as an embodiment of the everyday violence of being a migrant. Some informants who typify restless or resilient behaviour were being treated for severe mental health issues. Neither is the typology intended to designate a fixed set of attitudes.

I demonstrate that informants may represent different categories with regard to different spheres of their lives. Ibrahim, who I describe as resigned in his daily life with regard to gaining employment, securing his children's education and ensuring financial security, could also be thought of as restless with regard to his asylum application. This is because he spent much of his energy on understanding the asylum system, following up his asylum claim and advocating for himself. One of his main aims in his life —what is at stake— was for his children to access education. He thought that he could achieve this by ensuring his family's acceptance as refugees and resettlement to a third country. In focusing on the asylum case, however, his children's education and lives suffered. It is possible for informants to exhibit different strategies and attitudes towards managing risk at different points in their lives as well.

This brings me to the first shortcoming of the typology. The typology reflects only what informants told me, for the duration that I was able to maintain a relationship with them. Some of my informants have been resettled in European countries since I last met them. Although I have not yet spent extensive periods of time with them, I found some shifts in informants' attitudes towards the new decisions that await them. I found, for instance, that Rasoul does not have the social positioning he had when he was in Turkey, due to language barriers and the isolation of migrants in his country of

residence. He has maintained ties with Turkey and other refugees he knows who have since left Turkey, and misses his previous social life in Turkey deeply.

The second challenge of the typology is its situatedness. The attitudes that I document may only exist within a certain structural context. Whatever the legal status of my informants, there is always a degree of flexibility built into the system, which informants could negotiate to their advantage. Although they did not face the level of discrimination they faced in Iran or the more immediate threats to their physical safety that they faced in Afghanistan, in some regards their lives were similar in that they live in a country where personal relations are important in all aspects of daily lives due to the level of discretion built into the bureaucracy. In countries with different bureaucratic traditions or more restrictive policies, different attitudes towards managing risks may be more valuable.

A third difficulty associated with the typology, and decision-making in general, relates to theorising decisions taken in a family. Individual members' understanding of risk and preferences for managing risk may not be reflected in the final decision because of internal family dynamics relating to age, gender and caregiving roles. It was therefore difficult to separate my informants' efforts in managing risk from the family's efforts as a collective.

Finally, it is not always clear what is at stake in decisions. Some informants such as Arash, Javid and Hamid had very clear priorities in their decision-making process. Although these priorities shifted overtime, what their perception of the risk was singular. Arash, for instance, took several migration-related decisions for his education, but while studying his priorities shifted to obtaining residence in Turkey, which he achieved through his marriage. Informants such as Gulbahar and Asal were singularly focused on the wellbeing of their children, which is a broader and more complex risk. Thirdly, informants such as Daoud appeared to have several priorities. Daoud wanted his daughter to have a good life and to get education, but he also had professional ambitions for himself, which he sought to achieve through the migration process.

These shortcomings of the typology also underscore the central argument of this thesis that decision-making is context-dependent. While the typology I constructed for my informants may not be transferrable to a different situation, it is for this very reason that it is important focus on decision-making processes in their socio-cultural context. To return to the question with which I started this chapter, I argue that it is therefore possible to explain within-group variation in decision-making with social theory, and with socio-cultural theories of risk in particular.

I had initially thought that I would divide all my informants into the three categories. I did not do this because of these shortcomings. The typology is the product of my observations and relationships with my informants over a limited period of time. Furthermore, I was not as involved in the lives of some informants as I was in others. For all its shortcomings, however, I believe that this typology most accurately represents my findings and answers my initial research questions.

8.2 Directions for Future Research

I have identified four main areas of research as important for further study. These largely correspond to the subsidiary themes that emerged from my research, which I did not have the opportunity or the theoretical background to explore during fieldwork. The first area of future research relates to the legal consciousness of migrants regarding the legality and illegality of (their) migration status, particularly of migrants who come from fragile states or have a long history of displacement. In hindsight, I would have asked questions to better understand how my informants conceptualise the duties of the state towards its citizens and migrants, whether this differs between their desired countries of destination, the countries where they were previously resident and Turkey. Secondly, related to the first theme, how asylum seekers conceptualise the resettlement process is under-researched, especially as it pertains to protracted refugee situations. The opportunity for resettlement is central to the physical and mental wellbeing of asylum seekers and is a central occupation for many. I would have liked to have asked my informants more questions about who, among Afghan refugees, get resettled and why they think this is, and how they think the resettlement process works in general. I would complement this research with the

perspectives of refugees who are resettled. An informant who was resettled views his success as both a consequence of his hard work in advocating for himself, using his social contacts, and as a consequence of divine will, for instance. The third topic for future research would be a deeper understanding of the embodiment of migration and the everyday violence of living with uncertain legal status. The final issue would be to understand better how policy makers and state authorities understand migrant decision-making, particular with regard to what they perceive to be risks. In medical anthropological research on risk, it is usual for the 'expert' perception of risk to be described clearly, so that it can then be contrasted with how the subjects of the policy understand risk. As this thesis has shown, there is much to be said for a deep and more nuanced understanding of how migrants perceive risk and act according to that perception.

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