

FORGOTTEN PEOPLE ON THE STREET: HOMELESS MEN IN İSTANBUL

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İSTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

DECEMBER 2014

FORGOTTEN PEOPLE ON THE STREET: HOMELESS MEN IN İSTANBUL

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
İSTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

BY

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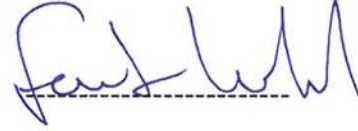
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN
SOCIOLOGY

DECEMBER 2014

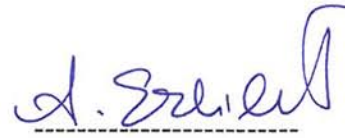
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ABSTRACT

FORGOTTEN PEOPLE ON THE STREET: HOMELESS MEN IN İSTANBUL

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December 2014, 66 pages

This thesis aims to analyse problem of homelessness in Istanbul. It is not known exactly how deep the problem of homelessness is in Istanbul in quantitative terms. In contemporary literature there are few studies therefore, it necessary to conduct further academic research on this problem. This work mainly focuses on why homelessness remains an unsolved problem in Istanbul. The state, communities and charity programs do not have the issue on their agenda and thus do not seek solutions. The İBB (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality) has one service of providing homeless people access to gyms as temporary shelters during the winter, however, when the weather becomes warm again; it makes them return to the streets. In the field of civil society, *Şefkat-der* which is the only association, which provides a shelter for the homeless, can reach a very limited number of homeless men. Finding a solution to homelessness is not something that can be done by the state or religious communities or by civil society alone, thus the problem has to be solved by all of them. This is a qualitative research, and contains interviews and observation as techniques. Fourteen homeless people, consisting of few who have been living on the streets for a long time, and few, who have been living in the shelter *Şefkat-der* for some time, have been interviewed. These men talked about their experiences on the streets of Istanbul by answering my questions as to how long they have been living on the streets, why they are homeless, which conditions have made them become homeless, and finally, as to whether they still have any family or not. Based on the findings of this study, I conclude that in this period the state has become increasingly invisible and insufficient. The state, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), communities and foundations have to compliment each other in order to establish a possible solution for this ongoing issue.

Keywords: Homelessness, homeless men, shelter, social exclusion, criminalization, stigmatization.

ÖZ

SOKAKTA UNUTULAN İNSANLAR: İSTANBUL'DAKİ ERKEK EVSİZLER

İşiker, Filiz.

MA, Sosyoloji Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Ferhat Kentel

Aralık 2014, 66 sayfa

Bu tez İstanbul'daki evsizlik sorununu analiz etmeye çalışmaktadır. Sorunun niceliksel açıdan derinliği bu konuda yapılan çalışmaların yetersizliğinden dolayı bilinmemektedir. Bugünkü literatürdeki çalışmaların eksikliği sorun üzerine akademik araştırmaların ilerletilmesini ve daha derinlemesine yapılmasını gerektirmektedir. Bu metin temel olarak evsizliğin İstanbul'da çözülme-yen bir mesele olarak sürmesine odaklanmaktadır. Devlet, dernekler ve yardım kuruluşları gündemlerine bu sorunu almamakta ve bu soruna çözüm aramamaktadır. İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi (İBB)'nin evsizlere yönelik, kışın spor salonlarında barınma sağlama gibi bir hizmeti bulunmakta. Ancak bu hizmet sadece soğuk havaları kapsadığı için, havalar ısındığında evsizler sokağa dönmek durumunda kalmaktadır. Sivil toplum alanında bu mesele ile ilgilenen tek dernek olan Şefkat-der, çok sınırlı sayıda evsize barınma sağlayabilmektedir. Bu çalışma niteliksel bir çalışma olup, derinlemesine mülakat ve gözlem teknikleri kullanılmıştır. Bazıları uzun süredir sokakta yaşayan ve diğerleri Şefkat-der'in evsizler evinde yaşayan 14 evsiz birey ile görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bu bireyler İstanbul sokaklarında evsiz olma deneyimlerini paylaştılar. Sokakta yaşadıkları süre, sokakta olmalarının sebepleri ve şartları ve ailevi durumlarına dair sorularını yanıtladılar. Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarına dayanarak, evsizlik meselesiyle ilgili olarak devletin bu dönemde görünmezliği ve yetersizliğinin söz konusu olduğu iddia edilebilir. Dolayısıyla, devlet, STKlar, cemaatler ve vakıflar, bu süregelen meselenin çözümü için ortak çalışmalar yapmak zorundadırlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler; Evsizlik, evsiz erkekler, barınak, sosyal dışlanma, suçlulaştırma, damgalanma.

To My Parents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful Allah and His provision of the opportunity and capability of writing this.

The deepest appreciation goes out to my thesis advisor Professor Ferhat Kentel for his seminal evaluation and analysis and his support throughout my studies. Further thanks to Associate Professor Alev Erkilet and Assistant Professor Eda Ü. Yücesoy in accepting to be part of my thesis jury and for their valuable contributions and evaluation.

Special thanks to TÜBİTAK *2211 Yurt İçi Lisansüstü Burs Programı* (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey 2211 National Graduate Scholarship Programme) for providing material support for me throughout my graduate education.

Special thanks also go to my family members; my mother Nevin Işiker and my father Mehmet Işiker, my brother Nurullah Işiker with whom I shared the same house. He put up with me during the whole arduous process of writing a thesis. A thank you to each of my other siblings Fatma, Figen, Deniz and Murat Işiker and to Ali Bedir, Merve Işiker and Rıdvan Işiker for their moral support and motivation.

A thank you goes out to my friends for their help during the interviews; Aybüke Ekici, Jandar Hussein, Fatma Betül Demir, and Kelemet Çiğdem Türk. Special thanks also goes to Akife Alan, Büşra Bulut, F. Zişan Tokaç and Huri Küçük and my other friends for moral support.

Thank you to Hilal Kına and Yakoob Ahmed for editing my thesis.

I would like to thank İSAM and BİSAV for their libraries in Istanbul. As well as the Hazar Association and its founder Ayla Kerimoğlu.

I would like to express my gratitude to Muammer Pamukçu for their valuable contributions. Mustafa Ulusoy, motivated me and made me believe that I could write

this thesis. A warm thanks goes to Hayrettin Bulan for all contributions to my thesis, and to myself, in terms of all I learnt about homelessness.

A very special thanks goes to the generosity and openness of all the homeless men whom I interviewed for this study. Without them this thesis would be incomplete. Thank you with all my heart.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	v
Öz.....	vii
Dedication.....	viii
Acknowledgements.....	ix
Table of Contents.....	xi
List of Abbreviations.....	xii
CHAPTER.....	1
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Analytical Perspective and Fieldwork.....	5
2.1. Research Method.....	5
2.2. Field Experiences and Literature Review.....	8
3. Homelessness and Exclusion.....	11
3.1. Theory of Social Exclusion.....	11
3.1.1. Criminalization.....	15
3.1.2. Stigmatization.....	17
3.2. What is home?.....	19
3.3. What is homelessness?.....	21
3.4. Types of Homelessness.....	26
3.5. History of Homelessness in the World.....	28
4. Homelessness: Case Study İstanbul.....	30
4.1. Contemporary Homelessness in İstanbul.....	33
4.2. The Reasons of Homelessness in Turkey.....	34
4.2.1. Economic reasons.....	35
4.2.2. Family.....	36
4.2.3. Mental illness / Alcohol Addiction.....	36
4.2.4. Wars and Natural Disasters.....	39
4.3. Public Policy And NGOs.....	40
4.3.1. The Gym As a Public Policy in Istanbul.....	41
4.3.2. NGOs Example: Case of <i>Şefkat-der</i>	45
4.4. Self-Survival Tactics of The Homeless.....	50
4.4.1. Mosque and Coach Station.....	53
5. Conclusion.....	57
Bibliography.....	61

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABB	Ankara Büyükşehir Belediyesi (Ankara Metropolitan Municipality)
ADNKS	Adrese Dayalı Nüfus Kayıt Sistemi (Address Based Population Registration System)
ASPB	Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı (Ministry of Family and Social Policies)
AŞTİ	Ankara Şehirlerarası Terminal İşletmesi (Ankara Main Bus Terminal)
DİB	Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı (Presidency of Religious Affairs)
FEANTSA	The European Federation of National Organizations working with the Homeless
İBB	İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
<i>Şefkat-der</i>	Evsizlere Güçsüzlere Açlara Cinsel Kurbanlara Şiddet Mağdurlarına Şefkat Kapısı Yoksullukla Mücadele ve Ötekilere de İnsan Hakları Derneği
TBMM	Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (Grand National Assembly of Turkey)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In October 2011 I was trying to decide on a topic for my thesis. I was having difficulty in choosing a topic, as I wanted to select a subject from everyday life that was not common and had not been dwelt on much. That month a man was found to have been frozen to death at a bus station in Şişli, Istanbul. People from the neighborhood identified him as Faruk Bağlar, a homeless man who lived on the streets in the area. However, apparently nobody had done anything to help the man, and he had died alone, at the bus stop on that rainy winter night. I have always been sensitive about the homeless but had not considered the issue seriously until hearing of the incident that winter. The small news article on his death triggered me to investigate further on the issue, including choosing this event as my thesis topic. Thus my effort to understand homelessness in Istanbul began.

As I started to research and listen to the self-survival tactics and experiences of homeless people in Istanbul it became apparent that homelessness was connected to the inadequacy of the state, as well as religious charities, local communities and society in general. It has often been claimed that Turkey is a country of socially responsible citizens, and where there are many religious communities connected to charity organizations, which take care of those in need. I began questioning to what extent the state, the municipality and the religious charities provided aid to homeless people, especially in Istanbul. The aim of this study is to understand the homeless men who live in the modern state/communitarian society. This study also describes the life of homeless men who live in Istanbul. Under the umbrella of that mentioned above, I also seek to answer some related questions: “What kind of street experiences do the homeless encounter?” and “Who are the people who define themselves or are defined as homeless?” “What were they doing before they became homeless?” “Do the homeless generally have any family or not?” “How do the homeless survive? What are their self-survival tactics? By the means of the answers of the homeless will try to understand this issue through the eyes of the homeless.

On the other hand, there are some important issues that need to be addressed as well, such as; “How are the homeless positioned, marginalized, criminalized, and stigmatized by the system/state, society through for example the news and mass media. “How do the state and the general public treat the homeless?” “Is the state and communities (religious/charitable) incapable of caring for the homeless, if so why does this take place?” These are all questions that I intend to address and to which I seek to answer in this research. While asking these questions, I took homeless male adults as the test case subjects because homeless men do not have the choices available that homeless women do in terms of shelters or services, added to this it was also easier to access homeless men. While looking into their survival strategies, I was also interested in observing what these homeless men thought about the state’s position regarding the issue of homelessness.

I first tried to carry out a general research (on the internet and writing material, books, research) on homelessness in Turkey however I could not come across any research besides a few articles and two forensic medicine thesis on homeless deaths.

There is no public policy regarding the issue of homelessness in Turkey, thus there is no institution in service. In large cities like Istanbul, Ankara and Bursa there are some temporary practices so that the homeless do not freeze to death in the winter. The municipalities open a few main gym salons or some other empty places of the governorship are opened for the homeless. Especially in Ankara, there are guesthouses which only function during the winter. However in Istanbul there are no places which serve the homeless, in 2013 there was a shelter opened by the Istanbul governorship however it was closed in 2013. Besides this when we look at the civil/NGOs sector dealing with homelessness we see only *Şefkat-der*, which was formed in 1996.

Şefkat-der is a small, not well known foundation, started in Konya by an individual named Hayrettin Bulan, who later opened a house for homeless men in Istanbul in 2011, and extended the work to helping sex-workers, refugees and women who are victims of violence. My first visit to *Şefkat-der* was three years ago, where I met its founder Hayrettin Bulan, who told me the purpose of the association and its activities regarding homeless people. I noticed that Hayrettin Bulan never used the word

“homeless” instead referring to them as “our (the countries/communities) homeless people”. He was trying to use the limited sources he had available as an individual to reach people and inform them of the urgency and severity of the issue of homelessness in Istanbul and Turkey. I decided to work as a volunteer in organizing events in order to increase visibility and create awareness about homelessness. Around the same time that I decided to write my graduate thesis about male homeless people in Istanbul.

Chapter 2 contains analytical perspective and methodology used in this thesis. In it, I provide detailed information about the research methods used. These are mainly the data regarding my case study gained through in-depth interviews, and personal observations. The in-depth interviews were conducted with homeless men who have lived on the streets in Istanbul and in the *Şefkat-der* shelter/affordable housing system between the years 2013 and 2014. The fieldwork and literature review carried out will take place in this chapter.

In Chapter 3 I evaluate my fieldwork material in light of the theory of “social exclusion”, and relevant theories which are connected to the larger theme of social exclusion. These terms of, “stigmatization” and “criminalization” have been used in order to understand and evaluate the situation of homelessness. There are details are of regarding the questions asked during the in-depth interviews. These are respectively “What is a home and homelessness?”, “Who are the homeless?”, “What is the process of becoming homeless?”, “What types of hazards exist on the street?”, “What types of abuse are the homeless exposed to on the streets?”, “How do the homeless survive?”. Additional questions are: “What is the role of the state in taking care of homeless persons?” and “What is the history of homelessness in the world?”.

In Chapter 4, the history of homelessness will be provided in Istanbul. The policies that have been implemented while seeking solutions of the problem throughout history will be explored. The attitude and work of charity organizations, NGOs, civil societies and the state regarding homelessness will be explained. The extent to which charities and the state are able to produce a solution to the problem of homelessness in Istanbul is discussed. These issues will be handled based on my interviews carried out with homeless men and with a volunteer at *Şefkat-der*. This chapter will be an

explanation of the life and experiences of homeless persons in Istanbul who I interviewed, both the men who had experienced homelessness in *Şefkat-der* and the homeless persons I interviewed on the streets of Istanbul.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion and contains an evaluation of the findings of previous chapters.

CHAPTER 2

Analytical Perspective and Fieldwork

2.1. Research Method

This study is based on qualitative research; it combines qualitative techniques in a case study. In this study I used a case study to understand male homelessness in Istanbul as a research method. A case study is a detailed study of a particular individual, group, or situation; a combination of research techniques may be used to describe the “case”¹. Carrying out a case study was appropriate for my research question to attempt to “describe, understand and explain the homelessness case study Istanbul” as it included a multi-perspective analysis and not only the perspective of actors, but also of relevant groups of actors and the interaction among them. It includes observation and interviews, and the case study approach is strong in representing reality as it reports actual behavior. It covers the complexity of social reality. As Robert Yin states “the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events.”² Thus because I wondered about the world of the homeless, I used a qualitative method and not quantitative method. Because while in a quantitative method, data represents social events outside of the interviews themselves, in a qualitative method the data provides the direct world of the interviewees, and how they interpret this world through experiences and feelings. As the meanings here are constructed socially they are sensitive to the contexts in which they are built in, and the data obtained during them are more detailed, rich and deep than those obtained through quantitative research.³

Homelessness is a process and this study aims to understand how the process of homelessness is formed. For this reason, it tries to make meaning of this process through the techniques of interviews and observation. In the process of homelessness

¹ Carl L. Bankston, *Sociology Basics (Magill’s Choice)*, Volume 2, Salem Press, New Jersey, U.S.A., 2000, p. 351

² Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, second edition, Applied Social Research Method series Volume 5, Sage Publications, London, New Delhi, 1984, p.3

³ Elif Kuş, *Nicel-Nitel Araştırma Teknikleri*, Anı yayıncılık, Ankara, 2013, pp.129-130

it will make use of the term of social exclusion to understand the issue. Whether this term is a result of homelessness or a reason of homelessness will be discussed with the data derived from the interviews. When analysing the interviews I used the qualitative descriptive analysis method, I will use direct quotation from the transcripts of the interviews and field notes from observation.

The research started in 2013, and the in-depth interviews using the semi-structured interviews were conducted during the winter and spring months of 2014, where I interviewed fourteen homeless men who live in different areas in Istanbul. Seven individuals I interviewed lived on the streets and the others lived in shelters, such as the house provided by *Şefkat-der*. I also interviewed the head of the *Şefkat-der* association.

Firstly, I conducted a brief research on a few governmental institutions and NGOs that are connected to the homelessness issue in Turkey. These institutions were the municipality, NGOs, and the ASPB. Secondly, I tried to reach the governor of Istanbul, but was unsuccessful. My application for an interview was turned down because I was informed that the only existing official shelter for homeless men in Beyoğlu had stopped functioning and that they did not deal with the issue any more. They sent me an e-mail explaining this situation and advised me to go to the ASPB instead.

I had been in the field and had in a sense started my fieldwork before I decided to write my thesis on this topic. As a result, when I began my thesis, the experiences I gained beforehand were helpful for me. One of these experiences was the vigil/protests of “*Birimiz Üşürse Hepimiz Üşürüz*”⁴. (*‘If one of us shivers, all of us shiver’*) This was a vigil carried out by 8 mostly religious civil society groups. These vigils were carried out three times throughout the winter of 2011 aiming to create awareness about homeless people in Istanbul. In the vigils the groups publicly invited people to join them to spend the night outside two important locations in Istanbul namely at Taksim square and at the Eyüp mosque in solidarity with the homeless while demanding officials to carry out a policy regarding the homeless.

⁴ Tuba Olgaç, “Birimiz Üşürse Hepimiz Üşürüz” November 7, 2011, accessed April 18, 2014. <http://www.on5yirmi5.com/haber/guncel/olaylar/66472/birimiz-usurse-hepimiz-usuruz.html>

Some homeless individuals attended the protests as well, as the vigils were supported by some public figures from the political opposition. I also participated in them, and it gave me the opportunity to learn more about the issue. These vigils became a pilot field research for my studies as it provided me the chance to observe the homeless. This enabled me to learn more on how to communicate efficiently with them, which greatly assisted me while carrying out the main interviews of my thesis.

The aim of this research is to understand and put forward why the homeless men in Istanbul live on the streets. There are homeless families, women, men and children on the streets. Particularly large is the number of refugees who escaped from the war, which has continued for the last 4 years in Syria and have come to Istanbul from the refugee camps. However, in my research I had to exclude refugees, children and women this was due to the lack of existing research on homeless men in Istanbul, added to this the feasibility of the study would also have become difficult if I had extended the scope of the research to other groups.

I excluded other groups because these other categories of people required different research. The reasons for the homelessness of homeless men and those of women or families may be different. Again, the homelessness of refugees includes reasons like war. These are reasons I carried out my research with a limited number of male homeless in Istanbul.

Also I was curious about a more specific group, which was male homelessness. The refugees and children who are forced to live on the street can also be the topic of another research. Particularly regarding children who live on the street, there is a fair amount of written material, as on the issue of women faced with violence, however there is unfortunately no research carried out in a sociological sense on male homelessness in Turkey.

As mentioned earlier, I carried out my interviews in two different locations. One was the on streets of Istanbul itself. The other was at *Şefkat-der*, the only permanent shelter in Istanbul and the only place where the homeless could shelter for an unlimited period of time. The persons I interviewed on the street generally consisted

of the homeless who I come across often and who live on my regular journey routes of Aksaray and Vefa in the Fatih area.

By the means of the vigils which I had attended earlier, I knew the homeless more than before and it was not very difficult for me to approach and reach them. I can say that at times I faced difficulty communicating with the homeless, because they have lost trust in people whom they are not familiar with, thus they questioned the reason for my research. Some were curious on what benefit they would attain from the research due to the fact that they told me that sometimes journalists would come and present news items on their plight but that this was meaningless for them. They said that they would be remembered particularly in the winter months, but that they struggled under difficult conditions for the rest of the year.

I told them that I was curious about the issue of homelessness and that beyond this I wanted to do something for them, therefore they talked with more ease, telling me that I should tell the officials of their difficult situation and that something had to be done for them to urgently help them leave these conditions. I told them that I had observed how bad their conditions were and that I would try to do what I could.

I didn't have difficulty reaching the homeless staying in the house of *Şefkat-der* because by the means of the vigils I attended earlier, I knew *Şefkat-der* had remained in contact with them. The shelter had opened soon after the vigils. Thus I was able to carry out the second part of my research with persons who stayed in *Şefkat-der's* shelter after spending many years on the street.

2.2. Field Experiences and Literature Review

In order to understand the experiences of homeless men, I conducted using semi-structured interviews. I interviewed 14 homeless men whose ages varied between 24 and 55. They have been homeless for periods varying between 3 months and 15 years. 7 of them were living on the streets while the others were staying at the *Şefkat-der* shelter. My interviews consisted of questions regarding their names, age, the time spent on the streets, their experiences while on the street and their survival

strategies, their relationships and trust of other people and their expectations on the future. Each person told me a different story of homelessness.

Homelessness is not an easy topic to study. Listening to the homeless men's stories about their lives on the street in a state of hunger, cold and loneliness often left me emotionally distressed. Another difficulty was reaching other studies and research conducted in Turkey about the problem. Sources were scarce in the academic literature. I discovered a PhD thesis about homeless deaths between 1991-1995 in Istanbul, but this was in the field of forensic medicine. This is the first known study about homelessness in Turkey.⁵ There is another PhD dissertation in the field of forensic medicine by "Murat Yağın, titled "The deaths of the homeless in Ankara between the years 1997-2006".⁶ According to this study of the homeless who died 91.33% were male and most deaths were in the age groups of 31 to 60. Most of the deaths were observed in the autumn or winter. There are two other studies which have been conducted on the homeless in Ankara by the Social Services Department of Hacettepe University. Vedat Işıkhın studied Ankara's homeless in 1995⁷ and Ercüment Erbay studied homeless people who live in AŞTİ (the main bus terminal of Ankara), Ankara Governorship's shelter and ABB (Ankara Metropolitan Municipality) shelter in 2013.⁸ In addition, Uğur Özdemir from Hacettepe University has authored an article where he draws a general framework about homelessness.⁹ There is the report¹⁰ regarding homelessness in Turkey, prepared by some NGOs in

⁵ Gürçın Altın, "1991-1995 Yılları Arasında İstanbul'da Görülen Evsiz Ölümleri", Trakya Üniversitesi Uzmanlık Tezi, Edirne, 1997.

⁶ Murat Yağın, 1997-2006 yılları arasında Ankara'da Evsiz Ölümleri. Tıpta Uzmanlık Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Adli Tıp Anabilim Dalı Ankara, 2009.

⁷ Vedat Işıkhın, Kentlerin Gölgesinde Yaşayan Evsizler, Kardelen Ofset, Ocak, Ankara, 2002.

⁸ Ercüment Erbay, Evsizler; Sokakların Görünmeyen Yüzleri, SABEV, Ankara, 2013.

⁹ Uğur Özdemir, "Evsizlik ve Evsizlere Genel Bir Bakış. A General Framework for Homelessness and Homeless People" in "Toplum ve Sosyal Hizmet", Cilt 21, Sayı 2, Ekim 2010. <http://www.manevisosyalhizmet.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/evsizler.pdf>

¹⁰ Türkiye'de Evsizlere Dair Rapor, 2011. <http://www.emekveadalet.org/wp-content/uploads/Evsizler-icin-Rapor.pdf>

2011. Besides these there is an article by four¹¹- titled “Psychiatric Morbidity of Homeless People in Istanbul.” Another article titled “Psychiatry and Homelessness.”¹² In this publication, although the majority of homelessness is said to be a multi-dimensional problem, the homeless in particular have been assessed as mentally ill people. Likewise, in the article "Homeless and Community Health"¹³, homelessness is defined as a major public health problem. This perspective gives a narrow framework for understanding homelessness but it also medicalizes the homeless. There is also an article¹⁴ titled “Homelessness, Poverty and Deprivation” in an architecture journal. The aim of the article is to shortly “ review the responses given by architects to imbalances in society through their professional work.” Finally the monthly journal¹⁵ of the DİB (Presidency of Religious Affairs) in November 2012 set aside its theme for homelessness and with reference to Islam, emphasized that the responsibilities of society is not to exclude the homeless, but to treat them with mercy and compassion and to help ease them back into society.

The aim of the literature review is to show how other studies on this issue have been carried out and point to the study methods used by others. It puts forward key ideas regarding the issue.¹⁶ The reason I looked at studies on homelessness in Turkey was to see if there was any work carried out on male homelessness, and if so in which aspect it was carried out. However I was unable to find any research on this issue. This is why I hope that my study will be a small step in filling this lack of research on homelessness in Turkey.

¹¹ Oğuz K. Karamustafalıoğlu & Bahadır Bakım & Mustafa Güvenli & Başak Özçelik & Uğraş E. Uzun. “Psychiatric Morbidity of Homeless People in Istanbul” *Düşünen Adam: The Journal of Psychiatry and Neurological Sciences* 20 (2007), 88-96.

¹² Ahmet Türkcan & Solmaz Türkcan, “Psikiyatri ve Evsizlik: Bir gözden geçirme çalışması”, *Düşünen Adam*; 1996, 9 (4): 8-14.

¹³ Ayşe Ergün & Nesrin İlhan, “Evsizler ve Tolum Sağlığı” *Aile ve Toplum Dergisi*, Ocak-Şubat-Mart 2010. yıl:11, 5 (20): 79-90.

¹⁴ Özlem Erdoğan Erkarlan, “Evsizlik Yoksulluk ve Yoksunluk” , *Mimarlık Dergisi*, sayı 347, Mayıs-Haziran, 2009, <http://www.mimarlikdergisi.com/index.cfm?sayfa=mimarlik&DergiSayi=361&RecID=2066>

¹⁵ *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, Kasım 2012, sayı 263

¹⁶ W. Lawrence Neuman, *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Third Edition, Pearson ed.2012, p.73

CHAPTER 3

Homelessness and Exclusion

3.1. Theory of Social Exclusion

A Chinese painter Le Song who draws watercolor portraits of homeless people in Los Angeles strives to show the feelings, emotions and dignity of the homeless in a painted form. His explanation of his art of work expresses the social exclusion faced by the homeless;

My drawings portray homeless people in Los Angeles. In China, the homeless are neglected by the general population and considered to be a burden on society. I have noticed that most people ignore the homeless that populate the streets of Los Angeles. Perhaps guilt, fear, and disgust compel people to look away. My drawing and watercolor portraits portray these ignored and neglected faces and demonstrate my respect and compassion for them.¹⁷

I found that making portraits of the homeless to describe their frame of mind to be very interesting and meaningful.

Social exclusion is the process of being excluded from any social, economic, cultural system, which might harbor the possibility of social integration.¹⁸ Especially those employed in temporary and insecure jobs in agriculture, children, the uneducated, women, the elderly, prisoners and people with disabilities are exposed to the danger of social exclusion in Turkey.¹⁹ It is also possible to add to this the immigrants and the homeless. Social exclusion is a situation which emerges on the social level and state level. If the social spending and policies of the state do not encompass all the parts of society then this leads to the isolation of a group of people. Other forms of social support also involve the exclusion of certain groups. These are usually

¹⁷ Le Song, Ignored Face, M. Thesis, California State University, Northridge. CSUN: Scholar Works databased, 2012, p. iv

¹⁸ Tijen Şahin, Sosyal Dışlanma ve Yoksulluk İlişkisi, Sosyal Yardım Uzmanlık Tezi, Ankara, 2009, p.11

¹⁹ Ibid., p.113

disadvantaged in some way and the homeless are one of these disadvantaged groups. The homeless are groups that are excluded by the state, charities and society, thus homelessness is a form of social exclusion. Homelessness can be explained in many different concepts but in this study I explain it through the lens of the concept of social exclusion.

The segregation which the homeless suffer by the state can be given as an example of social exclusion in Turkey. Since the population census ADNKS (Address Based Population Registration System) applied without curfew as before the year 2007, population data and population movements have been updated. However, homeless people who have lived on the street for many years are obviously not in this system because they do not have any address. This application is a kind of social exclusion which leads to segregation by the state. Therefore, homeless people are unable to benefit from any citizenship social security and social aid and are ignored. The homeless people who I interviewed stated that they were employed before becoming homeless, and they paid taxes to the state, but after they became homeless, the state would not accept them as citizens. In addition to the state, aid organizations exclude homeless persons because of the fact that they do not have a residence address. Mehmet, one of the homeless men I interviewed, when asked for help to go to one of the largest charities in Turkey described the situation he faced:

I went several times to the charity. They said to leave an address, I showed the mosque courtyard I stayed in. They said 'bring a residence document', how can I get residence document I do not have home. They said 'We help in this way'. I had asked for financial aid they would not help for a home, but perhaps would help financially. I went a couple of times, I went to write a petition and to another charity to ask for help. They said that we couldn't do anything when it is not official. Our workers will come and determine if you are suitable for help.

The concept of social exclusion was developed in France by René Lenoir to define and analyse poverty as a social policy theory and European welfare.²⁰ René Lenoir was the Secretary of the State for Social Action in the government of Jacques Chirac. Hilary Silver quotes from René Lenoir describing excluded groups in French society "He estimated that "the excluded" made up one-tenth of the French

²⁰ Megan Ravenhill, *The Culture of Homelessness*, Ashgate, e-BOOK, 2008, p. 41

population: the mentally and physically handicapped, suicidal people, aged invalids, abused children, substance abusers, delinquents, single parents, multi-problem households, marginal, asocial persons, and other social ‘misfits’. All were social categories unprotected under social insurance.”²¹

Social exclusion can also be explained as a result of insufficient state practices and economic policies. When we look at how the term social exclusion is used in European countries and in the USA we see that they are defined in terms of situations specific to those countries. One of the main reasons why the term social exclusion emerged first in France is their adoption of a certain understanding of the social welfare state, which would later spread to other countries in Europe.

In the USA in place of the term social exclusion the term ‘underclass’ is used more often. The term underclass is used more, to refer to the black community and refugees, consumption processes and class relations.²² Fikret Şenses explains that the term underclass in the US refers to the more specific context of a large group who “are unable to join the work force as they are affected by the lack of employment.”²³

According to the sociologist Faruk Sapançalı, social exclusion is specific to modern developed societies and “with the help of rational legal laws, in a rational bureaucratic process and made on the basis of equal citizenship rights and responsibilities, and occurs due to the weakening of formal support where state intervention is in question.”²⁴

One of the most important reasons why homelessness emerges is the serious weakening of this formal support. Together with this the support which Faruk Sapançalı calls informal support is more a support-base on blood relation or personal

²¹ Hilary Silver, Social exclusion and social solidarity: Three paradigms International Labour Review, Vol. 133, 1994/5-6, p.53

[http://www.bristol.ac.uk/poverty/ESRCJSPS/downloads/research/uk/1%20UK-Poverty,%20Inequality%20and%20Social%20Exclusion%20\(General\)/Articles%20\(UK%20general\)/Silver-Social%20Exclusion%20and%20Social%20Solidarity.pdf](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/poverty/ESRCJSPS/downloads/research/uk/1%20UK-Poverty,%20Inequality%20and%20Social%20Exclusion%20(General)/Articles%20(UK%20general)/Silver-Social%20Exclusion%20and%20Social%20Solidarity.pdf)

²² Tijen Şahin, ibid., pp. 18-20

²³ Fikret Şenses, Küreselleşmenin Öteki Yüzü, İletişim Yay., İstanbul, 2003, pp. 90-91

²⁴ Faruk Sapançalı, “Avrupa Birliği’nde Sosyal Dışlanma Sorunu ve Mücadel Yöntemleri, Çalışma ve Toplum Dergisi, 2005/3, pp. 55-56

relations, familial relative or citizenship relations, and provides support that prevents the exclusion of the individual.²⁵

In Turkey, although the number of homeless people are not known, when compared to homelessness in Europe and the USA, it can be said that Istanbul is in a much better situation due to informal support networks, which are better compared to Europe and the US. However we cannot say the same thing for formal support. The state in this sense is not institutionalized and furthermore does not provide any legal assurances on the provision of the basic right of the right to shelter. But the UNESCO states that this right includes all individuals and groups living in the city including families, tenants who do not have ownership rights, the homeless and nomads, travellers and Gypsies.²⁶ In Turkey the state does not have a general or specific social policy on the homeless. Again UNESCO states “municipalities, are responsible to ensure the temporary sheltering of the homeless in hostels, shelters and pensions until they find a lasting solution.”²⁷ However if we look at the example of Istanbul, the İBB, only gathers the homeless, allows them to use a gym during the harsh winter months and when the weather gets warmer, a large number of the homeless are forced to live back onto the streets again.²⁸ Thus, a lasting solution does not exist, what is done is to merely save people from freezing to death when there are harsh weather conditions. But it is a fact that homelessness is not simply an issue to do with having a shelter it is also a matter of being deprived of many social rights.

Eoin O’Sullivan quotes from Gosta Esping-Andersen and Daly refer to definitions of homelessness in the context of social exclusion in this manner:

Homelessness was an extreme form of social exclusion generated by the failure of housing and welfare regimes to provide adequate services.” Homelessness is thus one of the results of social

²⁵ Faruk Sapançalı, *ibid.*, pp. 55-56

²⁶ Senem Zeybekoğlu Sadri, *Kentsel Dönüşüm ve Kentte İnsan Hakları*, in *Kentsel Dönüşüm ve İnsan Hakları*, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yay. İstanbul, 2013, p.5

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.5

²⁸ A large number of the homeless are forced to return to the street, those who would like to return to their hometowns are provided the bus fare by the municipality. See: " 377 homeless are being hosted at the Metin Oktay Sports center in Sarıyer. Currently 323 people are staying at the center, 80 have returned to their hometown, 60 to their families. January 8, 2013. Accessed November 20, 2014. <http://www.ibb.gov.tr/tr-TR/Pages/Haber.aspx?NewsID=20889#.VH-Ued6Curc>

exclusion. Amartya Sen explains how homelessness can be a result of certain deprivations; “being excluded from social relations can lead to other deprivations as well, thereby further limiting our living opportunities. For example, being excluded from the opportunity to be employed or to receive credit may lead to economic impoverishment that may, in turn, lead to other deprivations (such as undernourishment or homelessness).²⁹

Amartya Sen thus states that social exclusion can be a factor leading to homelessness. As a result, social exclusion is a dynamic process which occurs as a result of the lack of new liberal policies and the welfare state in finding solutions to the problems of society. It is caused by inequalities in the distribution of income and excludes individuals from society.

The process of someone becoming homeless is the best explanation of this dynamic process. The process of homelessness of individuals who have been spoken to in this study, generally are caused by the effect of a hard economic situation on relationships and family relationships, and the breaking of connections with the family leading to the persons becoming depressed and becoming homeless.

At this point, the inability of the state to provide a solution to the individual, its lack of a policy which provides the individual with any sort of social protection, leads to the problem of social exclusion. Minimizing social exclusion and ensuring social integration can be both possible with the work of the state, civil society and communities together.

3.1.1. Criminalization

Criminalization is an indefensible and inhumane approach. Society or security forces and the press accuse homeless people of being potential criminals. For example, when American photographer/tourist Sarai Sierra was killed in Istanbul, in 2013, the first to be blamed as suspects of the crime were the homeless, as the killer had left

²⁹ Amartya Sen, “Social Exclusion: Concept, Application and Scrunity”, Master of Trinity College, Harvard University Social Development Papers No.1, Office of Environment and Social Development, Asian Development Bank, June 2000, p.4

the body at the ancient walls of the city where mostly the homeless lived.³⁰ While the murderer did turn out to be a homeless person, nevertheless *Şefkat-der* and the homeless in general were troubled with the homeless being labeled as potential criminals, resulting in the carrying out of protests on the incident.

Mustafa is a homeless man (interviewee) expressed a similar example to me:

One time it happened in Ankara, I was in a bad state, when the trauma was bad, I went to lie down in the hospital's emergency, I overslept on the heating, and the heating burned, left marks on my cheeks, I went to a park later and a man came and he showed his ID card. I said I did not ask for your identity. He was from the MIT (National Intelligence Organization) and accused me of stealing. He said, "You're a thief, you robbed there last night. I'll call the police."

Sadık is a homeless man (interviewee) said "You know the Üsküdar pier it is very cold, all the taxi drivers know me, they said, 'Sadık bring the fruit boxes lets use them to warm up.' We made a fire and burnt them. The police came and started to talk to me, the police said to me, and threatened me 'I will take you to the forest'." The police did this only because he regarded Sadık as a criminal because he was homeless.

In the report published in 2013 by TESEV on existing Turkish police legislation, there are details on how the terms like rogue, drunk, unemployed, weak, and beggar criminalize these persons: "Terms in the police legislation like 'rogue', 'drunk', 'beggars', which criminalize beggars and rogues can be read both as the construction of morality and a strategy to control poverty. Particularly 'roughness' is a category which refers to young men of lower income who are unemployed and 'idle' and refers to their incompatibility with the economic and work system."³¹ Thus the homeless are also regarded in this category of unemployed idle and are criminalized.

³⁰ Justin Vela, "Suspect in Sarai Sierra murder confesses he bludgeoned Staten Island mother when she resisted advances" March 19, 2013, accessed April 20, 2014. <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/suspect-sarai-sierra-murder-confesses-article-1.1291952/>

³¹ Zeynep Gönen & Biriz Berksoy & Zeynep Başer & Mehmet Uçum. Ed. Belgin Çınar, "Polis Yasalarının Ruhu: Mevzuatta Söylemler, Araçlar ve zihniyet", TESEV Siyasa Raporları Serisi Güvenlik Sektörü 5, TESEV Yayınları, 2013, pp.66-68

All of the examples mentioned above, show how the homeless are criminalized by laws and the security mentality of the state.

Usually, the bus or train terminals are shelters for the homeless. However, security staff in the terminals does not allow the homeless to stay there. Homeless people are seen as potential criminals and as beggars or drug addicts etc. If one asks an ordinary person about homeless people, mostly, they will define the homeless based on their imaginations. Some people think that homelessness is a lifestyle choice and that the homeless choose to live on the streets. But in actuality we know very little regarding the reality of the homeless.

James D. Worsly who is the former manager of a homeless shelter in the USA points out common stereotypes of the homeless:

Most homeless people are single men who are drunks and/or drug addicts. Homelessness is not particular to one ethnic, age or social group. Homeless people are dangerous and should be feared. Homeless people are uneducated and unemployable. People choose to be homeless. Homeless people don't want help, they just want a hand out.³²

3.1.2. Stigmatization

Stigmatization leads to a form of control over individuals by attributing and determining their current identity according to their past conditions which in turn leads to a negative effect for the individual.³³ The influential sociologist Erving Goffman refers to three types of stigma. The first are “ abominations of the body - the various physical deformities.”³⁴ These ‘physical deformities’ cause a person to feel bad and in turn step back from society itself and get isolated. For instance I interviewed a homeless man named Mehmet who had scoliosis disease. This disease

³² James D. Worsly, Underrepresented Population: The Homeless, MS, LRT/CTRS Facility Manager Past Homeless Coordinator, Mecklenburg County Park & Rec. (fourth and fifth slayts) http://www.slideshare.net/worsljd/homeless-presentation?qid=1cd3a779-5841-4cd9-9583-a4492ecef5c9&v=default&b=&from_search=85

³³ Anton J.M. Dijker & Willem Kommen, Stigmatization, Tolerance and Repair, Cambridge University press, New York, 2007, p. 6-8

³⁴ Erving Goffman, Stigma, London, Penguin, 1963, p.14

causes a curvature of the spine and hump. He talked about the negative effects of this disease, and how he thought his disability had an affect on him not being able to marry, as he was ill and lonely and said he felt stigmatized. In another example a physical disability was an obstacle to find a job. Cevat a homeless man (interviewee) become unemployed as a result of an accident at work and could not find a job after suffering breaks in his toes rendering him disabled and unable to work, saying that “no one gives a job to crippled people”.

The second type of stigma defined by Erving Goffman is connected to character. A persons character may be perceived as “weak will, domineering or unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid beliefs, and dishonesty, these being inferred from a known record of, for example, mental disorder, imprisonment, addiction, alcoholism, homosexuality, unemployment, suicidal attempts, and radical political behavior.”³⁵

One having served a prison sentence is a common example of such a stigma. After being released from jail a person is stigmatized by society, with a criminal history causing many difficulties in life. Ali, was a homeless man (interviewee) who had injured a man and got into a fight in the past thus resulting in a prison sentence for a certain period of time. He said that he had applied roughly seven to eight times for a job to the public unemployment office but was unsuccessful each time, and claimed that he could not find a job either because of his imprisonment or because he was old. Serdar, another homeless person that I met at *Şefkat-der* has no future expectations because of his past history. He expressed this by saying that he could not have a comfortable future “because always my criminal past will not leave me alone.”

The final stigma stated by Erving Goffman is the tribal stigmas of race, nation, and religion. These are stigmas that can “be transmitted” and can “equally contaminate” many individuals in.³⁶

In the “Homeless People and Community Health article” by health sciences academicians Nesrin İlhan and Ayşe Ergün discovered some prejudiced evaluations

³⁵ Ibid., p.14

³⁶ Erving Goffman, Ibid., p.14

against the homeless. For example, “Although homeless people who live on the street are not dangerous in daylight, they are dangerous at nights for society and themselves.”³⁷ This example is a generalization on the homeless, as those who are not homeless can be as inclined to crime as much as a homeless person.

Stigma involves extreme negativity. While homelessness is a stigma in itself, someone who is stigmatized due to other reasons as well faces larger challenges. For example one who is both homeless and an ex-inmate or has a visible physical defect becomes more stigmatized by society, and faces difficulty continuing his life, leading to social exclusion. Stigmatization can be the result of the actions of society or the state.

For instance this year the city of Marseille in France brought up a controversial practice of issuing ID cards for the homeless which detail their health issues through a yellow triangle to be worn on their clothing. The practice was protested as resembling the Nazi era practice of forcing Jews to wear yellow stars, as well as of breaching medical confidentiality and of discrimination. However the authorities including the deputy Mayor defended the practice as allowing “above all firefighters and care workers to get access to essential information in order to identify, give efficient help and often to save the lives of people lacking a social safety net.”³⁸

While this is an example of a more extreme and public form of stigmatizing the homeless, it shows the extent to which this can reach and how not only society but the state is also involved in the stigmatization of the homeless.

3.2. What is home?

To understand what homelessness means, one first needs to look at the meaning of what constitutes as “home” and what this term means to a respective individual. The

³⁷ Ayşe Ergün & Nesrin İlhan, “Evsizler ve Tolum Sağlığı” Aile ve Toplum Dergisi, Ocak-Şubat-Mart 2010. yıl:11, cilt:5 sayı:20 Ankara, p.80

³⁸ French homeless forced to wear 'yellow triangles', December 4, 2014, accessed December 4, 2014. <http://www.thelocal.fr/20141204/french-city-issues-yellow-triangles-to-identify-homeless>

home has an important role in an individual's life both physically and spiritually. By not having a 'home' this negatively affects a person in many aspects, because every individual wants a home where he or she can feel that they belong, where they feel secure and can be at ease. A home provides more of a life area than a place to shelter.

According to Fatih Kucur a Turkish social policies expert, no matter where we go as individuals, or for how long we are gone, in the end we are always faced with a desire to return to a place we call 'home'. Our homes surround us, protect us, and give us the confidence to live our lives, and can be likened to a fortress of a castle, which if it were to be destroyed, would mean the destruction or end of people and communities as well. Since ancient cultures, the home is the place where one builds his life. However, due to modernization, the place "home" has undergone a shift in definition, and today often, home is merely a place or structure where one can take shelter.³⁹

A home provides people a sense of belonging, as expressed by Todd Depastino:

Perhaps no category of human experience exerts more ideological power than that of home. Fundamental and universal, home nonetheless defies simple definition, for it exists in memory and imagination as much as it does in brick and mortar. More than mere shelter or the means of social reproduction, home provides a well of identity and belonging, 'a place in the world.'⁴⁰

Owning a house is almost equal to having a family. Being homeless is in a way like being without a family and being desolate. As the American social scientist Christopher Jencks points out;

Many Americans still use the term "home" as a synonym for the place where their family lives. People without family ties are then "homeless" no matter where they live. Building on this conception, American sociologist used to describe men who lived in skid-row

³⁹ Fatih Kucur, "Eviden konuta, yaşamaktan barınmaya, insanın ve evin dönüşümü" in, Diyanet Aylık Dergi, Sayı: 263, Kasım, 2012, p. 9

⁴⁰ Todd Depastino, *Citizen Hobo: How A Century Of Homelessness Shaped America*, The University of Chicago Press, 2010, p. xvii

hotels as homeless (...) Sociologist called these men homeless because they lived alone and seldom saw their kin.⁴¹

Turkey is a Muslim society. In Islam, mosques while being places of worship are also named as 'The houses of God'. This refers to everyone being able to enter the mosque. A house is a signifier of physical and abstract meanings at the same time. The house has an important place in religious texts. When one looks at Islamic text it can be seen that various places of worship are described as a house e.g. Bayt al Maqdis ('The House of the Holy') in Jerusalem. The emphasis on the Ka'bah as a holy site referred to as the Baitallah or 'the House of God' is foundational to Islamic belief. The word "home" in Arabic means "a place where one spends the night". However in our day mosques do not fill this function. They have become spaces only accessible during prayer times. This is why mosques have lost their quality of being a 'home'. For example, the homeless are not accepted in the mosques. Most of the homeless individuals I talked to said that they were not wanted even in the courtyards of mosques.

One of the most known idioms in English is "home sweet home" which implies the preference of ones home to all other places. In Turkish, to marry is '*evlenmek*' as well as '*yuva kurmak*' meaning to set up a home (*yuva*) and also '*dünya evine girmek*' which literally means to '*enter the house of the world.*' These idioms imply to the fact that togetherness is meaningful only when it takes place under a common roof. However, a home may not signify the same things for some people. This is partly connected to a perception of life. For example even if scarce, there may be people who choose homelessness as a way of life. Or it will be hard to say that a person who has no peace in the house that he or she lives in has any connection to the house to be a 'home'.

3.3. What is homelessness?

Homelessness is a complex and multi dimensional social issue which exists in developing and developed countries, has various reasons, and needs urgent attention.

⁴¹ Christopher Jencks, "The Homeless" Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1994, p.3

While homelessness is defined generally as not having a place to stay, staying at homeless shelters or with other people such as relatives can also be included in homelessness.

In the article where he evaluates homelessness, the social services professional Uğur Özdemir points out on the current situation regarding homelessness;

Homeless is one of the most important social problems of the world today. According to the reports of the UN there are 100 million homeless people in the world. Homelessness, which is a combination of so many social problems, is also one of the indicators of the tragedy of humanity in the 21. Century.⁴²

The head of *Şefkat-der* Hayrettin Bulan defines the homeless as “heartbroken”.

There are those who it is obvious have lived for years on the street, they are in a wretched state, in rags, some have a big bag, scattered hair, beard, some have torn shoes, no laces, sometimes they have no shoes only slippers. These (people) are obvious at first glance, there they have a common feature that even if they have money, restaurants will not accept them, they cannot even enter the toilets, even we enter the malls for shelter when we are cold although we have our own houses and are not going to shop, but they cannot enter there either.

FEANTSA⁴³ “the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless, was established in 1989 as a European non-governmental organisation to prevent and alleviate the poverty and social exclusion of people threatened by or living in homelessness.”⁴⁴ This organization explains homelessness: While there is

⁴² Uğur Özdemir, Evsizlik ve Evsizlere Genel Bir Bakış, Toplum ve Sosyal Hizmet Dergisi, Cilt 21, Sayı 2, Ekim 2010, p. 77 <http://www.manevisosyalhizmet.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/evsizler.pdf>

⁴³ FEANTSA, The European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless. “FEANTSA currently has more than 130 member organisations, working in close to 30 European countries, including 25 EU Member States. Most of FEANTSA’s members are national or regional umbrella organisations of service providers that support homeless people with a wide range of services, including housing, health, employment and social support. They often work in close co-operation with public authorities, social housing providers and other relevant actors. FEANTSA works closely with the EU institutions, and has consultative status at the Council of Europe and the United Nations. It receives financial support from the European Commission.” <http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=878>

⁴⁴ FEANTSA, ETHOS - European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion,. <http://www.feantsa.org/spip.php?article120&lang=en>

no common definition for homelessness, homelessness can be basically defined as the absence of a home. Usually it involves people who do not have a roof over their heads or people who live in temporary arrangements such as night shelters or any other kind of temporary accommodation.⁴⁵ In his thesis where he looks into homeless deaths in Ankara, Murat Yağın states that definitions of homelessness vary according to social and economic situations and the social structures of countries.⁴⁶ These varying definitions are also a reason why homeless people cannot be counted.

There is no consensus on the definition of homelessness in the literature. The definition often used relates directly to the objectives and ethos of the body or organization defining it. Thus all definitions become relative and prone to variation. In spite of this, definitions have been shaped and have formed public policy, molded and manipulated public opinion, identified causes and defined solutions.⁴⁷

According to The Encyclopedia of Homelessness, “Homelessness has been a topic of interest for religious organizations, journalists, social reformers, public policy analysts, filmmakers, photographers, poets, novelists, songwriters, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, historians, geographers, physicians, government officials, law enforcements agents, attorneys, and social workers.”⁴⁸

Homelessness is a widespread issue not only in Turkey but also in Europe and America. “It is also social marginalization.”⁴⁹

Some definitions claim that the issue of homelessness and the absence of housing need be separated. For example FEANTSA’s definition on being homeless is “There is a general consensus that homelessness is a process rather than a static phenomenon

⁴⁵ FEANTSA, What is Homelessness. August 20, 2014, Accessed 10 September, 2014. <http://www.feantsa.org/spip.php?rubrique172&lang=en>

⁴⁶ Murat Yağın, 1997-2006 yılları arasında Ankara’da Evsiz Ölümleri. Tıpta Uzmanlık Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Adli Tıp Anabilim Dalı Ankara, 2009, p. 3

⁴⁷ Megan Ravenhill, The Culture of Homelessness, Ashgate, e-BOOK, 2008, p. 5

⁴⁸ David Levinson, (ed.), Encyclopedia of Homelessness, Volume 1, Berkshire Publishing Group, Sage Publications, London, 2004. p. xxii

⁴⁹ Ahmet Türkcan & Solmaz Türkcan, “Psikiyatri ve Evsizlik: Bir gözden geçirme çalışması”, Düşünen Adam; 1996, 9 (4): 8-14, p. 8

that affects many vulnerable households at different points in their lives. This explains also why there is no clear dividing line between homelessness and housing exclusion.”⁵⁰ The issue of homelessness cannot be addressed apart from the related issue of housing. This is true everywhere today, but especially so outside the United States where homelessness is often defined as a lack of housing or suitable housing.⁵¹

Among the definitions of homelessness in Turkey made by social scientists is the one by Uğur Özdemir, who unlike other definitions mentioned above, defines homelessness according to appearance:

Alone, uneasy, proud, dirty and badly smelling, furious, haughty, strange-looking and man of tough stories. These adjectives come together they are mostly used to describe the homeless people whose population increase all around the world day by day, who use bus terminals, railway stations hospitals or bank teller machines as their homes, and who are the haughty-looking actors of tough stories.⁵²

Vedat Işıkhhan who is a social service expert and one of the first persons to explore research on homelessness in Turkey, states, homeless people live in coach stations, railway stations, at ATMs, under bridges, in parks or in any marginalized part of society; homelessness has become a contemporary issue associated with poverty, inadequate income, mental illness, unemployment, and over population.⁵³

According to research conducted in Japan, the USA and Japan’s homelessness definitions differ. While in the United States, homelessness is understood as “a condition ranging from sleeping on the street or in shelters to being marginally

⁵⁰ FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless. <http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=878>

⁵¹ David Levinson (ed.), *ibid.*, p. xxii

⁵² Uğur Özdemir, *ibid.*, p.77

⁵³ Vedat Işıkhhan, “Türkiye’de Evsizler Sorunu ve Sosyal Hizmet,” *Küreselleşen Dünyada; Sosyal Hizmetlerin Konumu, Hedefleri ve Geleceği Sempozyum Sunum Kitabı*, T.C. Başbakanlık Sosyal Hizmetler ve Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu, Nisan 2006, Antalya, p. 38-39

housed or in institutions (e.g., hospitals, jails, and nursing homes) with no home to return.” In Japan, on the other hand it can mean “sleeping rough in public places”⁵⁴ Megan Ravenhill quotes from sociologist Theodore Caplow, “homelessness is a form of alienation from the rest of society, caused by the loss of an ‘affiliative bond’ (work, family or home) that links or connects the individual with society. The lack of an ‘affiliative bond’ effectively excludes them from society.”⁵⁵ Various countries have legal definitions of homelessness. Looking at these we can see how varying understandings exist on the issue. For example the UK’s legal definition of homelessness states:

Families with dependent children and without access to accommodation are considered homeless, as well as those accepted as in ‘priority need’ on the grounds of ‘vulnerability’ (i.e. aged over 60, pregnant, suffering from mental ill-health, young people in danger of exploitation). However this definition tends to exclude single homeless men which are the large majority of the homeless.⁵⁶

The Table 3.1⁵⁷ includes definitions of homelessness in various European countries. In Bulgaria, Netherlands and Spain, there is no official definition for homelessness and the number of homeless is unknown. Homelessness in these countries is associated with housing condition and is being focused on social process. But in Denmark, homelessness is equivalent to social exclusion. It is understood that childhood period has influences on homelessness as well. Also, in Denmark, people have a right to claim for a shelter but not for housing. In Italy, unlike other countries, the main reasons for homelessness are extreme poverty, extreme hardship and multiple deprivation. In general, housing issue in other countries is identified as the reason of homelessness. Unlike other countries, in Hungary, there is an emphasis on economic factors in post-socialist state. As a result, majority of factors that is used to identify homelessness are classified as housing issue, welfare and social process that can be seen from the results of European Countries included in the table. In addition,

⁵⁴ Mike Hasegawa, “We Are Not Garbage!” The Homeless Movement in Tokyo, 1994-2002, Routledge New York & London, 2006, p. 148

⁵⁵ Megan Ravenhill, p.6

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.6

⁵⁷ Adopted from Megan Ravenhill, *ibid.*, pp.9-10

reasons for homelessness can be considered as unemployment, social exclusion and other economic factors. Thus, the reason for homelessness is not just a problem of lack of housing hence only resolving this problem will not be a solution.

3.4. Types of Homelessness

There is a wide range of types of homelessness. Despite the fact that homeless people may stereotypically appear the same on the outside, however they all have different life stories and experiences. Therefore they cannot be classified under the same homogenous category. The results of a study conducted in Los Angeles, states that homelessness can be divided into new and old homelessness: new homelessness appears due to hopeless and tragic life events, as opposed to old homelessness where psychiatric illness has been the cause.⁵⁸

This study defines further categories for homelessness; one of these is episodic homelessness, which refers to people who have a risk of becoming homeless over time. These people are very poor and they live under the poverty limit. Another one is chronic homelessness. According to this definition the chronic homeless are those who are likely to be entrenched in the shelter system, and for whom shelters are more like long-term housing than an emergency arrangement.⁵⁹

Christopher Jencks divides the homeless into two groups as 1) street and 2) shelter homeless. Those who sleep in free shelters (the “shelter homeless”) and those who sleep in places not intended for human habitation, such as bus stations, subway trains, automobiles, doorways, and abandoned buildings. Those who sleep outside shelters are generally known as the “street homeless”, even though many sleep in

⁵⁸ Gelberg L, Linn LS, Leake BD: Mental health, alcohol and drug use and criminal history among homeless adults. *Am J Psychiatry* 145:191-96, 1988. Quoted Ahmet Türkcan & Solmaz Türkcan, *ibid.*, p.11

⁵⁹ Randall Kuhn & Dennis Culhane, “Applying Cluster Analysis to Test a Typology of Homelessness by Pattern of Shelter Utilization: Results from the Analysis of Administrative Data” (1998), University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice. p.211
http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=spp_papers

Table 3.1. European definitions of homelessness

Country	Type of definition	Emphasis of definition(s)
Bulgaria	Statistical	No official definition, no strategy for counting; 'no people, no problems'
	Housing	Based on rooflessness and housing status (shared housing; temporary shelter)
	Welfare	Secondary cause being unemployment, capacity to work, poverty, asylum seekers and Roma displacement
Denmark	Social exclusion	Social exclusion is synonymous with homelessness
	Continuum	People have 'right' to shelter not housing
	Social process	Definitions derived from existing projects/services
	Welfare	Association between childhood factors and homelessness
		People's lack of housing is due to the individual's social and mental problems
France	Housing	Based predominantly on housing (quality and type)
	Statistical	The 'norm' approach
		Other contributing factors are causes or correlates of the housing problem
Hungary	Social Process	Loss of housing is last phase of a social process
		Personal factors – including poor social networks, poverty
		Roofless, those living in shelters for the homeless
		Economic factors in post-socialist state – including mass unemployment
Italy	Welfare	Primarily caused by poverty: extreme hardship, multiple deprivation
		Social welfare problem, focusing on serious marginalization and desocialization
		No housing – part of the multiple problems of 'no abode'
Netherlands	Statistical	No official definition
	Housing	Based on rooflessness and housing status (live in institution, squat, the streets)
	Welfare	Socially vulnerable (social, psychological and physical well-being). Those unwilling/ unable to access welfare facilities
Spain	Statistical	Homeless are statistically invisible
	Housing	Housing conditions
		To be excluded – have to have housing, homeless are those using services for homeless people

abandoned buildings, bus stations and other indoor locations. Shelter homeless, “those who sleep in free shelters”.⁶⁰

3.5. History of Homelessness in the World

According to Joel Blau, there are five major periods in the history of homelessness throughout the world which present different conditions and forms of homelessness. The first period is pre-industrialization where the issue was the lack of houses for the general population, thus making the concept of homelessness different from today. The second period is that of industrialization which took place largely in the eighteenth century. In this period unemployment increased due to mechanization, migration from rural to urban spaces intensified and homelessness was temporary. The third period is that of colonization. The exploitation and slavery of the natives of Asia and Africa led to a new period of homelessness. The fourth period of homelessness was experienced because of the spread of industries. Homelessness reached its peak in this long lasting period which saw the emergence of capitalism. The final period is the one shaped by the market economy after the 1980s. The number of the homeless increased with the reduction of spending on social welfare programs, and decreases in wages and the increase of low paid jobs.⁶¹ Looking at the historical process of homelessness, it can be seen that the development of capitalism through industrialization, due to its effect on social life led to an increase in homelessness. Furthermore, it can be seen that the homeless are becoming increasingly heterogeneous.

According to Peter Rossi, there are differences among homelessness in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. While in the past the homeless mostly consisted of elderly people and elder men, today, the homeless are generally defined as anyone sleeping on the streets, in abandoned places or in their cars.⁶² This change in the typology of

⁶⁰ Christopher Jencks, *ibid.*, p.4

⁶¹ Joel Blau, *The Visible Poor: Homelessness in United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992

⁶² Peter Rossi, *Without Shelter*. Homelessness in the 1980, New York: Priority Pres. 1989

the homeless comes about through economic crises, the inefficiency of social spending and housing policies of the state.

One particular period/type of homeless was the hobo. The hobos have an important place in American history.

The origin or specific meaning of the word *hobo* is unknown. There are several theories that have been put forth over the years, but there is no concrete proof that any of them has a valid basis. The only thing that we know for a fact is that the term *hobo* came into being shortly after Civil War, as did the first train hoppers, which also appear in the same time frame. It was after this period that train hopping soon became synonymous with the term *hobo*.⁶³

The hobo was a wanderer and a prototype of the migratory worker who would find temporary jobs. Some regarded the hobo as a wanderer or “A free spirited human who put his personal freedom ahead of his desire for worldly gain.”⁶⁴ Among the reasons for becoming a hobo is child abuse, the death of a family member. These reasons are also the common reasons of the homelessness today. There were an estimated 100,000 hobos in the United States. The Depression years added to the homeless and wanderers in the country due to rising unemployment.⁶⁵ While during the late 19th century hobos and tramps were at the attention of officials, with the 19th century it was the skid rows, transient workers and retired single men. In the 1970s a new category of homeless, of formerly institutionalized people with untreated mental disorders emerged. In the 1980s, racism and economic inequality along with a decrease in well-paid and unskilled jobs as well as the housing issue created new homeless groups which still exist in the 2000's.⁶⁶

⁶³ Charles Elmer Fox, *Tales of an American Hobo*, University of Iowa Press, Iowa City, 1989, p.1

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.1-4

⁶⁵ Charles Barber, (David Levinson and Marcy Ross, Editors), “Homelessness Handbook” Berkshire Publishing Group, Great Barrington, Massachusetts, 2007, p.12

⁶⁶ David Levinson, (Ed.), *ibid.*, p.xxi

CHAPTER 4

Homelessness: Case Study İstanbul

Istanbul has housed many foundations for those in need throughout history. This chapter will deal with homelessness in various periods in Istanbul and information and practices regarding the homeless in this city.

In the Byzantine Empire there were shelters for the homeless. Churches often served as charities. The resting areas provided by the churches were called *Ksenodokheion* or briefly *Ksenon*. This term refers to a place where the poor, orphans, elderly, and the people with leprosy could stay. Justinian I built the first *Ksenon* for people in need, and there were also the *Gerontokomion* for the elderly or ill.⁶⁷

When we look at Ottoman period of the history of Istanbul we see a group of homeless people called the “Külhanbeyi”. The Külhanbeyi was a group who carried this name because they slept and took shelter in the ‘Külhan’ or furnaces of the hamams. They wore specific clothing and spoke in a certain fashion. They would easily pick a fight and were considered a type of rogue.⁶⁸ The first hamam to be built after the conquest of Istanbul which was Gedikpaşa, became the first shelter of the Külhanbeyi. Many would shelter in the furnace section of the hamam, particularly in the winter months. One of the conditions of being a Külhanbeyi was having no family connections.⁶⁹ From the XVIII. century onwards, a portion of the Külhanbeyi began to stay in the ‘hans’ (inns), in ‘bekar odaları’ (rooms rented out by low-income single men) in shops or in coffee houses.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Nuran Yıldırım, İstanbul Darülaceze Müessesesi Tarihi, Darülaceze Vakfı Yayınları, 1996, İstanbul. p.1

⁶⁸ Server Tanilli, “Geçen Yüzyılda İstanbul’da Kabadayılar Ve Külhanbeyleri”, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Yaşamak*, Editörler: François Georgeon, Paul Dumont, Çeviri: Maide Selen, İletişim yay. , İstanbul 2003, p.138

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp.138-139

⁷⁰ Mehmet Demirtaş, “XVIII Yüzyılda Osmanlıda Bir Zümrenin Alt-Kültür Grubuna Dönüşmesi: Külhanbeyleri”, p.120

The K lhanbeyi which gained an income through begging, towards the end of the XVIII. century would also resort to robbery and extortion, leading to them being seen as a security threat to Istanbul. In 1846 the War Minister Rıza PaŐa took the 700 K lhanbeyi, sent those younger than 16 to workshops which produced shoes for the army and the rest to be soldiers.⁷¹

Following the Young Turk revolution in 1908, in 1909 legislation was made called the ‘Serseri Nizamnamesi’ (The statute of rogues) regarding the K lhanbeyi and those who were considered rogue because they disturbed the peace of society. This formed punishments such as sending the K lhanbeyi back to their own hometowns outside of Istanbul, working for a while in state works, as well as imprisonment.⁷²

In the Ottoman Empire, there was also the institution of the *Darulaceze*. This foundation was built in 1896 for migrants, homeless people, beggars, widows and orphans. *Darulaceze* literally means ‘the home of the helpless’. The term is used as charity or shelter in Arabic (a place giving temporary protection from bad weather or danger, a place providing food and accommodation for the homeless).⁷³

As a result of the Ottoman-Russian war (1877-1879), Istanbul experienced an intense wave of migration from Rumelia. Approximately four hundred thousand migrants arrived to Istanbul. Many migrants were ill or disabled, and some were widows and orphans. As a consequence of migration the streets were crowded with the homeless.⁷⁴ *Darulaceze* was built in this period by Abdulhamid II who was known for his charitable works.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Server Tanilli, *ibid.*, p.144

⁷² Mehmet DemirtaŐ, *ibid.*, p.133

⁷³ Oxford dictionary

⁷⁴ ReŐat Ekrem KoŐu, ‘‘Dar laceze (1895-1974)’’ in *klap ve Aka basımevi*, İstanbul, 1974, p. 20

⁷⁵ Nadir  zbek, *Osmanlı İmparatorluĐunda Sosyal Devlet; Siyaset, İktidar ve MeŐrutiyet (1876-1914)* İletiŐim Yay. 2002, İstanbul, p.23

The institution aimed to give aid to those in need, to protect street children⁷⁶ and to get beggars off the streets.⁷⁷ Beggars would be given employment as officers. Those who continued to beg would be collected by the municipal police and transferred to *Darulaceze*. Some would be sent back to their hometowns.⁷⁸ The Council of State formed regulations for the *Darulaceze* consisting of fourteen items. The items defined who was eligible to be admitted by the *Darulaceze*, and beggars who were not from Istanbul would be sent back to their hometowns.⁷⁹ The site contained a hospital, dormitories for women and men, as well as children and babies, a school, workplaces, a mosque, a church and a synagogue, considering there were people from different religions such as the Armenians and Greeks. It was designed to be adequate for all the needs of the poor.⁸⁰ The *Darulaceze* consisted of eighteen buildings.⁸¹ The rich would donate to the institution.⁸² In other big cities similar institutions to the *Darulaceze* would be built.⁸³ Today the *Darulaceze* no longer serves for the mission it once did.

In a journal published by the *Darulaceze* for the sixty-fifth anniversary of the *Darulaceze*, its aim was explained in poetic expressions:

To those who knock on our door, we do not ask who are you, where do you come from? If you are in distress, you are ours. You will find solace with us. Our home and heart is open to you. *Darulaceze*: the helper of the tired and worn out, the friend of the fallen, the owner of the desolate, the home of the homeless, and the protector and companion of those who take sanctuary.⁸⁴

⁷⁶ Nuran Yıldırım, *ibid.*, p.v, 22

⁷⁷ Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *ibid.*, p. 19

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-25

⁷⁹ Fatmagül Demirel, Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in Mirası: İstanbul'da Kamu Binaları, İstanbul Ticaret Odası yay. İstanbul, 2011, p. 111

⁸⁰ Nadir Özbek, *ibid.*, p. 113

⁸¹ Nuran Yıldırım, *ibid.*, p.58

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.v, 22

⁸³ Fatmagül Demirel, *ibid.*, p. 111

⁸⁴ *Darulaceze 65 Yaşında 1896-1960*, İstanbul Belediyesi Sosyal Hizmetler Tesisi, İstanbul, 1960, Vakıf Matbaası.

After the 31st March incident in 1909 Abdulhamid II was dethroned. In order to ensure order, the *Meclis-i Mebusan* (Assembly of Deputies) passed new laws that involved people who had recently migrated to Istanbul, beggars and any ‘suspicious persons’ meaning those seen as potential criminals.⁸⁵

With the Second Ottoman Constitution, the solution of the state and the parliament regarding the problems of ‘begging’ and ‘rogues’ was to open options of work where such characters who were not predisposed to working and to influence them to “get used to work” and be “kept busy”. Areas of employment were planned as mainly road building, various public works projects and mining. The reason why the state did not open reformatories, gurebahanne workhouses and industrial schools and instead sent beggars and rogues to hard labour jobs was the Ottoman treasury was not favorable to these sort of institutional solutions.⁸⁶

4.1. Contemporary Homelessness in İstanbul

Homelessness today is largely experienced in metropolis, including Istanbul which is the most populated city in Turkey and where homelessness is becoming increasingly visible. Homelessness exists in parks, under the city walls, gardens of mosque, near metro stations, in bus stations or empty buildings. These locations change due to seasonal processes. For instance when the weather is cold, the homeless are placed into the gyms of the municipality. However they have a limited capacity. As mentioned earlier, besides this the only address where the homeless can take shelter is the shelter of *Şefkat-der* which opened in 2011 and where a small number of homeless stay until they manage to make it on their own. However the maximum capacity of this place is 20 people. Because there are no official studies on homelessness, the exact number of the homeless in Turkey is not known. According to the head of *Şefkat-der* Hayrettin Bulan there are approximately 10,000 homeless people in Istanbul and 100,000⁸⁷ in the whole of Turkey.

⁸⁵ Nadir Özbek, *ibid.*, p. 66

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.34-43

⁸⁷ Syrian refugees are not included in this number.

According to the directorate from DİB, homelessness is a modern concept. In the November 2011 issue of their monthly publication whose theme was homelessness, where they claimed:

In our tradition there is no such thing as homelessness. (...) Homelessness has not been traditionally in question in Islamic civilization either. The foundations (*vakıf*) have taken on this responsibility, and society has always provided a home for those living on the street. They have opened their own homes for them, provided special houses. Those who were stranded, those who were travellers, this extending even to (the sheltering of) animals. They built their own houses, and made houses for the birds on their walls. In this sense ‘homelessness’ is a phenomenon which has entered our world in modern times’.⁸⁸

While the directorate claims that homelessness did not exist in the past in this geography due to tradition and religion, today in Turkey where the majority of the population is Muslim and this tradition still exists, we yet find homeless people. The reasons of this are related to the process of modernization. Modernization which began in the late Ottoman period, and with the centralization of the state, the culture of foundations (*vakıf*) slowly disappeared.

For instance an Ottoman tradition which made homes for birds including in places of worship, could years later due to the to be the concern of appearing more European and for the modernization of the city sent 80 thousand dogs to the isolated Hayırsız Ada (Sivriada). These dogs after a while began to eat each other out of starvation.⁸⁹

4.2. The Reasons of Homelessness in Turkey

Drug and alcohol addiction, migration, mental health issues, depression, broken families, natural disasters, wrong government policies, economic crises, a decrease in purchasing power, deprivation of social security and lack of charitable works,

⁸⁸ Yüksel Salman, “Prof. Dr. Mehmet Emin Özafşar ile “ev metaforu ve evsizlik üzerine söyleşi.” Diyanet Aylık Dergi, Sayı: 263, Kasım, 2012, p. 27

⁸⁹ Ömer Aymalı, “İstanbul köpekleri Hayırsız Ada'ya niçin gönderildi?” October 10, 2012, accessed November 23, 2014. <http://www.dunyabulteni.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=230393>

occupational hazards, and poverty could be listed as the numerous possible reasons contributing to homelessness at first glance.

4.2.1. Economic reasons

Especially after the 1980s, many economic crises occurred on a large scale. The global financial crises of the 2000s increased the rate of unemployment and brought along with it many other problems. Unplanned urbanization, especially in poor areas can be mentioned among the reasons for the problem of homelessness. In this sense, because of increasing migration and urbanization an adaptation problem emerged. There are many more reasons such as different economic conditions or different socio-cultural structures.⁹⁰ Capitalism and the consumer culture are factors contributing to financial trouble of families and their disintegration. Having a strong sense of family ties is closely related to economic conditions.

Alp Çıracı, in an article discusses the reasons for homelessness in Turkey, and points out to the extreme liberalism that penetrates our lives. He asks the rhetorical question: do you think that the fact that the homeless begin to be visible in the public sphere with the 2000s, every winter, and the fact that every year a growing number of homeless has to be sheltered in the metropolis a coincidence? Or is it due to the extreme liberalism in our society, its entrance to our society, our mentality and particularly our working lives.⁹¹

Most of the homeless men I interviewed had had employment before they became homeless. For example, Salih worked at a big company. He explains the reason for his homelessness was mainly the ‘devaluation’ in 1994, during Prime Minister Tansu Çiller’s government. “The Çiller government caused devaluation and my debt tripled. My house, my three cars, my money in the bank, land I owned... I lost everything. However, in 1997, I was able clear some of my debt.”

⁹⁰ Ejder Okumuş, “Evsizlik ve Evsizler” *Diyanet Aylık Dergi Kasım*, Sayı: 263, 2012, p.6

⁹¹ Alp Çıracı, *Evsizlerin Sesleri*, Abd’deki Tartıcı, Evsizlerin Öneri, December 15, 2013, accessed October 8, 2014. <http://www.emekveadalet.org/arsivler/11455>

4.2.2. Family

Family relationships are an important effect in the process of becoming homeless.

There is a unique aspect of the childhoods of homeless people, which shows that the majority of people's routes into rooflessness began in childhood. Experiences during childhood began a series of experiences, decisions and gradual disaffection or alienation from society, the family and home. The family, relationships within the family and home environment were the strongest factors that either triggered or protected people against homelessness.⁹²

Unrest in the family, dissolution, disintegration, and divorce are familial reasons. To feel unloved or unsafe at home, poor conditions at home, abuse, oppression, conflict, neglect and indifference, even sexual abuse are effects and issues that can lead to homelessness.⁹³

Homelessness emerges in the absence of these structures of family and family bonds in traditional societies. Salih a homeless man (interviewee) his mother's death was an important factor in his homelessness. "My mother passed away in 2004, and I broke all bonds to life. A mother's love and support are unique." As Salih, most homeless men I interviewed, mentioned the lack of family as reasons for their homelessness. Mustafa a homeless man (interviewee) said, "a great number of people who live on the streets grew up as orphans or have grown apart from family, or have grown up in a family that is has problems. So if you come from an orphanage in particular, you cannot establish a family of your own or adapt to the system.

4.2.3. Mental illness / Alcohol addiction

One of the most important reasons for homelessness is chronic psychosis-related functional failure. This causes conditions of psychosis. According to this, chronic mental patients become homeless because they cannot cope with challenges of life.

⁹² Megan Ravenhill, *ibid.*, p.2

⁹³ Ejder Okumuş, *ibid.*, p. 6

The first psychiatric publications on the subject were published in the 1980s, and changes in practice of psychiatric approaches began to be seen in the following period. The subject has drawn attention to failure due to de-institutionalization and public health services. Consequently according to this research, mental illness as a cause of homelessness, and the role of economic and social problems has been defined as symptoms.⁹⁴

Research also suggests that ethnic differences exist in mental health and substance abuse problems among homeless individuals. European-American homeless individuals are more likely to report a history of psychological difficulties and to report that these difficulties contributed to their homelessness. Looking at a lifetime prevalence of substance abuse disorders, one study found that European-American homeless men report higher rates of both alcohol and drug abuse problems than their African-American counterparts.⁹⁵

When one looks at the percentage of mental illness among the homeless, for example in Europe, it can be seen that approximately 30% of homeless people have mental disorders. However mental disorders may not be the direct reason for becoming homeless, because it is not known when these people developed mental disorders, or whether the disorders developed before or after becoming homeless. The main reason for immediately assuming mental illness as the cause of homelessness is prejudice against the mentally ill, where these patients have low incomes that disable them from functioning in society. In the USA, seeing mental illness as a source of becoming homeless is a cliché. Because the spread of homelessness took place before the mentally ill were removed from institutions. So, it was expressed that homelessness caused by mental illness is a myth.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Cohen O, Thompson K: Homeless mental ill or mentally ill homeless. *Am J Psychiatry* 149:816-23, 1992. Quoted Ahmet Türkcan & Solmaz Türkcan, *ibid.*, p. 12

⁹⁵ David Levinson (ed), *ibid.*, p. 6

⁹⁶ Dennis Culhane, "Five Myths about America's Homeless", *Washington Post*, 2010, July 11, 2010, accessed April 14, 2014.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/09/AR2010070902357.html>

Alcoholism causes chronic homelessness. However every homeless person is not an alcoholic.⁹⁷ Cevat is a homeless man (interviewee) for a 10 years, he is an alcoholic. He abandoned his family because of alcohol. He said

I have lived on the streets in Istanbul for 10 years. I was married; I have three children and two grandchildren. My family is in Niğde. But I do not live there because I'm a burden to my family. They cannot afford the costs of my alcohol and tobacco.

Does alcoholism cause homelessness or is it the opposite? This is a controversial topic:

Let us come to the issue of alcohol and drugs. In the 1990s, "street children" issue, "*tinerci*"s much discussed. Homeless children living in the streets because they are thinner, or vice versa relationship? On the other hand we have established for the mentally ill logic, if we go in the footsteps of our society, alcohol and drug use in middle and upper classes do not have to use the material in such to attribute to become homeless? Of course, alcoholism and drug use among middle-class homeless individuals are examples of bites. But the general trend of heavy substance use or after becoming homeless already started or dismissal, bankruptcy, an economic impact such as being unemployed or another tragedy is that after the show early. In orphanages growing or a very poor family as a child came into the world on the streets to work, places to live in the remaining substance abuse began and the way homelessness up to this point, the reasons that the "substance" is not already obvious, I guess.⁹⁸

Among the homeless that I talked to were those who had been alcoholics for a long time or had tried to stop their addiction. Those who used alcohol were those who were still living on the street. Those who were no longer addicts were those staying at the *Şefkat-der* shelter. Ali who was one the homeless (interviewee) on the street and an alcoholic described that consumption of alcohol for the homeless was out of necessity; "You can't sleep in the street in this cold, in this water. We use the alcohol to keep warm and to be able to spend time numbed till the morning. It works as a sort

⁹⁷ Baum, S. and W. Burnes (1993) *A National in Denial The Truth About Homelessness*. San Francisco: Westview Pres. p.17. Quoted Uğur Özdemir, *ibid.*, p. 81
<http://www.manevisosyalhizmet.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/evsizler.pdf>

⁹⁸ Alp Çıracı, *ibid.*

of narcotic, you are like half dead.” So alcohol is generally not a contribution to homelessness but a way for the homeless to survive in the streets.

4.2.4. Wars and Natural Disasters

Wars have also been among the most important reasons of causing extreme mass homeless worldwide. For example, the number of homeless people in Japan after World War II considerably increased. This was connected to Japan’s defeat which left the country in chaos which became worse with air raids and later the atomic bombs. For example 80 percent of the housing in bombed cities like Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed with the war.⁹⁹

Homelessness increased sharply across the country; one is immediately after World War II, which ended in August 1945, and the other is around 1992 when the Japanese economy was hit by the worst recession since the war end. As a consequence of war: “Homelessness rose rapidly in these and other cities as growing numbers of people found themselves jobless and houseless.”¹⁰⁰ In Japan, the majority of the homeless started out as regular workers, most often in manufacturing or in services and construction. Many eventually became day laborers. A significant proportion of homeless people held regular positions, before they became homeless.¹⁰¹

After the uprising began in Syria on March 15th, 2011, the civil war began and is still continuing today. Millions of people were forced to leave the country. Many fled Syria and took refuge in neighboring countries. According to research 3 million Syrians in total have left the country. While the majority live in camps, a large number live in conditions of no shelter outside the camps.¹⁰² Those who live on the streets usually beg, live in miserable conditions and are shunned by the larger

⁹⁹ Miki Hasegawa, *ibid.*, p.23

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.24

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.35

¹⁰² ORSAM (Ortadoğu Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi) Rapor, April 2014, accessed 17 May 2014, p.5 http://www.orsam.org.tr/en/enUploads/Article/Files/2014424_orsam%20rapor%20189tur.pdf

population. This is similar to the 1990's in the Gulf War, of the occupation of Iraq by the USA and mass refugees emerged. These are two examples of how war caused homelessness in the geography. Besides wars, natural disasters such as earthquake, flooding etc. can cause homelessness. For example, in 1999 the great Marmara earthquake in Turkey left thousands of people homeless.

4.3. Public Policy And NGOs

In the European context homelessness is defined in different ways, such as those, based on rooflessness and housing status, social exclusion, poor social networks, economic factors, social welfare problems or poverty.¹⁰³ However in Turkey, there is no official definition or social policy regarding homelessness. There are no established social policies in Turkey so homeless persons have to try to survive on the street's poor conditions. Homeless persons who are the unseen and forgotten faces of the street are also ignored in terms of an official response to the issue.

Sociology departments have carried out no academic study in Turkey about homelessness only three academicians in the Hacettepe University's Department of Social Work's deal with the issue of homelessness in Turkey specifically on homeless persons who live in Ankara.

In terms of services although there are some services for homeless women and children are protected in Turkey, for men who constitute large portion of homeless men, services are quite limited. The Social Services and Child Protection Agency Centers for Children and Youth provide the rehabilitation of homeless children and supporting studies to back their families. For homeless women the Social Services and Child Protection Agency has nine women's shelter.¹⁰⁴ According to data from the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, the last numbers of women's shelters are 125. 90 are ASPB, 32 are local government, and 3 are NGOs.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ see more Table 3.1 'European definitions of homelessness'

¹⁰⁴ Ayşe Ergün. & Nesrin İlhan, *ibid.*, p. 84

¹⁰⁵ Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi 1339 Nolu Araştırma Önergesi, 2014.
<http://web.tbmm.gov.tr/gelenkagitlar/metinler/302947.pdf>

Within the Beyoğlu Office of the Governorship there was a shelter for homeless men. This shelter opened in 2003 December by Governor Kamil Başar and was supported 60 thousand credit by World Bank every year.¹⁰⁶ Every needs of the homeless was responded including shelter, hygiene, eating, dressing and social security. However the shelter has not been serving homeless men since 2013 April. It was closed permanently because according to the explanation given by the Beyoğlu Office of the Governor the house needed restoration and could not serve in this manner.

Besides this there was a shelter belonging to the in Yenikapı in 2010. This a second stage shelter which served the homeless between 2004-2010. It served only in winters.¹⁰⁷ However this does not serve now. The İBB currently only opens a gym for certain periods in winter for homeless persons. Further information regarding the gym will be given in the following sections.

4.3.1. The Gym As a Public Policy in Istanbul

The İBB had been opening one of its large gyms for the homeless around the months of December and March in an arbitrary manner whenever they decide that it has become freezing point for the homeless.

According to the İBB's data between 2004-2013 2.780 homeless were hosted at gym. The homeless are gathered in the salon where they go through a doctors check up, then are able to clean themselves and are given new clothes. Those who need special care are sent to the necessary places, and those who want to go back to their hometowns are provided money for the bus fares by the İBB. The sports salon works with an 'open door' system, the homeless in the day can come in and leave whenever they want to.

¹⁰⁶ Ersin Kalkan, "Beyoğlu Evsizler Evi'ne Dünya Bankası Desteği", February 24, 2005, accessed April 9, 2014. <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=298911>

¹⁰⁷ "İstanbul'da Kar Yağışı" January 20, 2010. Accessed November 16, 2014. http://www.ibb.gov.tr/sites/akom/documents/haberler_haberdetay_0252.html

This is how the services provided temporarily for the homeless by the municipality is explained on the Internet website of the municipality. However talking to the homeless regarding the conditions at the sports salon shows a different picture. They were not very positive on the salon. They pointed out that particularly the news about the homeless persons who stay temporarily at the gym does not reflect the fact unfortunately in Istanbul. It is true that those who leave of their own volition from the gym do so because the care services are inadequate, unhealthy and the hygiene is bad. The biggest cause of people leaving from the gym is when the weather gets warm as the municipality does not to provide this service. Homeless persons are hosting in the gym and to return to the main function of the gym homeless persons are evacuated from there by the municipality staff.

Homeless persons who I talked to and who had stayed in the gym told me of inhuman conditions existing there. People with serious mental disorders and others were all made to stay in the same area. For instance Ahmet a homeless man who I talked to at Zeytinburnu, complained about the issues of hygiene; “there is a toilet problem. There are only 5 toilets. Pissiors were demounted. Why? Because it is sin.” He told me there was a stuffy atmosphere inside,

Salih a homeless man, who experienced the gym for a while, expressed of the bad conditions of the gym;

I could not breath, it was like an Auschwitz¹⁰⁸ there. After dinner, I became ill, maybe they added something to the meal. I stayed there for two nights then I left. I could not breath. If there were 10 officials, then 3 of them were food. Those who stayed there would fight. The security would come and interfere throw some out; they fight in the food queue. The doctor walks around the place. I later heard that there were 4 deaths. The state needs to categorize, to group (the people in the gym). It was like a Nazi concentration camp. I would prefer to die in the cold, even if it were -40 degrees.

¹⁰⁸ A Nazi concentration camp in the Second World War, near the town of Oświęcim (Auschwitz) in Poland. Oxford Dictionary. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/Auschwitz>

I would save money for 72 hours and rent a room but would never stay there. Who would look after me if I were infected with a virus?

Another homeless who I met Ali, made the same analogy like Salih of the camp for prisoners. Ali had described the gym as an ‘Auschwitz’;

The İBB gathers us to the gyms in the winter. The gym is likes an “Auschwitz” concentration camp. We are not slaves. There are all kinds of people, alcoholics, drug addicts or those with mental disorders. There are unsafe and dangerous conditions. We did not want to stay there. The bathrooms are messed up.

A homeless man Serdar said similar things about the gym’s conditions.

I went to the Sarıyer Metin Oktay gym. However I said there is no need for this, I am better dead outside than in here. 600 homeless persons all sleep in the same area. All there drug addicts, those who can’t take care of themselves, who wet themselves etc. I could not stay for 10 minutes there, I saw a man who asked me how did you fall in here? I said I’m leaving.

Ramiz, a homeless man from *Şefkat-der* states the gym condition “God forbid, I have never stayed at the gym, my friends say ‘the gym is the last place that people would fall into before the grave.’ ” Mustafa from the *Şefkat-der* house said, “I stayed for an hour in the Zeytinburnu gym then I left. I would prefer to stay in the Bakırköy mental institution rather than at the gym.”

The gym which the municipality opens for the homeless in the winter months is normally used as a gym. One municipal worker told that it

Unfortunately is not an accommodation facility. On cold days it can be difficult and we take the homeless as guests. But the people who use the gym are constantly asking when it will open. We have come to the end of March. Now the gym has to give its real service (as a gym).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Seyit Erçiçek, “Cemre evsizlerin kafasına düştü”, Mach 26, 2013, accessed April 13, 2014, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/22896888.asp>

Even if it only opens in freezing weather, only the homeless who are Turkish citizens are allowed in the gym. The state who does not look after its own citizens gives priority to its own citizens in terms of ethnicity. Those few lucky refugees who cannot stay in the gym and somehow hear about *Şefkat-der* go to take shelter in *Şefkat-der*. Mustafa told me about this issue and how they, due to space cannot take in all the refugees who find them.

There are Iranian immigrants at the shelter home. Because Iranian immigrants are not accepted to the gym in Zeytinburnu, officials accept them just when they are about to freeze, then when the weather gets a bit more warm they say ‘we accept only Turks here.’ Iranians are removed from the gym. Therefore we have to accept them into the *Şefkat-der* homeless home. We try to choose between the most disadvantaged between them.

As can be understood from these examples, the state which cannot even look after its own citizens, when it comes to foreigners, takes a racist attitude and does not accept them into the sports salon, prioritizing its own citizens. A good example of the states lack of social policies about homeless persons was Osman who had been staying at the *Şefkat-der* shelter for 1 year. Osman grew up in an orphanage and was found in the courtyard of a mosque when he was a baby. When he had to leave the orphanage due to his age, he came to Istanbul to find his family. However he applied to the municipality because he had no where to stay, and there he was directed by the Kadıköy Municipality to *Şefkat-der*. Osmans narrative shows the lack of solutions of the state.

Because of the lack of state policy about homelessness many homeless men try to reach *Şefkat-der* home by their own effort. Serdar, an ex prisoner, does not have a family, so he is a homeless man, told me that he found *Şefkat-der* on the Internet. Rüstem, another man I talked to from *Şefkat-der*, told me how he met Hayrettin Bulan the head of *Şefkat-der* through a shop owner while he lived in Konya. Bulan sent Rüstem to the Konya house.

4.3.2. NGOs Example: Case of *Şefkat-der*

In Turkey *Şefkat-der* is the only association which provides shelter for homeless persons in Istanbul. Hayrettin Bulan is the founder of the group. Hayrettin Bulan is a man who has devoted himself to homeless persons, orphans, migrants, and women who are victims of sexual violence. He was a businessman in Konya who took in homeless people that he thought needed help, by providing them with shelter in his own home or in hotels. A while later, to be able to do this work in a more serious manner and to reach more people he decided to establish *Şefkat-der* in 1995 in Konya. However, even before founding *Şefkat-der* he worked a lot to voice his concerns on the homeless.

To raise awareness on these issue, he made use of unconventional methods. For example, when a private radio had only been recently established in Turkey in the 1990's, he would connect to the live shows and requested the songs to be sent out to 'persons who were considering those who were freezing in the street'. If he could he would try to add in some words of information on issues regarding the homeless. He informed me that when fax became widespread he would send faxes about homeless persons, orphanages to in order to spread awareness.

Hayrettin Bulan states that the religious charity foundations which exist in Turkey today although they were established before *Şefkat-der*, did nothing regarding homelessness. He would try to direct them, personally contacting them requesting them to work on the field on the issues of those who were too old to stay in orphanages, women's murders and the need for women's shelters and the need for shelters for the homeless. However he states that they would not do anything on the issue.

I can't forget how I would go to a group talk at the time, they would each week talk about the virtue of helping orphans, the needy, with nice verses (from the Quran) with hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), and when I would say 'ok lets to this and this' nothing would come out of it, it was all only limited to talk.

Bulan thinks that one reason of indifference to the issue of homelessness that people associations and charities prefer responses in the short-term for their donations. For example, they would consider giving scholarships to students in the future as easier than caring for street children. He complains of not being taken seriously by government officials. For example in an interview meeting with someone from the municipality, he asked about shelters for the homeless and was given an irrelevant answer that they ‘gave scholarships to students.’ Bulan also told me of his meeting with the director of a private school regarding orphans where he was told that the ‘school order would be broken down’ if he accepted the orphans. Thus as can be understood from Bulan’s experiences, even charity groups, some communities and NGOs think in terms of a modern consumption mentality. None of them want to try to solve the issue, as they regard the issue of homelessness as too laborious. Sheltering the homeless, rehabilitating them, putting aside a provision for their employment and putting up people responsible for them does not interest the state.

This is one aspect of why homelessness is not solved in Turkey. Sometimes the police or municipality direct homeless persons to *Şefkat-der*’s shelter as officially there is no official policy or solution about homeless persons in Istanbul for a whole year except opening the gyms for a while. This is insufficient and is not a solution to end homelessness. Bulan said that he has to tell them that the house was for a maximum of 20 people and that condition very difficult. Individual charities are like municipality in their inadequacy on homelessness. Rüstem, one of the homeless men who stays at the *Şefkat-der* shelter says that “The issue of homeless persons is not acknowledged by any opinions, neither the religious ones, nor leftist, rightist, or humanists. I would say it very clear. What I need to be comfortable is to neither have a socialist conscience, nor define themselves as religious.”

Government policies and aid organizations for the solution of homelessness should look at what kind of policies. How much is enough for these solutions? There are no legal laws related to homelessness in Turkey. The ministry publishes circulars only in the winter months. However, this is not a solution. It is temporary and unfortunately not a humanistic regulation. Bulan criticizes how the municipality collects homeless persons to gyms only in the winter months from December to March, informs the press of this but does not make it public when they send the homeless back into the streets in March.

As I have mentioned earlier according to data by the İBB, 2187 homeless persons stayed in the gym in 2011.¹¹⁰ Bulan claims that this figures do not reflect reality because there are also many ‘hidden homeless’ and mentally disordered homeless. These persons with mental disorders are not convinced to go to the gym by municipal officials. The homeless who have to stay for long periods in the street can lose their mental health, may not want to go to the sport salons, and the officials do not insist on taking them in for shelter, so these individuals face the risk of dying of the cold. Bulan says that these people need to be taken from the street even if by force, as they cannot comprehend that they can die of cold in the street in that weather. He criticizes the practice of the municipality and claims that there is many more homeless people than the number they have put out.

Bulan complains that throughout the whole year in all of Turkey there are only two government agencies which provide shelter for the homeless. One is operated by the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality and the other by the Kocaeli Metropolitan Municipality. In the case of İzmir, information about the abundance and quality of service that can be accessed by meeting the needs of homeless emergency shelter seems to be a shining example in terms.¹¹¹ Just like İzmir, in Ankara and Bursa they stayed for 4-5 months in the winter months or in hotels or municipal homeless shelters relatively qualified guests are left to the streets again after. In İstanbul, we know the story, it is virtually the same, they too careless.

The gym was hosting for three months. That's something, that's important, it's very valuable, but it needs to be done and can be done as outlined in İzmir from that. Moreover, since 2004, which is good and bad in the Beyoğlu district governor's house, homeless people were being turned away in April for no reason, this does not match the both logic and conscience.

We talked also about these structural problems with the homeless men. Rüstem a homeless man from *Şefkat-der* talked about social justice. He told me that the government is helping robbers, no social justice, all the governments are doing the

¹¹⁰ “Büyükşehir evsiz vatandaşları misafir ediyor” March 7, 2011, accessed September 3, 2014. <http://www.ibb.gov.tr/tr-TR/Pages/Haber.aspx?NewsID=19202>

¹¹¹ Alp Çıracı, Evsizlerin Sesleri, Abd’deki Tartışmalar Ve Bir Öneri, December 15, 2013, accessed October 8, 2014. <http://www.emekveadalet.org/arsivler/11455>

same thing. There is wild capitalism in Turkey, governments are in favor of capital and the rich. Turkey needs Socialism because the masses are oppressed. The government party defines itself as Islamist. They are violating people's rights. Ramiz from the *Şefkat-der* house criticized the system. He claimed there was discrimination between men and women. He said,

There is discrimination between men and women. Men could be forced to stay on the street as women, he may need a shelter or clothes. However, everything focuses on women. I stay on the street for a long time, I also need a bed. Life is easier for women. This discrimination brings unsolvableness. There are great injustices. According to the law shelters must be opened for men as well as women. I lived in Germany, and the municipalities built small houses with single rooms for homeless persons and in that time then tend to find work. It means, they do not give me money. They are marrying. You do not have to be a citizen. The State has to solve homelessness but state does not aid us and also does not let us to take charity. For example they came on many occasions to close the *Şefkat-der* house. Some people came to help us recently from Japan, but our municipality and governorship tried to close the *Şefkat-der* house.

Mustafa a homeless man from *Şefkat-der* said “if the government or municipalities open shelter 5-10 person stay there, people would be freed but they do not do it. In Turkey, people only have pity on homeless persons, this is wrong, to say what a pity! We do not need anyone's pity.”

As an individual the right to request for social relief of homeless people are provided by law. Local government is responsible for tasks related to the homeless, which are specified by law. However with limited solutions in the winter months, they act as if the issue is solved.

As mentioned earlier, according to UNESCO housing should be a legal and human right. The government should see the housing as a right however there is no model to implement this in Turkey. The Ministry of Interior had sent circulars to the governor in 2003. According to these circulars, in each province, in the first instance at least one shelter, including overnight or for a certain period homeless people can apply for shelters or centers for the establishment of civilian and local governments and non-

governmental organizations co-operation will be provided.¹¹² The Family and Social Policies former Minister Fatma Şahin also had sent circulars to the governor in 2013 to sheltering homeless people by Social Assistance and Solidarity.¹¹³ All these official instructions are not applied in practice.

Provision of services related to the homeless and strategy development is an obligation in many European countries.¹¹⁴ However there are exceptions. According to a research on homelessness in Denmark, homeless persons complain about social security payment difficulties. They cannot receive social security payment without an address. This is the handicap of social policies.¹¹⁵

Homelessness is a growing problem in Europe. There are many NGOs trying to solve and prevent homelessness. As I mentioned earlier, FEANTSA one of these organizations is attempting to solve homelessness “housing first model” is applied in European countries. Before this model, the “staircase model” was applied. In this model, firstly homeless persons were being rehabilitated and health problems were solved but most countries prefer the housing first model. In France and Finland they apply housing first model.¹¹⁶ Housing first model firstly provides a shelter / home to homeless then other needs like a job. Because homeless need a home to feel safe.

To prevent homelessness at least as important as solving the problem of homelessness. Therefore each country has different strategies to end homelessness in the long term. For example, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy, “the southern European or Mediterranean regime is distinguished by the crucial role of family support systems. Labour market policies are poorly developed and selective. The benefit system is

¹¹² İçişleri Bakanlığı Soru Önergesi, 2013. http://www.icisleri.gov.tr/default.icisleri_2.aspx?id=2678

¹¹³ Bakan Şahin'den evsiz ve kimsesizler için "mekan tahsisi" talimatı, December 13, 2013, accessed October 28, 2014 <http://www.aa.com.tr/tr/yasam/262385--bakan-sahinden-sokakta-yasayanlara-kisi-gecirebilmeleri-icin-mekan-tahsisi-talimati>

¹¹⁴ “Avrupa Birliği Ülkelerinde Evsizliğe Yönelik Uygulamalar.” <http://www.emekveadalet.org/wp-content/uploads/Evsizler-icin-Rapor.pdf> p.11

¹¹⁵ Rasmus Christensen & Nicole Kirkwood, Homelessness in a Welfare State: Perspectives from Copenhagen. <http://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledgebase/9-homelessness-in-a-welfare-state-perspectives-from-copenhagen>

¹¹⁶ “Avrupa Birliği Ülkelerinde Evsizliğe Yönelik Uygulamalar.” <http://www.emekveadalet.org/wp-content/uploads/Evsizler-icin-Rapor.pdf>, p.11

uneven and minimalist in nature and lacks a guaranteed minimum income provision.”¹¹⁷

4.4. Self-Survival Tactics of The Homeless

In this section, attempt to the address how homeless experience ‘streets’ in order to survive and what forms of strategies and tactics they use. According to Michael De Certeau, power relations are the basis of all experiences connected to everyday life. And strategies and tactics are related to power. Strategies, based on place represent the practices of those in power. On the other hand, tactics, as the ‘art of the weak’, are incursions into the field of the dominators. Without a ‘proper’ place, tactics are based on time, such as seized opportunities, cleverly chosen moments, and rapidity of the movements, and can alter the organization of space and challenge the ‘proper’ places in the city.¹¹⁸

I interviewed many of the homeless who had a job before becoming homeless; some were working in a regular job others in part time jobs. These people have lost their jobs for different reasons. The 14 people I interviewed had two work-related accidents, which led to permanent damage to their bodies and left them jobless. The other two people could not work due to permanent physical deformation, two could not find work because they were criminalized in the past. The rest were in the negative condition of having to live for a long time in the streets and so could not work. Nonetheless, there are certain tactics for people to sustain their lives no matter where they live. The homeless living on the street implements various strategies and tactics in order to live. As it will be seen in some examples below, homeless men that I interviewed has also applied some tactics against the bureaucracy strategy of the government to transform some places like bus stations, mosque gardens or hospital emergency rooms into shelters, which they consider as safest places. Besides, homeless men may work in small-scale ways in order to survive. These may be to

¹¹⁷ Eoin O’Sullivan “Welfare States and Homelessness” in “Homeless Research in Europe” p.68 <http://www.feantsaresearch.org/IMG/pdf/ch03.pdf>

¹¹⁸ Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, The University of California Press, Los Angeles, 2004, pp.35-37

collect paper or scrap, working as a porter etc. They earn money on a day-to-day basis and sometimes not even enough to rent a hotel room for the night but only enough to eat one meal. Those who cannot work, have to do with what they find from the garbage to eat. Actually, working a regular job cannot be possible. The homeless men I spoke with at the *Şefkat-der* shelter told me about the difficulties they faced:

For example Ramiz, who is a homeless man said;

To go to a job interview, you have to dress properly, otherwise you will not be accepted for the job. When you find a job, you should shave every day and need to take a shower but if you do not have a home to go, you cannot do any of them.

Homeless persons cannot work in regular jobs because the housing problem affects them fundamentally.

Most of homeless men which I interviewed said that they wake up in the early morning; as early as the morning call to prayer which changes according to the season, between 4 and 6. Rüstem a homeless man told me about this;

The azan (call the prayer) is our wake up time. We have to wake up in that time because where we stay it should not be discovered. Those who would discover us there would hassle us and tell us to leave. Then, to wash our face and hands we go to a mosque or a toilet just opened. Then, we begin collecting the bread from the garbage in the early hours. I am not a beggar, I didn't beg. At night you do not go there before 12 pm because people are maybe there. You are lucky if you find a blanket and nylon. These protect from the cold. We sleep with our clothes we cannot remove them, we do not have a such luxury as at home.

Homeless people live drastically different lives from individuals who have a home. This includes even minimal aspects like a sense of time. Salih a homeless man told me about his time perception while on the street, "There no such thing as day. No hours. No night and day, what day is it? What was going to happen? I did not care."

Salih had participated in cross-border operation of Turkey against Iraq in 1986 and stayed at Gabar Mountain for 45 days. He set a similarity between the condition of

homelessness and soldiery. “I sleep on cardboard, or if I had one on a quilt or blanket. Only my ranger boots were missing. It was also like this while in I was a Comando in the army.”

Access to a toilet and being able to take a shower are very main needs in a human being’s everyday life. However in Istanbul, there are very few locations where the homeless can find free toilets and showers. They face this reality everyday. Mustafa, who was a homeless man said, “When you wake up in the morning right after you need to wash your hands and face and go to toilet, but if you are a homeless person, you can not do any of these.”

Loneliness was a state which many of the homeless I met complained to me of. Sabri a homeless man told me he had not always been alone;

Actually, if we don’t count the last few years before I came here, I was a person who was loved, like I would wake up early in the morning, go to work, come together with friends, like to travel, listen to music, and so on. Generally what I enjoyed most was reading, I like reading.

However now he feels alone and forgotten more so with every passing day. At the same time he sees himself as forgotten.

Homeless people are faced with numerous dangers on the street. I asked Sabri if he faced these dangers and he gave an indirect answer which implied that he had experienced a lot; “Perhaps, who can know what people have experienced, have gone through.”

Homeless persons have fears. Rüstem, who is a man who had lived for 12 years in the street told me about his fears:

A person who has lost his mental health can certainly not think about a shelter place, he will just sleep wherever he finds a place. Someone who does have a sane state of mind will think about shelter and protection first, then food will come after that if you are without food this will affect you more in the winter because the body is not burning any fuel when you are without food, you are colder, the clothes on you are like that too, like I remember wearing three pants, and 5-6 things on the top but still having to walk around with a coat on. My hair and beard are all mixed up,

even if you go to a barber, the barber will not take you in the shop. They say let him (the homeless) find a job and work but how will he work? Who will give him a job? His psychological state is bad, his physical appearance is bad, this person cannot even go and say give me one lira or buy me a bread, because he will be scared.

Alcohol was also described as one of the ways/tactics to deal with the difficulties of life in the streets by some homeless men which I interviewed.

4.4.1. Mosque and Coach Station

There are no national policies about homelessness thus there are not any institutional services for the homeless in Turkey.¹¹⁹ Homeless persons have to try to take care of themselves. They have to search for safe places to stay and sleep especially in the days where the temperature is cold. These places are mostly coach stations or railway stations, mosque gardens or hospital emergencies rooms because they think that these places are safer than the streets.

Although Istanbul is the biggest city in Turkey, there aren't any appropriate places that the homeless can shelter even in the coach stations such as Ankara coach station. Many of Ankara's homeless stay at the AŞTİ coach station. However although the coach station is somewhere where the homeless stay temporarily and seems safer than the outside, it is claimed that the homeless face harassment and maltreatment here too. Ankara's coach station is better than Istanbul coach station for homeless persons to stay in temporarily. While the Ankara coach station is a large closed structure with all the bus firms, the Istanbul coach station is not suitable for the homeless to take shelter. According to a news article an unidentified person who had no where else to stay and who stayed in coach stations applied in 09.01.2010 to the human rights commission of the TBMM (Turkish Grand National Assembly) claiming that there are about 200 homeless persons at the coach station and they are exposed to harassment and mistreatment. Ankara's homeless persons and their human rights came to the agenda of the National Assembly in 2010. The human

¹¹⁹ Ercüment Erbay, Evsizler; Sokakların Görünmeyen Yüzleri, 2013, SABEV, Ankara p.39

rights commission came into action and published a report about homeless persons who live in the Ankara coach station. This report emphasizes the inadequacy of institutions and for the homeless. The report, based on the evaluation of people interviewed in the report claims that the homeless who shelter at AŞTİ, besides having to face problems like hygiene, the cold, and hunger, also face thievery, and physical and sexual assault incidents among themselves. Despite these, because there are no better options, it is regarded that sheltering at AŞTİ is the best option. In the report, homeless persons who are interviewed complained of being treated badly in the Governorship and Municipality's shelters so they do not prefer stay at these shelters, they prefer stay in AŞTİ.¹²⁰ Although there are only 250 homeless persons staying at the coach station, based on the information given by the Governorship of Ankara and the ABB there is a shelter serving for 45 homeless persons in Ankara. In conclusion the report claims that the institutions in Ankara are lacking in terms of service quality and capacity.

The Social Services and Child Protection Agency General Directorate held that the First Social Services Council's have taken a decision in one of the following so called "Social service organizations should provide and established permanent night shelters for the homeless and orphaned who live on the streets, particularly in large cities."¹²¹

The Governorship of Ankara started a project to provide temporary shelter, rehabilitation, food and other basic needs for homeless persons in 2011. This project continued for 3 years. 3487 persons benefited from this project and were rescued from the street.¹²² Apart from this, the provinces of Bursa¹²³ and Kocaeli¹²⁴ provide

¹²⁰ Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi İnsan Haklarını İnceleme Komisyonu Ankara Şehirlerarası Terminali İşletmesinde (AŞTİ) Barınan Evsizler Hakkında İnceleme Raporu (2010) http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/insanhaklari/belge/evsizler_raporu.pdf

¹²¹ <http://www.shcek.gov.tr/1-sosyal-hizmetler-surasi-sonuc-belgesi.aspx> in "Türkiye'de Evsizlere Dair Rapor", 2011. <http://www.emekveadalet.org/wp-content/uploads/Evsizler-icin-Rapor.pdf>

¹²² "Ankara Valiliği Kimsesizlerin Kimsesi, Devletin uzanan eli, Evsizlere Kimsesizlere Uzanan El Projesi" <http://www.ankara.gov.tr/SayfaYazdir.asp?ID=2081&Shf=29>

¹²³ Ercüment Erbay, ibid., p. 48

¹²⁴ "Kimsesizlerin Evi Yeni Yerinde" April 3, 2013, accessed October 2014. <http://www.kocaeli.bel.tr/icerik/kimsesizlerin-evi-yeni-yerinde/2363/27643.aspx>

not only shelter but clothing, health services and food. Metin is a homeless man who told me about a day in the coach station in Bursa. “You sleep there at night and wake up in the morning, look around for a job or else for example I go to Bursa wherever there is food, for example morning soup, there are charities, one gives food at 9 the other at 12.”

Here if we are to turn back to the main topic of my thesis which is the homeless men in Istanbul, because there are no institutional solutions in Istanbul, we can see that the homeless try to struggle by themselves to stay alive, and look for safe places to take shelter from the cold.

The gardens of mosques are one of these places. It is chosen as it is relatively safer than the street. I met with Salih in the courtyard of the mosque in Fatih. Salih states;

I stay and sleep there because it is safe here. But I am not good with the *Imam*, he throws out my bag and blankets. The streets are very dangerous. They are a bad lot. Harassment is inevitable. Now, we are staying with two refugees from Morocco and Palestine in the garden of the mosque. They say that sometimes they are woken up by people who want to sexually harass them. These are mostly alcohol or drug addicts. After 11 pm around here it is very dangerous.

Mustafa was a homeless man, talking about the issue of mosque he told me;

Once in Kemer on a rainy day at the mosque I tried to take shelter but although I was still getting soaked from the rain, I am cold, a man comes and tells me to leave; why should I go, what did I do, they let me in the garden but not in the mosque, both those who came for prayer and the mosque people intervene, they see you as criminals. While sleeping at a mosque in Bornova, they came and said don't sleep here the police is coming I said let him come, I have no crime record, but that is how they see us.

Another place that is safe for the homeless are hospital emergencies. Mustafa and Serdar homeless men would shelter in a hospital for a while in different times and space. Serdar told me that he had stayed in the Okmeydanı hospital emergency for a long time. Many of the homeless men I met who have experienced this.

In conclusion, the findings presented that; because the state, local authorities, religious communities, civil society organizations¹²⁵ or charities, do not have any permanent solution or action plans to shelter the homeless. Homeless men living in Istanbul face a struggle on their own to survive, they are forced to take refuge at bus stations, mosques gardens or in the hospital emergency room. As mentioned in the previous section, the İBB provision of gym facilities at a certain period in the winter for the homeless is not humane, with the homeless even defining it as a "concentration camp" and feel like the people of "Auschwitz". Self-respect and pride need recognition as important concepts which are often ignored in this process, especially since many men in Istanbul have a concept of self-respect and when antagonized they feel humiliated.

The Director of Religious Affairs Mehmet Görmez, made a statement saying, that mosques were the houses of God and that everyone should be able to enter mosques, however this was not applied.¹²⁶ In fact, some mosques even lock their garden gates. So the homeless are left unable to even shelter in a relatively safe area like the courtyard of the mosque.

¹²⁵ except *Şefkat-der*

¹²⁶ "It is not anyone's right to put a lock on the door of the house of God."

"Our mosques must be able to remain open 24 hours. No matter what time a believer feels the need to worship he should not find that door locked. There is no mosque in the Islamic world which opens during prayer time then closes up when prayer time is over like a government office. We must make the mosques open all day. No worry or concern should justify the locking up of mosques. It should not be forgotten that locking our mosques with the concern of thievery is a bigger thievery than what the thieves take from the mosques." January 13, 2013, accessed December 20, 2014

<http://www.diyamet.gov.tr/tr/icerik/diyamet-isleri-baskani-gorme-z-cami-dernek-baskanlariyla-bulustu/7970>

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

This study can be regarded as an attempt to understand the issue of homelessness in Istanbul. To understand the reasons of homelessness, I initially carried out an in-depth interviews with 14 homeless men in Istanbul. During the interviews questions like the following regarding the homeless were asked; who are the homeless? What do they do in order to survive? What are their experiences on the street? The interviews showed that, homelessness can basically be defined as the lack of having a home, a place of shelter, and having to continue ones life on the streets on in shelters. Again the interviews show that there are various causes of homelessness and the complexity of the issue. Every homeless man had a different life story but the common feature of all these narratives was that they mostly involved “broken families”. However, the bases of this are economic reasons. Because a lack in terms of economy prosperity also leads to the disintegration of the family and to the beginning of homelessness. The homeless men fully felt a desolation and despair and had no hope for the future.

A sense of belonging is one of the most important things for homeless men to feel safe. Therefore, it is very important that they are provided with a shelter, albeit temporary. However temporary shelters cannot end homelessness. After providing a shelter, homeless persons need firstly psychological help (this is entirely their request), and then they need a job to survive. This may be a long process, but homelessness is not an issue that can be resolved immediately. It should be thought of in a multidimensional way by government policies, NGOs, communities and individuals. Public policies should be redesigned to shelter for homeless persons. Officials think that by providing shelters only in the winter can solve homelessness. Solutions of homelessness at the moment have been left to local authorities, and the İBB thinks that providing temporary shelters in the winter solves this problem in Istanbul. However this does not go beyond protecting the homeless people from

freezing to death in the cold weather. Homeless men are mostly dissatisfied with conditions of the gyms which they describe as inhumane.

The matter is not only of gathering homeless persons from the streets and providing them with shelter, but it is a structural problem. The main problem is there is no national policy regarding homelessness in Turkey. Homelessness is mostly seen in metropolitan cities so there are local solutions instead of national policies. Sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, the state itself may be the cause of homelessness. As a result of incorrect policies about poverty, the indirect causes of homelessness increase. In addition to this, the criminalization of homeless persons by security agencies is also a big problem. They are regarded as idle, as rogues, or potential criminals.

Homelessness is not a problem in the simple sense of housing; it is an issue when one is deprived of many social rights at the same time. The modern state leaves out homeless people starting from excluding them from the system by making them invisible. Many homeless have not seen their families for many years and are living on the streets as not registered to any address, thus are not counted in the population census. They are not seen as citizens. Therefore, homeless people not able to benefit from any social rights of the citizenship. The issue is not only to know the statistics of the homeless, this is an issue of recognition. The homeless are not given the status of respectable human beings.

When we look at the factors that lead to homelessness, we can see the impact of economic reasons, because the economic crisis, and neoliberal policies have led to the bankruptcy or dismissal of many people. It is obvious that there is a structural problem here.

Reviewing the history of homelessness in Istanbul, it can be seen that both in Byzantine and then in the late Ottoman Empire, there were foundations for the incapable, poor, homeless, beggars, sick, disabled, widows and orphans. If an institution like the *Darulaceze* is compared with current practices, the present application can be said to be extremely inadequate.

The homelessness issue has not been included in the agenda of charities -especially religious organizations- up to now except for that of *Şefkat-der*. *Şefkat-der* which is

completely based on the support of a few volunteers, has been for 20 years providing a shelter where about a maximum of 20 homeless men can stay until they can make it on their own. In addition to providing a shelter for homeless people it tries to deal with all their problems. By means of *Şefkat-der*, homeless men have an address where they turn into registered citizens and can for example apply for a health card for uninsured people. They can thus apply for both the physiological and psychological treatment of their illnesses. The homeless men feel better in psychological sense in time and they begin to work even if they initially make money though in small amounts. Other things they gain with a shelter are foundational, like washing clothes, having something to eat and having someone to talk to. *Şefkat-der* is a demonstration of how the most important thing for homeless men is to firstly feel the multi-dimensional security of a shelter.

The interviews showed that the majority of homeless people have alcohol addiction. However, this does not mean that all of the homeless are alcohol addicts. Alcohol was described as one of the ways to deal with the difficulties of life in the streets.

“In Istanbul the İBB provides the gyms as a shelter for homeless men during the winter months only, which does not solve the problem in any way. The Beyoğlu District has closed the only other shelter serving for homeless persons. The Family Ministry circulars issued every year during the winter months for open shelters for the homeless are not applied and the authorities do not make an effort to solve the problem.

This study shows that the state is the responsible authority and should be the most accountable one for providing shelters as an urgent solution for this problem. But the state can not do everything and the state is 'cold' as people feel alienated from the sense of helping. Instead, all they can say is that they 'give taxes' so the state should 'just do it'. However, on a human level, every person should be responsible for their hungry neighbor. Therefore, the state's public policies, communities, civil society and individuals should all contribute towards solving homelessness.

The ordinary information about the homeless is that many of the homeless are mentally ill, that they choose to live on the street because they are lazy or drunk. The results of this study show that, homelessness is not simply a housing problem or

choice or mental health, it is a condition that involves many factors. Homeless people are able to express themselves and their concerns, homeless people want to be treated like human beings, to be taken seriously, with dignity and pride. This study is an effort, albeit small, to understand the homeless.

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