TURKISH REPUBLIC
YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
PHD PROGRAM IN CULTURAL STUDIES

PHD DISSERTATION

AT THE BORDER BETWEEN TURKEY AND BULGARIA: A MULTIFACETED STUDY ON THE TOWN OF KIRKLARELİ

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İSTANBUL
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Aysun BULUNUZ tarafından hazırlanan “At the Border Between Turkey and Bulgaria: A Multifaceted Study on the Town of Kırklareli” başlıklı çalışma, **09.02.2024** tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda oybirliği ile başarılı bulunmuş ve jürimiz tarafından İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Ana Bilim Dalı Kültürel Çalışmalar (İngilizce) Programında **DOKTORA** tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ABSTRACT

AT THE BORDER BETWEEN TURKEY AND BULGARIA: A MULTIFACETED STUDY ON THE TOWN OF KIRKLARELİ

Aysun Bulunuz

February, 2024

This study aims to examine the border between Turkey and Bulgaria by focusing on Kırklareli and the interaction between local border dwellers and border crossers who appear as late-term Bulgarian Turk migrants, Bulgarian daily shoppers, and irregular/illegal immigrants. The theoretical framework explains the concept of the border with its natural consequences such as mobility, migration, tourism, culture, identity and illegality. Through participant observation, oral history, and a series of semi-structured interviews with forty people living near or crossing the border, the study explores how border residents in Kırklareli position different subject identities for the ‘others’ they encounter along the border, and how they construct a subject identity for themselves in the process. The results can be summarized as follows: Bulgarian Turk migrants who arrived in 1989 and later transformed their national and cultural identities constructed in Bulgaria into a hybrid identity after encountering the local Turkish population. On this border between Turkey and the European Union, Bulgarian shoppers represent an economically welcomed ‘other’ for local shopkeepers and traders, and an advantageous European 'other' for the local population. However, in the process, locals realize that they themselves are Europe’s ‘others’. On the other hand, irregular and illegal migrants moving in the opposite direction and trying to reach Europe via Turkey represent an uninvited 'other’. This leads to the conclusion that the border as a material and physical structure has different representations in the 'mental maps' depending on which side it is crossed and who crosses it. This ethnographic border study also looks at the 'illegal' activities that locals observe and sometimes become involved in at the border. They are examined in terms of locals' perceptions of illegality in comparison to the legal and policy regulations of the state.

Keywords: The Turkish-Bulgarian border, Kırklareli, Bulgarian Turk migrants, Bulgarian shoppers, irregular/illegal migrants, illegality

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE-BULGARİSTAN SINIRINDA: KIRKLARELİ KENTİ ÜZERİNE ÇOK YÖNLÜ BİR ÇALIŞMA

Aysun Bulunuz

Şubat, 2024

Bu çalışma, Kırklareli'ni merkeze alarak Türkiye ve Bulgaristan arasındaki sınırı ve yerel sınır sakinleri ile geç dönem Bulgaristanlı Türk göçmenleri, Bulgar günlük alışverişçileri ve düzensiz/yasadışı göçmenler olarak ortaya çıkan sınırı geçen öznelerin etkileşimini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Kuramsal çerçeve, sınır kavramını hareketlilik, göç, turizm, kültür, kimlik ve yasadışılık gibi doğal sonuçlarıyla birlikte açıklamaktadır. Katılımcı gözlem, sözlü tarih ve sınırın yakınında yaşayan ya da sınırı geçen kırk kişiyle yapılan bir dizi yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme yoluyla, bu çalışma Kırklareli'ndeki yerel sınır sakinlerinin sınır boyunca karşılaştıkları 'öteki'ler için nasıl farklı özne kimliklerini konumlandırdıklarını ve bu süreçte kendileri için nasıl bir özne kimliği inşa ettiklerini araştırmaktadır. Bulgular şu şekilde özetlenebilir: 1989 ve sonrasında gelen Bulgaristanlı Türk göçmenler, Bulgaristan'da inşa ettikleri ulusal ve kültürel kimliklerini yerel Türk nüfusla karşılaştıktan sonra melez bir kimliğe dönüştürmüşlerdir. Türkiye ile AB arasında bir sınır olan bu sınırda, Bulgar alışverişçiler, yerel esnaf için ekonomik açıdan memnuniyetle karşılanan bir 'öteki'yi, yerel halk için ise avantajlı bir Avrupalı 'öteki'yi temsil etmektedir. Ancak bu süreçte yerel halk kendileri de Avrupa'nın 'öteki'si olduklarını fark etmektedirler. Öte yandan, ters yönde hareket eden ve Türkiye üzerinden Avrupa'ya ulaşmaya çalışan düzensiz ve yasadışı göçmenler ise davetsiz bir 'öteki'yi temsil etmektedir. Bu durum, maddi ve fiziksel bir yapı olarak sınırın, hangi taraftan geçildiğine ve kimin geçtiğine bağlı olarak 'zihinsel haritalarda' farklı temsillere sahip olduğu sonucuna götürmektedir. Bu etnografik sınır çalışması aynı zamanda yerel halkın sınırda gözlemlediği ve bazen dahil olduğu 'yasadışı' faaliyetleri de incelemektedir. Bu faaliyetler, devletin yasal ve politik düzenlemeleriyle karşılaştırmalı olarak yerel halkın yasadışılık algıları açısından incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye-Bulgaristan sınırı, Kırklareli, Bulgaristanlı Türk göçmenler, Bulgar alışverişçiler, düzensiz/yasadışı göçmenler, yasadışılık

To the memory of my father, Esat TUTA (Evliya),

my first and everlasting teacher…

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ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	: Justice and Development Party
BGL	: Bulgarian Leva
CHP	: Republican People's Party
ESCS	: European Cool and Steel Community
EU	: The European Union
FETO	: Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation
FRONTEX	: European Border and Coast Guard Agency
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
IBM	: Integrated Border Management
ICE	: Immigration and Customs Enforcement
ICMPD	: International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
ISIS	: Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
NATO	: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PCR	: Polymerase Chain Reaction
SCT	: Special Consumption Tax
SGK	: Social Security Institution
TBMM	: Turkish Grand National Assembly
TİKA	: Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
TRY	: Turkish Lira
TURAN	: Turkey- FRONTEX Risk Analysis Network
UNHCR	: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
YETKM	: Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center

1. INTRODUCTION

In our first years of school, we learned that this is nation X and that this is the map of it drawn according to the borders between neighboring countries. But who decided those borderlines and according to what? What kind of political and social changes and transformations has taken place on the existing borders since those days? What is happening in current borders? Why is it a so hot topic of today? Although the current borders of many states have been shaped after World War I, it is still an issue to be discussed. The border has been a very popular topic, especially in politics and international relations studies until the early 1990s. Obviously, those written on the political and geographically strategic borders providing security of nation-states are directly or indirectly related to society and social beings. That's why, towards the end of the 1990s, social scientists have begun to examine the institutions, discourses, and practices that emerged around borders in terms of the culture and identity perceptions of the border societies. Scholars from different study fields have been approaching the issue of 'border' from different perspectives to show it mainly as a subject of humanities rather than politics. Furthermore, rather than seeing the border as a variable in all political structures, it is necessary to see it as an independent variable on its own. To see the borders as a subject of study within the humanities is not, of course, to add a 'surplus value' to it constantly, or to attribute it an over metaphoric meaning. Rather, it is important to remember that there are borders, they are concrete, fixed, and bounded but at the same time, they are tried to be crossed over and so they are becoming flexible every other day in a way.

In today's so-called 'global world', people, refugees, immigrants, traders, smugglers, travelers, tourists, or daily visitors across the world try to cross borders for one reason or other. Economists and bourgeoisies defend that borders are already disappearing in this globalization. The nation-states, on the other hand, aim to maintain and protect their national assets with security concerns by reinforcing their borders and controlling border crossings using high-end technology such as thermal cameras, watchtowers, fences, raised walls. Using border with different purposes and seeing it

from different perspectives prove that the border is a 'becoming' in Platonist sense, not just a 'being' over there. That's why, in the climate of tumultuous clashes at different border sites, especially after the 1990s, the border problematic has begun to be discussed extensively over permeability or lack of it thereof, *vis-a-vis* different contexts and subjects. Today's borders are being started to be studied not as territoriality of the states as in legal or political studies, but in the sense of Soja's *thirdspace* or Foucault's *heterotopia*. To recap, Edward W. Soja's Thirdspace (1996) proposes that there is a *firstspace* perspective which refers to a real space and a *secondspace* perspective referring to an imaginary one, and we have the *thirdspace* now which reconstructs the multiplicity of these two (1996, pg.6). Soja, referring to Lefebvre, says that there is a complex linkage between space, time, and social beings. Therefore, he sees Lefebvre's The Production of Space (1974) as the most important book written about the social and historical significance of human spatiality since it deconstructs the "binary logic in thinking about space and other complexity of the modern world" (1996, pg.7-8). Starting from the vantage point of *thirdspace* or *heterotopia*, it is obvious that the main axis of today's border studies has been around with this understanding of space. In that sense, I feel a necessity to study the concept of border by associating it with the issues of space, identity, and culture. For those living near the border, changes, transformations, breaks, and ruptures in the practices of daily life, economies, history, and politics are important (Aras, 2020). Crossing the border is by itself accepting a change and transformation and it can create new opportunities or eliminate existing ones. Furthermore, the fact that the borders are the entry and exit points between two countries and that they ensure the security of the nation-states makes a border a divisive device for those living on both sides. Besides, I'd like to point out that it is important to discuss the ways in which nation-states are metaphorizing and legitimizing their 'borders' by constructing them over the binary logic of 'us' and 'other'. That is, while states think that they create a strict situation by determining the borders according to such dichotomies, they inevitably create new interactions between communities separated by borders. In fact, there is a multitude of socio-spatial interactions that occur on borders that separate states from each other and reinforce their sovereignty, that's why, borders are layered, complex, and selectively permeable.

The significance of study

Like all borders across the world, there has been a constant change in the borders surrounding Turkey as well due to changing national and international relations, wars, and security concerns. Turkey's border studies have recently gained speed, especially in the last 20 years, in tandem with the emergent border studies across the fields of social studies. Hence, after 1990s, Turkey's borders have begun to be examined not only within the context of international relations but also from a sociological perspective. Starting in 1996, Neşe Özgen, one of the pioneers of this field in Turkey, engaged in border anthropology, particularly on the economic and political anthropology of the town of İdil, on the border between Turkey and Syria, followed by her studies on various border geographies of Turkey. Likewise, in 2014 H. Pınar Şenoğuz wrote her dissertation on Kilis as a border city, in terms of the socio-economic strata there. Another dissertation on one of the strategic borders of Turkey, *Border Capitalism: From Georgia to Turkey Daily Labor Migration – "Hopa Case"* (2016) by Kerem Özbey is an ethnographic study that has contributed to recent border literature in Turkey. Regarding Turkey's westernmost land borders, Zeynep Kaşlı's dissertation *(Re)bordering Territory and Citizenship on the Greek-Turkish Borderland* (2017) on the border between Turkey and Greece examines the European Unionization of this border and the interaction that occurs as a result of cross-border interactions in terms of flexibility and the different permeabilities it creates for different groups. A more recent ethnographic work on border study applied in Turkey is *The Wall: The Making and Unmaking of the Turkish-Syrian Border* (2020) by Ramazan Aras, whereby he investigates the social, cultural, political, economic, and psychological impacts of the Turkish-Syrian border on people's lives living in Mardin, Nusaybin. In addition, in Ferhat Tekin's book, *Sınırın Sosyolojisi* (2020), the border phenomenon is examined with a sociological approach in general. Tekin discusses the subject matter in terms of nation-state, nationalism, national identity, and culture on the one hand, and on the other hand, he verifies how the border is perceived by border people and communities and thus how it plays a role in shaping the culture in the border region. In addition to these works, several articles on the borders in Turkey have been published in various journals, each of which claiming that there is a need for more work in this area. Based on the views discussed above, in this dissertation, I will examine the Turkish-Bulgarian border at the town of Kırklareli by addressing the

historical processes, the points in history when the border turned into a permeable structure and the times it turned into a more tightly protected line as well as its current dynamism. Hence, through this study I aim to contribute to the border literature in Turkey in general and to the Turkish-Bulgarian border in particular.

Thrace Region, located in the northwest of Turkey and on the border of Bulgaria and Greece, member countries of the European Union, consists of the provinces of Edirne, Kırklareli, and Tekirdağ. In addition to the presence of highway crossings between Turkey and Europe, the fact that a large part of the people of the region immigrated from the Balkan countries and settled in the region has made the Thrace Region not only a physical but also a cultural and social transit point. As a result of the fact that some people in the region migrated mainly from Bulgaria and other countries in the West Thrace, later settled in the different parts of the East Thrace region in Turkey, and locals have had a constant relationship with their relatives and friends on the other side of border, it is inevitable to see and meet different people, cultures, and practices experiencing transitions on that border. Their lifestyles, the local language they speak with different tones and Balkanize dialects and all the other cultural, social and economic exchanges with their neighbors or relatives in Bulgaria are all quite apparent in the region. As Baud and van Schendel state;

> Despite attempts by central states to control their borderlands and to impose a "national" culture on them, a fascinating aspect of many borderlands is the development of a "creole" or "syncretic" border culture. When two or more languages meet, a border lingua franca often comes to existence. Where different religions prevail on both sides of border people may visit each other's religious festivals, as well as festivities marking national holidays. Cross-border (and often interethnic) networks of friendship, courtship, and kinship are as much part of the border culture as cross-border economic and political partnerships (1997, pg. 234).

In other words, the transboundary interaction of human beings in the social, cultural, and economic fields is inevitable for the people living in either side of the Turkish-Bulgarian border. Specifically, as a researcher who came from Anatolia and has started to live in a border city, Kırklareli, for more than 10 years, I saw that the people here are very different from the people of the place I came from. Of course, the main reason for this difference was not the fact that the Thrace region was separate

from the Anatolian lands, rather, that it is their constant relationship with their neighbors and relatives in the West and Northern Thrace.

The Turkish-Bulgarian border at the town of Kırklareli can be handled from many different perspectives with multifaceted ethnographic studies. Historically, the region of Thrace has been a melting pot of different cultures due to its geographical location. From the Ottoman Empire to the Republic, and from the early years of the Republic to the 1990s, the region served as a center for cultural exchange and integration due to population exchanges, migrations, and minority issues. This ethnographic study on the Turkish-Bulgarian border in Kırklareli, a city located in the northeastern part of the region, has researched and explained a series of historical events that took place in the city in the context of urban historiography to examine all these changes and transformations spatially through the phenomenon of 'border'. In contrast to some other border regions of Turkey, the Turkish-Bulgarian border at the town of Kırklareli is remembered mainly for the population exchange from 1878 to the 1990s, as a border town where many Bulgarian Turks were settled after being expelled from Bulgaria. As a result of the migration and population exchanges throughout history, while people who crossed that border felt that they became closer to their roots in terms of ethnicity, they also moved from one economic, social and political sphere to a totally different one. It can be argued that the Turkish-Bulgarian border in Kırklareli, and the hybrid culture formed by the people living in Kırklareli cannot be understood without mentioning the population exchanges and various ethnic and religious minority groups within this border geography from the empire to the republician period.

Therefore, in this study, the changes that took place in Kırklareli as a border town in the historical process and the different subjects that crossed the border between Turkey and Bulgaria are analyzed by examining the official historical sources and alternative studies from 1913, when the border was officially established, to the 1990s. Since this is a two-layered, multi-faceted research, it is considered necessary to conduct historical research on the Thracian region and the city of Kırklareli in the first layer, which will provide a better understanding of the change and current position of the border and the city, as well as its socio-economic, cultural and ethnic structure. The aim is also to analyze in detail the processes that led to the border crossings during the Ottoman-Russian War, the Balkan Wars and the early Republican period, as well

as the exchanges and settlement policies in the early Republican period, and the Thracian events of 1934, which arose because of the threat posed by the minorities living on the border, all of which affected the sociological and demographic structure of the city. The main reason for all this inquiry is the understanding that the border is not a predetermined phenomenon but has a contingent structure.

In the second layer, the EU-ization of the Turkish-Bulgarian border will be investigated through an ethnographic study with participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The socio-economic, cultural, spatial and identity-related perceptions of the border and the everyday life practices of those who cross the border are examined. The Bulgarian Turk immigrants settled in Kırklareli are initially interviewed as 'national minorities' about the relationships they maintain both with the people in their place of residence and with the other side of the border. Later, beyond the diplomatic level that characterizes cross-border relations between two states and societies, borders have created new 'others' under contemporary conditions that influence the social acceptability and dimensions of legality of cross-border activities. In relation to these new 'others', this study examines how the one-sided permeability of the border with regard to the border crossing of Bulgarian everyday shoppers affects the identity constructions of the locals for their 'self' and towards an 'other'. Subsequently, the practices of migration management and border security at the external borders of the EU that produce 'irregular/illegal' immigrants along the border are also analyzed in terms of locals' constructions of identity for their 'self' and the new 'other'. The argument, then, is that for locals, the border between the 'self' and 'the others' in the past and today does not run in a straight line. This means that the border between Turkey and Bulgaria has a multi-layered and selective permeability structure.

In addition to the different subject constructions that are a natural outcome of border lands, the illegal activities that border residents are involved in or observe are discussed in comparison to migration management, customs laws, and border regimes established by state authorities. To summarise, this multifaceted study explains all these variations in the historical process in detail in terms of cause-effect relationships at first and later combines them with a range of socio-economic phenomena such as migration, tourism, culture, identity and smuggling - without foregrounding any of

them - and thus opens a window on a hundred years of history, but uses the heuristic method to deal with the border question, the beginning and end of which is not clear.

The aim of study

Borders, today, are becoming more of a type of place where exchanges and interaction increase, and where conflicts and exclusions are supposed to decrease. However, it is in fact the agents of borders that make or unmake borders (Aras, 2020). There is a difference in the perception of the state's borders and practices of borders at the local level. The state's barbed wires, security control, and passport and visa applications represent the sovereign power of the state over its territory. On the other hand, on a performative level, borders are represented by the subjects who cross them and reside near them. In other words, they are not static frontiers that separate the nations and states, they are, on the contrary, dynamic pores where people, places, histories, and economies integrate (Brunet-Jailly, 2005). To reiterate, if there is a border, all forms of transitions are sociologically important, be they immigrants, daily visitors, or refugees as in the abovementioned examples, all of which constitute the general framework of this border study. Relatedly, Baud and van Schendel state (1997);

> If in this postmodern epoch so much attention is paid to the construction and deconstruction of historical concepts, borders should be one of the first issues begging our attention. We began by emphasizing the artificial character of borders. They are prime examples of how mental constructs can become social realities. Once agreed upon in diplomatic meetings and neatly drawn on maps, borders become something real for the people living near them (pg.242).

This study follows in the example of abovementioned border studies of Turkey and aims to reveal the meanings and experiences of the sometimes permeable and sometimes quite rigid border between Turkey and Bulgaria with empirical data. Border studies in this postmodern period aim to understand borders as both material and symbolic social formations, rather than being the lines that determine the absolute authority and strict frontiers of the states. As Van Houtum states, in the last few years, borders have been viewed from an epistemological and ontological perspective in a broader framework, and borders' old narrow and deterministic studies have been left behind (2005, pg.673). Besides, in his more recent study, by using the metaphor of

'wall' instead of 'border', Van Houtum (2021) claims that in fact the new walls are not made of any bricks or stones, they are more border lines fortified by steel fences, barbed wires, or high technological devices. Furthermore, contrary to popular belief, he claims that today the thing that divides people into both sides of the border are not those fences or wires anymore but it is the 'paper walls' that divide 'one' and 'other'. According to Van Houtum (2021), those paper walls are often very difficult to break through due to the "discriminative taxonomy" of countries such as the US, Australia, or the EU countries. As a result, irregular, transit, and illegal migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are an inevitable category of today's borders that create a market of criminality and smuggling. All in all, human beings are those who mark the border or are affected by it, Van Houtum states;

> In a similar vein, it is the amalgam of the people living close to the border barriers, the borderlanders as well as the people crossing it, the businesspeople, commuters, tourists, and migrants who together construct and shape the significance and interpretation of the border. So, it is not the lines on the map and in the sand that we need to focus on only when studying power geometries, but also how, when and where spatial power differentials are given meaning and being translated in daily practices by people (Van Houtum, 2021, pg.35-36).

In Kırklareli, that 'amalgam of people' living around or passing through the border between Turkey and Bulgaria appears in different typologies. That's, there are borderlanders, border residents, former migrants from Bulgaria, irregular, transit and illegal immigrants from third-world countries, and daily shoppers coming from Bulgaria all around the city or in the villages close to the border. For instance, in addition to early Bulgarian Turk migrants who were settled in different districts of the city, today it is possible to come across Bulgarian shoppers frequently, with whom the borderlanders have a trade-based relationship. On the other hand, the villagers confront the transit/irregular and illegal migrants or refugees who try to cross the fences and wires between Turkey and Bulgaria illegally all over their lands every day. Since the border is the sum of "a means of saying, representing, glorifying, or resisting a here, a we and a them" rather than protection of sovereign power of states, it is important to "understand a border as a constant, contextual work in progress, dependent not only from its material set-up but also from the everyday social construction of the here, we and them" (Van Houtum, 2021, pg.36). Therefore, the different typologies mentioned

in a way represent ‘us’, ‘them’ and ‘others’, all of which attribute a different meaning to the concept of border. Therefore, it is vital for this study to adopt ‘polyvocality’, that’s, to hear ‘lived experiences’ of all the different portraits represented. Hence, in this study, using the techniques of participant observation and semi-structured interview, the border phenomenon has been evaluated in the Turkish-Bulgarian border in Kırklareli by categorizing border people typologies that interact within the border zone.

The borders affect all socio-cultural values and economic practices at the point they are drawn, therefore, this study in a multi-layered structure aims to analyze the Turkish-Bulgarian border as maintaining a dynamic and contentious essence in the historical process and today. Theoretically, this study elaborates border phenomenon and its natural outcomes such as mobility, migration, tourism, culture and identity constructions, and illegal activities around borders. As an ethnographic study, firstly, it makes a historiographic analysis of Kırklareli as a border town, the border itself and its transformation, the life of the Bulgarian Turks who migrated from Bulgaria or Northern Thrace in general and settled in Kırklareli during the population exchange in the Ottoman period and the later migrations until the end of the 1990s. The things they brought with them materially and culturally, the life and relations of the Bulgarian Turk migrants in 1989 who settled here again, the permeability of the border at that time and the construction of their identity are investigated through a series of interviews. That’s, after migrating to the homeland, Turkey in 1989, how they were confronted by local-residents, and whether they have ever experienced any marginalization as ‘other’ as they are Bulgarian Turks are all questioned. Secondly, this border is also crossed every day by Bulgarians within the frame of cross-border mobility practices such as cross-border shopping and tourism. It is possible to come across daily visitors from Bulgaria all over the city, in cafes, restaurants, shopping places, and local markets. The most important factor to explain this, of course, is the constant depreciation of the Turkish Lira against the Bulgarian Leva. However, it is also possible to read this economic event through the permeability and dynamics of the border from either side of border between Turkey and Bulgaria. In other words, Bulgarians do not come here to spend money just because their money is worth more. They come here because it is easier for them to cross the border and because the Turkish side grants visa-free travel to Bulgarian citizens, so they can enter the country

with just their ID or passport. However, they also increase and transform the socioeconomic flow of the city, as well as the interaction between the two cultures. As a result of the different applications, strategies and policies in both physical and paper permeability of the border, it is noticed that the local residents in Kırklareli construct their 'self' *vis-a-vis* 'Bulgarians' as 'others' they confront every day. Lastly, this study focuses on the current state of the border as how it turns into a 'door of hope' for the illegal immigrants and refugees coming from the Middle East and third world countries and trying to flee to Europe. The villagers living close to the Bulgarian border in Kırklareli today claim that Syrians and more recently Afghan refugees or any other illegal immigrants from different countries have been brought here from İstanbul by bus and left, and they try to find the way to cross the Turkish-Bulgarian border. Again, border villagers in Kırklareli construct their 'self' as a result of their confrontation with those illegal immigrants as 'other', who are totally different from Bulgarian 'other'. That's why, in this study, it is necessary to analyze the fragmentary identities of this border region who embody their 'self' by confrontation with an ever-shifting identity of 'other' in contrast to their national identity, which is considered to be tied up to the assumed stable spatiality of the nation-state.

Where borders are drawn, there are inevitably perforated areas. Therefore, in these places, smugglers who know that they can use these pores to their advantage or those who profit from illegal crossings can create a space for themselves. In this respect, it is inevitable for this study to consider the Turkish-Bulgarian border in Kırklareli in terms of illegality and illicitness. Today, this border is mostly a route for illegal migrants and smugglers who want to find a leakage route for migrants from Turkey to the European Union. However, it is not enough to think of the smuggling activities at this border only as migrant smuggling. The border between Turkey and Bulgaria in Kırklareli is also a border where cigarettes and alcoholic beverages are smuggled, which is claimed to happen as a result of the country's current economy and high taxes applied to those products. Lastly, it is also possible to encounter some 'illicit' forms of suitcase trade, that's, Bulgarian daily shoppers who come to Kırklareli buy goods at bargain prices in bulk and carry them back to their home countries for trade. In the light of this information and data gathered especially from the locals, the last section of this dissertation traces and explains the tangle of conflicting illegal, illicit and informal activities that occur around the border.

Research questions

All in mind, this dissertation examines bordering and othering practices along the Turkish-Bulgarian border in Kırklareli within both a historical process and ongoing years. It also scrutinizes changing mobility directions across the border between Turkey and Bulgaria under the effects of migration flows and later of Bulgaria's being a member of the EU. From the population exchanges to the communist regime of Bulgaria and the collapse of it, and Bulgaria's entrance to the EU, and their all over effect on the mobility structures between two countries has been explored. It is inevitably a comparative study of past and present mobility practices along that border. Throughout the inquiry, it is noticed that there are variations in constructed identities of local people in their 'self' and border crossers as 'others'. While this same border is giving such different identity constructions among different groups of border residents and crossers, it also reminds that the idea of a borderless world for all has withered away (Paasi, Prokkola, Saarinen, & Zimmerbauer, 2019). It is also detected that the borders are for all but with different designations for legal and illegal crossings. Furthermore, this study shows that different visa-regime applications and exchange rate disparities by either side of the same border have also brought about different forms of illegal actions emerging as migrant smuggling, smuggling of alcoholic beverages and cigarettes, and petty suitcase-trade. Therefore, through the ethnographic research conducted between September 2022 and December 2023, this study sought to answer the following questions in general, which were expanded during the interviews and according to the research groups:

1. How do the earlier Turkish migrants from Bulgaria construct their national and cultural identity and sense of belonging on either side of the border?
2. How do border residents in Kırklareli position two different subject identities for the 'others' emerging as Bulgarian daily shoppers and as illegal and irregular migrants they confront along the border, and how do they construct a subject identity for themselves in the process?
3. How fluid and transient is the concept of 'legality' and 'illegality' in the operations of border regimes?

During the fieldwork, qualitative research with its flexible structure was used to comprehend individual experiences deeply. Thus, in the form of audiotapes, videotapes, and field notes, it provided me as a researcher authentic textual

information. With the usage of open-ended questions in a semi-structured form in qualitative research, the responses of participants' answers to questions could usually become more complex than simply "yes" or "no". Thus, the participants were free to answer any one of the questions and, it was also possible for the researcher to ask different questions as necessary during the interviews. Therefore, data collection and research questions were adjusted in time according to what was learned from the interviewees. It provided greater spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the participants.

The outline of dissertation

In border studies, in addition to all the theoretical studies concerning space, identity, and culture, it is clear that many more ethnographic studies are needed in such areas that will objectify or strengthen all the theories with empirical data. In addition, while the dynamics of these subjects are constantly changing, it is only possible to evaluate them through new examples that reconstruct previous assumptions. Therefore, in the further phases of the study, I aim to expand and verify the changes which have been occurred in both all historical steps around the border and its current dynamics with the ethnography, as it is understood from the range and order of the research questions above. Firstly, in the literature review section, to give the essence of the subject, I explain how the border question is reshaped by the new perception of space and territoriality, by different mobilities such as legal or illegal migration, and in terms of tourism in the form of cross-border tourism and shopping, and as a result, I investigate how the border affects identity constructions of the locals as well as their hybrid culture. Beyond all, since all these phenomena are interrelated issues in border studies, it is crucial to look at 'border' as a liminal space that is cut out for examining the concept of 'culture' and 'identity' that should not be merely thought fixed or bounded. Precisely, it is necessary to examine how important territoriality is in the identity construction of nation-states, or, as Agnew says, how it is used as a 'trap' (1994). Then, I chronologically examine both the historical migration flows, that is, population exchanges during the Ottoman Empire period, later Balkan migrations both in the early years of the Turkish Republic and in the 1950s and 1980s, and how that migration flows along that border affect the events across Thrace at that time, as well as space, identities, and culture in the borderland and the place-making strategies of immigrants and border people. Also, as a more recent issue, I analyze the border

between Turkey and Bulgaria as a European Union border after Bulgaria acceded to the EU. Therefore, I refer to the dynamism on this border and the advantageous position of the Bulgarian side over the border. Lastly, in literature review, in relation to the outcome of historical, social and financial ups and downs along that border, I present the cultural ties between Bulgaria and Turkey and their significations in society.

In the following methodology chapter, I explain the methods and procedures used in this dissertation to find answers to the research questions. After giving the general information about research area, I give the details of the qualitative research methods and how they are used in this study. Additionally, I elaborate the geographical aspects of landscapes near the Turkish-Bulgarian border enriched with the visual materials collected by me, as a researcher in the field.

In the fourth chapter, I discuss the research findings based on the transcriptions of the materials collected during fieldwork in Kırklareli. That's to say, I elaborate the interviews that enabled me to see how the existence of a border affects the sociological, economic, and cultural assets of the town of Kırklareli, and, in particular the impact of the border on the identity constructions of those living in the town. As a result, firstly, I start with a subchapter named 'Selective Permeability of the Border' in which I discuss three different types of border crossings, and later othering processes along that border between Turkey and Bulgaria as a result of locals' confrontation with their constantly changing 'other'. First of all, the Turkish migrants from Bulgaria and their 'hybridized identities' have been discussed with the help of transcriptions of the interviews of the late term immigrants. Secondly, I aim to focus on frequent daily border-crossings of Bulgarians with the purpose of shopping or as an act of leisure activity, their rationales for crossing the border on daily. With the help of interviews gathered in the town, I discuss the ways in which the local-residents construct their 'self' in contrast to those Bulgarians as 'European other', or more importantly, the ways in which they feel themselves as 'other' in their own land, when they confront a more advantageous European identity. Thirdly, I try to figure out how the border maintains its own existence despite increasing numbers of immigrants -mostly illegal and irregular- and so-called refugees from third world countries (e.g., from Syria and Afghanistan), who see Turkey as an intermediate country to flee to Europe, by embracing Agamben's theory of 'Bare Life' as a take on for that subject matter.

Last but not least, while I want to analyze the identities that locals construct for themselves and for those who cross the border, a new layer has been added to the study, particularly through semi-structured interviews with locals. The "illegal" activities related to the border, which interviewees mentioned in almost every interview, are discussed in more detail in the final section of the study. Through the end of this study, I present the interviews conducted with a moderate number of people involved in the illegal or illicit activities through the border and the findings supported by statistical data. For this study, it is a necessity to state that the issue of illegality or illicitness is not one-dimensional and one way. It appears in different forms and directions, such as migrant smuggling, smuggling of goods, or informal petty suitcase trade, all of which have been elaborated especially from the perspectives of locals in the section before conclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL NATURE OF BORDERS

The border issue is a subject that changes in time and space, in other words, its meaning and understanding change with the change of empires, states, regimes, or the international trades and migration flows. One can work it as a fixed, boundary place, and/or as a permeable, porous place. Therefore, in this section, I start the discussion about how the border issue is shaped in the changing state structures, regimes, that is from empires to nation-states with the help of theories such as Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (2006), John A. Agnew's "Borders on the Mind: Reframing Border Thinking" (2008) and Saskia Sassen's "Bordering Capabilities versus Borders: Implications for National Borders" (2009). Then, I argue about the trends which defend the idea that borders have disappeared or should disappear due to globalization, increasing economic activities, and migration movements while the borders literally continue to be strengthened as Anssi Paasi, Prokkola, Saarinen, and Zimmerbauer suggested in *Borderless Worlds for Whom* (2019). While discussing the border in that sense, I will explain what the border is affected by and what it affects in terms of sociocultural perspectives. Furthermore, I elaborate on the fact that under the effects of mobility and migration flows, how the border re-establishes the perception of space, culture, and identity in the people who have any relation to the border via the theories of the cultural theorists such as Edward Said (1978; 1994; 2008), James Clifford (2008) as well as Tim Cresswell (2008), Stuart Hall (1990; 1996), and Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997). As a natural outcome of border, I discuss the issue of tourism in the form of cross border tourism and cross border shopping with help of quite recent theories by Dallen J. Timothy (2001;2023) with Alon Gelbman (2023), as well as Thomas M. Wilson (2023), Teemu Makkonen (2023) and again Anssi Paasi (1996;2023). To elaborate the legal and illegal flows around the border, I discuss the facets of illegality at the borders in general. Finally, after discussing the border in its general context with elements such as 'space', 'mobility', 'migration', 'identity', 'tourism', 'illegal flows' and 'culture', I explain the formation and shaping of Turkey's

borders, and then specifically the border between Turkey and Bulgaria and the social and political events that took place near this border and the historical, cultural, and social meanings it represents for both countries.

2.1. Reshaped Borders from Empires to the Modern Nation-States

When I started to write these pages, my son, who is just six years old and goes to kindergarten, was trying to paint a flag map of Turkey for his homework about the 29th October Republic Day. Since I was aware that at school they were taught such issues as nation, republic, the importance of our flag, etc. throughout the week, I asked him what could be the connection between a map and a flag as if I have no idea. He was fast on the draw and said "Both belong to us, Turks, who live in Turkey", which reminded me Liisa Malkki's statement on the issue: "[F]or it is self evident that "real" nations are fixed in space and "recognizable" on a map" (2008, pg.277). I intended to ask him, what about other Turks who live outside of this map or non-Turkish people living inside the map, but I didn't want to blur his mind a lot since that was a question which even hasn't come to the minds of adults frequently. I also realized that I myself even didn't question such things till the recent years of my life. Because I noticed that it had made me feel comfortable to belong to a nation, to have a national identity, to believe that I had different characteristics from 'others' outside the lines, and to have boundaries that harshly separate 'us' from those 'others'. I'm sure that I wasn't alone in those feelings. However, now I can see and feel that the borders drawn by the states, the stone walls, the barbed wires they put there, injure communities, and increase the violence to strengthen the hegemony there and marginalize those who do not fit the mold of nation-state. Apparently, educational tools have also been used as significant providers of nationalist narratives, expressions and they incite the sentiments of belonging to a nation. Moreover, physical processes such as the creation of national and military symbols, landscapes, maps, national days and flags that separate different spatial and historical dimensions concretize the idea of nationhood (Paasi, 2016, pg.22).

For sure, it is not possible to study borders without looking at the issue of the nation-state. In other words, before saying a word on borders, it is necessary to grasp and deconstruct the issue of the nation-state. That is simply because, as Saskia Sassen enounces, "state sovereignty is usually understood as the state's monopoly of authority

over a particular territory, demarcated by reasonably established geographic borders" (2009, pg. 567). However, the fact that states taboo the maps that define their borders obscures the fact that borders unite nations as much as they separate them. On the one hand, borders separate people who share a long history of social and cultural interaction, while they also unite them in the experience of living on the same or very close but separated territory. That also gives an ambivalent character to the border as it has been over-metaphorized in nation-building processes. Therefore, studying the dynamism of borders in terms of their meaning and practice can provide precious signs to deconstruct so powerful mental construction of the territoriality of nation-states. It also gives us the opportunity to undo the inherent state-centered nationhood.

Today, we can say that many states have created their current borders by modeling ideal European states. According to Benedict Anderson;

> Since World War II every successful revolution has defined itself in *national* terms - the People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and so forth - and, in so doing, has grounded itself firmly in a territorial and social space inherited from the pre-revolutionary past (2006, pg.2).

Likewise, Agnew claims that;

> borders are primarily the result of cultural borrowing about how states should be laid out. By this cultural definition, a state without rigid and rigorously controlled borders is not much of a state. Borders thus make the nation rather than vice versa (2007, pg.399).

Agnew again reminds us that in traditional thinking, borders were simply seen "as boundary lines between self-evident states" and they "served various economic and social functions" (2008, pg.177). According to classical Kantian philosophy as well, the understanding of geography was that there is a fixed homeland, which divides an ethnic pool. It has been believed that the most important element for the state to maintain its existence and unity is the possession of a piece of land. That kind of strong beliefs creates a perception as if state sovereignty has been perceived like this since ancient times. In fact, there were no such fixed borders in medieval Europe, and the constant wars of the time had nothing to do with protecting the borders. The real cause of wars was the constant changes in these vague dominions. Benedict Anderson

(2006) also explains the difference in the understanding of borderlands between current nation-states and sovereignties as such;

> In the modern conception, state sovereignty is fully, flatly, and evenly operative over each square centimetre of a legally demarcated territory. But in the older imagining, where states were defined by centres, borders were porous and indistinct, and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another (2006, pg.19).

Namely, through the 19th and 20th centuries, as European empires broke up into state-like units, the indivisible integrity and sovereignty of the nation-states started to be more important than monarchies, and the citizenship definitions began to be made through national identities living on a certain territory. Those definitions were used not only to define the nation but also the society, and society began to mean social order and organization on the bounded territory of state. In Hegel, for instance, the individual agent legitimizes itself through the definition of states as well as the existence of private property rights. The founding fathers of sociology, Durkheim, Weber, and Marx while developing modern social science also studied society within a territorial definition. In other words, societies were seen as a community of people of a certain nationality living in a bordered space. However, contrary to those definitions of communities that legitimize themselves as unities of nationhood, Benedict Anderson defines nations as "cultural artefacts of a particular kind" (2006, pg.4). According to him, the creation of these artefacts stood out towards the end of the eighteenth century, since before that, the word 'nation' was generally used in the meaning of 'societies' or 'states'. However, he says, nations "once created, they became 'modular,' capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations" (2006, pg.4). That's why he proposes the definition of the nation as "it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (2006, pg.6). In fact, the important aspect of this definition for this discussion is that, for Anderson, a nation is imagined as *limited* since it, "even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations". Moreover, as mentioned above, the nations were also "imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm" (2006,

pg.7). Through those 'images' of nationhood, both European and American models of statehood even today are underlining the importance of sharp borders between them and 'other' states. Therefore, as Agnew said; "This reinforces totalizing power of the territorial state as a primal force; everything is subordinate to it" (1994, pg.68). That totalizing power of bordered state both within and outside its borders might result in both internal and international conflicts. For instance, the contemporary internal conflicts especially in the Middle East and Africa might be resulted from the totalitarianism of state, social fractionalization, and authoritarianism as well as the economic and political effects of oil (Sørli, Gleditsch&Strand, 2005). Although it does not come out with a mere national sentiment, we can say that the desire of states for a both purely religious and national community lies under these conflicts. Relatedly, Arjun Appadurai in his "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" (1990) states that nation-states exploit that issue for their benefit from the minority groups;

> Typically, contemporary nation-states do this by exercising taxonomical control over difference; by creating various kinds of international spectacle to domesticate difference; and by seducing small groups with the fantasy of self-display on some sort of global or cosmopolitan stage… Here is the seedbed of brutal separatisms, majoritarianisms that seem to have appeared from nowhere, and micro-identities that have become political projects within the nation-state…: ideas of nationhood appear to be steadily increasing in scale and regularly crossing existing state boundaries: sometimes, as with the Kurds, because previous identities stretched across vast national spaces, or, as with the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the dormant threads of a transnational diaspora have been activated to ignite the micro-politics of a nation-state (1990, pg. 204).

Contrary to the idea of a borderless and globalized world, people around the world face strengthened border areas where crucial *biopolitic* controls are carried out. As a result, especially immigrants and refugees are subject to ever more discriminatory regulation and control along borders (Paasi et. al., 2019, pg.5). In other words, in many places notably in the Middle East and Africa, there are internal conflicts caused by various marginalized groups to strengthen or rebuild their so-called nation-state, and there are those who escaped from those conflicts who generally think that they will flee to any nation-states in Europe or to the US and live there in a safe and prosperous

environment. However, those states in a way strengthen their borders every other day with walls, and barbed wires with security concerns and according to their discriminative regulations. Therefore, borders, rather than lines that separate nation-states, are determiners of the spatial scales of states and keep a significant role in sustaining national landscapes while permitting some and selectively restricting some others.

2.1.1 Strengthened Borders

Despite the increased mobility flows of the globalized world, the borders have not disappeared at all. Obviously, the boundaries fluctuate and deform, sometimes harden and sometimes soften, as Paasi et. al. (2019) suggest the borders are highly contextual or penumbral. Unlike the ideal of a borderless world, border dynamics now often move towards strengthening borders, reflecting the geopolitical situation of an unstable and volatile world as a result of growing distrust among key political leaders. We witness the resurgence of power politics and the strengthening of that thinking in areas of interest in international politics. For instance, the US security system has been dramatically revised since 9/11, when courts and lawmakers recognized immigration and border as a national security issue. According to the article by Madeleine Carlisle on the 11th September 2021 in *Time*,

> In 2002, Congress created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), incorporating 22 federal agencies in the largest reorganization of the federal government since World War II. Many units of DHS, including the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), were given broad discretion and deep resources to enforce immigration laws both at the border and at the interior of the country (Carlisle, 2021).

In addition, Donald Trump, the 45th president of the US, again in his Presidential Announcement Speech on June 16, 2015, brought up the issue of Mexico's border to the agenda and said; "When do we beat Mexico at the border? They're laughing at us, at our stupidity. And now they are beating us economically. They are not our friend, believe me. But they're killing us economically." He emphatically states that the border issue is not something that can be resolved with common sense, but it is a political and economic issue. Trump, while asking for support, makes promises to secure the border by saying; "I would build a great wall, and nobody builds

walls better than me, believe me, and I'll build them very inexpensively, I will build a great, great wall on our southern border. And I will have Mexico pay for that wall" ("Here's Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech", 2015). Although Trump was criticized a lot by many with this speech, it was possible to see that this understanding prevailed all over the world in the so-called 'new world order'.

Similarly, in an interview, in August 12th, 2021, President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated regarding the protection of the country's borders, "Everyone should know that Turkey is not a 'yol geçen hanı'[1]. We measure and evaluate all these and take our steps accordingly." In the same speech, he also stated; "Our borders are completely walled up...We are currently raising our walls significantly both from the Iranian gate and Iraq. The rising walls here are to prevent irregular migration from entering our country" (Beyaz, 2021). In response to the President and *AKP'*s Chairman Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's statement that the borders are not "yol geçen hanı", and in the belief that the borders are not protected by the *AKP* and that the number of migrants in the country is increasing day by day, in August 18th,2021, a banner reading 'The Border is Honor' *('Hudut Namustur'*) with a photo of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the then chairman of the main opposition party in Turkey, was hung by the Rebuplican's Party (*CHP*) on its headquarters building in Ankara. The same banner was also hung on *CHP* buildings throughout İstanbul and in various places in Kırklareli, the research area ("CHP Genel Merkezi'ne 'Sınır Namustur' afişi", 2021). It is clear that the political actors who claim that the main threat to the survival of the nation and Turkishness are the immigrants/refugees, and construct an 'us' and 'them' distinction based on this claim, instrumentalize and thus legitimize the border discourse by using the preferred political communication language as an expression of this approach in their political propaganda (Mursül, 2022; Yaşli, 2023).

We can see how people force the borders all around, and how the states try to protect the borders harshly. For example, in November 2021, in all news agencies, we have seen the people on the border of Poland, mostly from Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, and are waiting under the freezing cold for passing the EU. However, they are stuck between Polish guards on one side and Belarusian guards on the other. The migrants cannot get into Poland, because at the borders, migrants are sitting on a road in front

[1] A Turkish idiom which means a place where passengers frequently stop by.

of barbed wires and Polish forces are nervously waiting, ready to act at any moment. Moreover, Belarus has been accused by the EU of causing such a humanitarian crisis (Rosenberg, 2021). The thing I want to explain by this example is that we have to rethink the relationship between borders and their social and ethical practices and social justice in terms of border management and humanitarian crisis. Borders and human mobility are some of the most important research topics in the social sciences, but the discussion of ethical issues in both research areas is not as central as it should be (Paasi et al., 2019). While for many radical scholars the term 'open border' or, 'no border' has become very popular and valid, many more reject as they are too idealist and naïve cosmopolitanism defenders. The current idea of a borderless world is associated with many types of social fluctuations and problems. Thinking of human rights, ethical reasons, and morality, one can sincerely advocate the idea of free mobility of people, especially those more disadvantaged ones such as refugees and asylum seekers. However, contrary to such romantic idealisms, we see people are not welcomed within the borders with hospitality either by political agents, security forces, or by residents. Rather, they confront a hostile, Xenophobic, racist, and prejudiced atmosphere. That's why it is apparent that we are "far from a borderless world" (Paasi et. al., 2019)

In that sense, Paasi et. al. (2019) also suggest that analytically we can think of the existence of borders in two landscapes forms. The first one is "the discursive landscape of social power", that is, symbolic and institutional control mechanisms for ocial and spatial relation. It is the usage of ideological state apparatus to highlight symbolic national landscapes, for instance, of educational institutions, national literature, national days, or media. The second landscape form, Paasi et. al. (2019) assert, is "the technical landscapes of control", that is, militarized bordering security control mechanisms equipped with the latest technology. They conclude;

> Instead of becoming borderless, the current world is blanketed with oppressive border controls; deadly wars and conflicts; xenophobia and racism; intolerance and discrimination. Concrete border walls are also constructed around the world, typically justified by the fear of terrorism but in practice states erect walls and develop bordering technologies to govern and categorize various forms of mobility. (2019, pg. 29)

To sum up, the point is that the states build walls and develop adjacent technologies to control and classify different forms of mobility, which largely shows how unequal are the mobility and migration flows along borders.

2.1.2. The Idea of Loosened Borders with Globalization

One of the first and the most well-known definition of globalization has been made by Roland Robertson as such: "globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole" (1992, pg.8). That's to say, the evolving world cannot be fully understood in terms of fixed territorial space anymore. In this regard, Agnew proposes that there are three problematic assumptions in international relation theory, which doesn't comply with the idea of 'globalized world'; the first one is "reification of state territorial spaces as fixed units of secure sovereign space", the second is "the division of the domestic from the foreign", the third is "geographical assumption is of the territorial state as existing prior to and as a container of society" (1994, pg.77). As for border studies, Ramazan Aras asserts the new perspectives on the issue of the border in the age of 'globalization' as such:

> [T]he multi-layered influences of globalization along with economic, cultural, social, and political developments and dizzying developments in transportation and communication technologies redirected thinkers and researchers to reconsider the phenomena of space (de)territorialization of the state, political border, border security, state-controlled territories and what in fact the border is. (2020, pg.23)

Saskia Sassen (2005) also implies that global and digital capabilities are shifting the meaning of borders. The changes contribute to the formation of new types of borders. Bordering takes place in far more sites in the geographical borderlines and their linked institutions. It is clear that the long-standing binaries 'our land' and 'their land' of nationalist literature have become ambiguous. In particular, it affects the various areas of influence of the state and the world, that's, the state and non-state actors, and the private and public. Hence, one can say globalization produces a hybrid model of deep and partial forms of authority in the states, not completely private or completely public, not completely national, or completely global. Briefly, global hybrid states are to take place of nation-states. Everywhere, regions, religions, and ethnic groups challenge the territorial state as a place of political identity.

At present, almost all political administrations, macro or micro, non-governmental organizations or the public see it as a natural necessity of globalization to deal with common problems that transcend borders. In fact, in spite of the fact that borders are standing out there, separating the lands, nations and states, the global issues such as climate crises, common ecological problems, refugee problems, and global epidemics should be evaluated beyond and out of borders. One of the best and the most recent example of this could be the B40 Balkan cities network meeting held in İstanbul on November 29, 2021. The B40 Balkan Mayors Summit was hosted by the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality with the participation of 24 Balkan cities in collaboration. I consider this meeting worthy of mention, especially since it concerns 24 Balkan cities located on two sides of eastern and western Thrace. Ekrem İmamoğlu, the mayor of the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality gave an opening speech in which he stated “For years, the word ‘Balkanization’ has been used to describe ethnic divisions, border disputes and conflicts. Nevertheless, we are here today to make a fresh start for our region. We have met for stronger cooperation and to build a better future together. Vital issues we face as local governments, such as environmental and climate problems, the refugee crisis, energy management and the aspirations of a progressive democracy are global topics that transcend local borders"(my own translation). Emphasizing that they came together with the motto of "better cooperation, better future", the mayor said that global-scale issues like abovementioned are common issues and problems for each and every municipality in Balkans. With the necessity of regional cooperation and solidarity in fundamental problems such as forest fires resulting from climate change and irregular migration problems, the mayor expressed that they gathered here to build bridges of friendship across borders. In summary, he explained that they aim to create better job opportunities with the help of local governments, to contribute to the vision of the Balkans and Europe, to strengthen solidarity, peace and fraternity in the face of those major and global problems. He concluded the speech by saying; "The multinational and pluralistic democracy model represented by the European Union is an ideal for all of us. Human rights, the rule of law, the culture of consensus and freedoms are common goals for millions of people who live in our cities. These common goals are the foundation of the B40 network" (my own translation). Subsequent speakers also made statements in the same manner. For instance, the Mayor of Athens, Kostas Bakoyannis, stated that what was being

discussed there that day were positive political agendas that transcend borders, while the Mayor of Belgrade, Zoran Radojičić also stated that globalization and its pressure, climate changes, political differentiations in the world are common problems for all of them. The mayor of Kırklareli, Mehmet Siyam Kesimoğlu started his speech by sharing his happiness of being there as the child of a family who migrated from Thessaloniki and said, "We all have common features coming from this Balkan geography like our history, culture and geography as well as our common feelings and thoughts. Our partnerships from this date have already manifested itself in concrete examples in every aspect of life today" (my own translation) (İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2021). In the declaration of this network, the plans for the future regarding these wishes are explained item by item (B40 summit: İstanbul mayor says EU's pluralist model 'ideal for all of us', 2021). As the Balkan states came together with the awareness that these global and common problems could not be overcome without stretching and even overcoming borders, it was seen that this network represented what was intended to be explained with the theoretical ideas above, and this reality was understood by some political agents. In other words, now, it is indispensable to observe the international economic activities, increasing complex population changes, the ecological interdependence of separated states, and globalization in general, all of which deconstruct the old-fashioned idea of the territoriality of states, governments and local policy makers.

Relatedly, Arjun Appadurai (1990), as a cultural anthropologist, explained this globalization and porosity of borders encountered in all areas of society, by dividing it into layers with his well-known global cultural flow theory. The theory reifies the flow of people, artefacts, and ideas across national boundaries as a result of globalization, by which he proposes five *scapes* for the global interchange of cultures, ideas and beliefs swiftly. He says that he uses the '*scape'* suffix to express the fluidity of the places better as irregular shapes of the landscapes. The first three *scapes, ethnoscape, technoscape,* and *finanscape* are all closely intertwined and shift in relation to each other. According to Appadurai, *ethnoscape* is the place of people such as immigrants, refugees, exiles, etc. who constantly change their places, and so do their cultures. *Technoscapes,* for him, with extreme speed, convey information and thus provide a new form of cultural communication. As to *finanscapes,* he says they are the way of transmitting the culture by economy and trade. Moreover, he proposes

mediascapes are comprised of many media tools including TV, radio, and newspapers, producing a great number of messages "in which the world of commodities and the world of 'news' and politics are profoundly mixed" as the spectators are ready there to internalize any kind of message reflected on media (2004, pg. 223). *Ideoscapes*, according to him, are also message-centered like *mediascapes* but these messages are generally about the ideology and politics of power, and they are usually transmitted by interventions of states. Appadurai claims the flows and transactions were restricted in the past due to geographical and economical obstacles, but as it is seen in his cultural flow theory, the *scapes* direct all cultural transactions. In other words, as the main point that I deduced from all, the world that we perceive has become like a patchwork of all these landscapes, but the junctures or let's say borders are not so much neat and fixed anymore. There is disjuncture, flows and transactions everywhere, and thus the borders literally and metaphorically are blurred, though they are not withered away at all. As Paasi and Ferdoush (2023) state, "[g]lobalization has been closely associated with the idea of opening borders or debordering, and border crossings" (pg. 50). However, "it is clear that the world does still have its borders and distances... Nation states still exist; there are fierce debates over international migration" (Massey & Clark, 2008, pg.3)

From now on, in the next step of this dissertation, for a more particularized study from this broad contextualization, the issues such as mobility, migration, tourism and identity construction in relation to border phenomenon will be elaborated with their fluxes and peculiarities. Although, when considered in itself, each issue seems very distinctive, in fact, they are quite interrelated and intertwined. In the next section, I therefore discuss 'border' in a theoretical framework, in terms of its overlapping aspects with issues of 'mobility', 'migration', 'tourism', 'illegality' as well as 'culture', 'identity' and 'memory' just before covering over all the borders around Turkey in general and state the political and social upheavals appeared in bordering procedures of the country particularly in the last decades.

2.2. Borders and Mobility

In the sections so far, I have discussed the examination of the concept of borders as a representation of 'nation-state' and its territoriality. I have also argued the significance of maintaining its borders for a nation-state and while doing so how the

issue of mobility is perceived as a threat to nationhood. On the other hand, I have also touched upon how the issue of border has been eroded due to globalization and changing perceptions of space. In this section, I aim to explain the issue of mobility as an indispensable reality of our time, which affects the perception of borders and embodies in both ancient nomadic people and today's immigrants, refugees, and travellers all over the globe.

Borders and mobility in conjunction with migration, are compelling research topics in social sciences. In fact, the politico-ideological borders are also at the core of the narration of the national identity. Hence, many nationalist parties around the world perceive any kind of mobilities as a threat to their independence and nationhood. The phobia of seeing any act of mobilities as threats towards nation-state accompanies some anti-migration, xenophobic and even Islamophobic attitudes (Paasi, 2016). The relationship between protecting borders and national identity and culture which are believed to be controlled by state-based mechanisms makes borders in conjunction with mobility a highly multi-layered and complex issue to specify for the scholars in the field. Hence, it sometimes becomes necessary to think of the notion of border as an umbrella term and every single issue under it. Relatedly, Liisa Malkki (2008) asserts that people are constantly in motion and states that:

> the recognition that people are increasingly 'moving targets' of anthropological enquiry is associated with the placing of boundaries and borderlands at the center of our analytical frameworks, as opposed to relegating them to invisible peripheries or anomalous danger zones (pg.276).

In traditional geographical studies, geographers, anthropologists, or ethnographers have had much to say on fixed places and rooted cultures. However, mobility has always been something in question. In fact, mobility is one of the main components of this era and it is traditionally connected to modern while the dwelling is accepted as traditional. Like culture and space in the old sense, languages, nations, societies, and their borders were all believed to be fixed and rooted in the soil. That was another way to say that there are geographical distinctions that separate the nations and their cultures from one another. However, today it is important to see the contrary, since there could not be a fixed home when there are always nomads, immigrants, refugees, and travellers who never fit that form. That is, dwelling and mobility should not be viewed as opposite and distinct ways of being, as if one is normal and the other

is not. Instead, dwelling and mobility must be regarded as necessarily linked and they are mutually constructed. For that reason, these two concepts are intertwined and under the investigation of many new cultural geographers and anthropologists. To start the discussion on the issue of mobility with some theories on space, Tim Cresswell (2008) defines mobility as it is "socially produced" and it is meaningful with its historical and geographical context. He proposes "three cheers for mobility": First, mobility is a threat to normality. Secondly, it also upsets people who invest in fixity, because of the fact that, property rights are related to place-based laws and regulations. Thirdly, as mobile people are seen as rootless, they are also seen as a threat to residents in their "rooted" existence. That's why; he says the agents of the state have constantly sought to make a society legible by turning rootless, pseudo regulating, and channelling mobility into acceptable pathways.

Likewise, Edward Said in his *Culture and Imperialism (2012)* asserts that it is this new era that gave birth to more refugees, migrants, displaced people, and exiles. He suggests that there is a constant struggle for being free in this age, that's why, so many new states and new boundaries are accompanied by so many homeless people and wanderers. Therefore, as Edward Said (2008) proposed there is "a generalized condition of homelessness" (pg.357), and he asks, is this mobility just for true emancipation or is it just hope of emancipation? Unfortunately, for either way, it is not. We can see that even if an immigrant escapes, particularly for a refugee, an asylum seeker, or an irregular immigrant, one cannot be totally emancipated. Moreover, the escape is not a safe journey at all. The path they follow is difficult, arduous, and dangerous, the escape could even cost their lives because there is a 'border', and there are security forces at the borders. This is the scene we encounter all around the world: the conflicts between border security and border crossers.

The reason for the mobility is in fact a very multidimensional issue that affects many actors in the area. The ones who leave their homelands and the power dynamics that cause such escapes, the way they follow to arrive the 'safe' places, that is, the journey itself and the legal or illegal border crossings and the atmosphere they have encountered in the destination, whether they have been welcomed by political actors and the public there all are to be discussed with social and ethical concerns. I intend to say, not only during the journey itself from the point it starts, but also in the course of crossing the borders, the situation is harsh. As Tim Cresswell points out; "The

movement of people is never just velocity – getting from A to B – it is imbued with an interrelated set of power-relations and meanings" (2008, pg.332).

John A. Agnew (2008), a distinguished professor of geography, asserts that borders can lose their meaning when it comes to social issues, that is, borders can be seen both as "facts on the ground" and as "artefacts of dominant discursive processes" (pg.175-176). According to him, borders can be taken as "given or complex human creations" (2008, pg.176). Instead of taking their existence for granted, it is possible to focus on their social construction. More accurately, he claims that they have an equivocal character, and it is nonsense to take the borders as either "fixed" or "such must be overcome", but rather as an evolving construction that has "merits" and "demerits" (Agnew, 2008, pg.176). Relatedly, the crucial point to be detected is what borderlands can teach us about social spaces and local identities, and that the roles they have played in re-conceptualizing the territoriality of modern states.

Furthermore, for a long time in history, culture was seen as something about people's place-based experiences through which social changes occur. Most of us in this postmodern era are still under the influence of that traditional way of thinking. However, some postmodern anthropologists, for instance, Gupta and Ferguson warn the people working in the field and being engaged in the study of culture to be aware of the relation between culture, identity and, space and they assert;

> But the irony of these times is that as actual places and localities become ever more blurred and indeterminate, *ideas* of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient. It is here that it becomes most visible how imagined communities (Anderson,1983) come to be attached to imagined places, as displaced peoples cluster around remembered or imagined homelands, places, or communities in a world that seems increasingly to deny such firm territorialized anchors in their actuality. In such a world, it becomes ever more important to train an anthropological eye on processes of construction of place and homeland by mobile and displaced people (1997, pg.39).

Likewise, James Clifford, a distinguished professor in the field of humanities, in his "Traveling Cultures" (2008) says it is time to uproot the culture and, look at the borders and circuits rather than enclosed and well-defined communities. He draws attention to the many ways that cultures are not local and bounded but are better to be

seen as '*enroute*' or as heavily influenced by other cultures. He exemplifies the irony of the idea of fixed places and localization and says the ethnographer is already a traveller who tries to learn local culture from another traveller who dwells in that place for a longer time. And he adds, "If we rethink culture and its science, anthropology, in terms of travel, then the organic, naturalizing bias of the term culture – seen as a rooted body that grows, lives, dies, and so on – is questioned. Constructed and disputed *historicities,* sites of displacement, interference, and interaction, come more sharply into view." (2008, Pg.319). That's why, we can say that the best examples of these interrelated and interactive areas are the border cities, the regions closest to the places where the borders connect. Therefore, I think it is necessary to address the issue of bordered spaces, border identities and border cultures in their relation to both the border itself and the other side of border. Moreover, it is also significant to treat the concept of border as a sociological phenomenon not only dedicated to local-residents in either side of border but also to displaced people, such as migrants, refugees or exiles.

2.2.1. Borders and Tourism

The existence of borders signifies a long history of various types of mobilities, including tourism. Although borders have long been studied from national, political, social, and security perspectives, many scholars now view them as sites of social and economic exchange. Tourism is at the forefront of this. Tourism, as a type of movement of people, involves the travel of people from one place to another, that is, to a place of interest for the purpose of recreation, medical care, religious or spiritual concerns, or simply to visit an authentic place. International tourism has also increased, especially after the 1970s, due to globalization, financial flows, innovations in transportation systems, and the creation and improvement of various tourist attractions.

Despite perception of borders as places of conflict and isolators, and their being strengthened with security concerns, they regenerate themselves as places of physical, social, economic, and cultural transitions. Borders and border cities in that sense rather than a ground that separated nations and communities has been started to be characterized as integrated lands, connectivity and unifying spaces and facilitators of exchange of goods, ideas, and services (Timothy, 2001,2002; Brunet-Jailly, 2005).

Tourism cities have generally become places that attract tourists with their distinctive features, historical and cultural attractions, and places worth seeing and visiting. However, it is crucial to note that border tourism is inherently based on the existence of a border and the authenticity, convenience and advantages of the services and facilities offered on the other side for those crossing the border. In other words, as Timothy and Gelbman (2023) state, "even the ordinary borders exude and appeal as they demarcate the differences between "here" and "there": distinctive landscapes, foreign languages, different currencies and monetary policies, and extraordinary cultures" (pg.5).

Cross-border shopping is a significant form of border tourism, by which consumers of two countries get the chance of traveling for purchasing goods and services that the neighboring country on the other side of the border provides. That's why, it is already a hot topic around the world in terms of the revival of tourism between borders. Some of the most studied borders in this sense are the USA-Mexico border, the Canada-American border, and between countries such as Germany and Denmark in northern Europe, or neighboring countries such as Malaysia, which borders Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia. In one of the leading research projects in the field, for Timothy and Butler (1995), in the North American context for instance, and probably in Europe as well, that shopping might become a powerful motivating factor in the motion to launch a cross-border trip. It is even sometimes a primary motive though not the most significant in the decision to make such a trip (pg.16-17) For those researchers, a shopping trip is not a new phenomenon, rather it has taken place since prehistoric times to exchange goods. However, it is getting more common with the effect of increasing leisure and tourism activities. They also think that what really triggers it is the rapidly increasing consumption trends in the modern age. (pg.17). The authors also state that changing role of shopping in leisure time results in new social, cultural, and economic trends. As a result of these new trends, in addition to the changes in lifestyles, it is indispensable to see increased mobility, new urban forms, and innovative nature of shopping since shopping goes beyond a simple everyday activity undertaken to acquire the daily necessities. (pg.17)

Border crossings for shopping can emerge in the form of daily visits or overnight stays. Some passengers travel long distances to cross the country, while others can reach this opportunity at very close distances. While short-distance visitors

can cross the border and return to their countries and homes after finishing their shopping, those who come from long distances may want to spend a few days at the destination. Besides, when the motivations of cross-border shopping are examined, mainly two reasons stand out. The first is the diversity of the products at the destination, and the second is the possibility of purchasing the products cheaper when the exchange rate and tax rates are calculated. In addition to the economic concerns of these consumers, as many authors of the field state, another important factor that stimulates cross-border shopping is the fact that shopping is a good relaxing, and enjoyable activity in itself. (Bussey 1987; Gratton & Taylor 1987). As a result, tourism in border regions leads to new urban forms because clusters of services and institutions are created to meet the needs of border tourists.

The permeability of borders influences tourism activities for both sides. Furthermore, that characteristic of permeability can be evaluated in terms of "infrastructure, transportation, services and facilities, as well as marketing activities and attraction development" (Hannonen & Prokkola, 2023, pg. 120). Cross-border tourism develops and thrives if borders are sufficiently permeable both physically and psychologically (Timothy & Butler, 1995; Makkonen, 2023). Moreover, it is clear that "[b]order regulations, visa politics, sanction regimes and case-specific regulations impact international travel mobility" (Hannonen & Prokkola, 2023, pg. 115). The visa and passport requirements of two countries that share the same border can lead to different hierarchies between travelers on either side. If visa liberalization and the ability to enter and exit with a national ID are applied only on one side of the border, there can be no question of reciprocity or equivalence. For example, Mexican citizens require a visa to enter the United States, while U.S. citizens do not require a visa to enter Mexico. Likewise, free mobility and right to travel have been issued as rights to EU citizens especially since the 1993 Maastricht Treaty and the declaration of the Schengen common travel area in 1995. However, the right of non-EU citizens in terms of mobilities, travel, and visa-passport regulations to cross the EU borders have become restrictive, differentiated, and unequal (Paasi et al, 2019, pg.127-133). As such, Turkey provides visa-free entry to its border neighbors such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Bulgaria and Greece, while only Azerbaijan, Georgia and Iran provide visa-free entry to Turkish citizens. Therefore, there is a clear inequality of mobility and right to travel between the citizens of Turkey and the citizens of EU countries such

as Greece and Bulgaria, which are located on Turkey's EU borders. This is proof that beyond the physical and concrete borders that people face, there are also mental and abstract borders, thereof paper walls. As Paasi (1996) claims, the border between two states which are proximate in distance may represent a mentally impenetrable barrier for one while it is invisible to the other. For all these reasons, new border studies emphasize the necessity of investigating the social, cultural, economic, and even psychological conceptualization of borders beyond their physical existence.

2.2.2. Borders and Migration

The Migration Period, also known as *Völkerwanderung* (wandering of the peoples) in German occurred between 400 and 800 AD and it resulted in the transition from Late Antiquity and to the Early Middle Ages. It was a significant period since there was an extra extensive migration of many groups. Most tribes and nomads decided to inhabit in a place and that roughly formed the roots for future generations of the European states. However, can we say that people moved from one place to another and lived on the same field happily ever after? Wandering of the peoples never ended and it will never end. As a result of geographical discoveries, Crusades, revolutions, and epidemics in the archaic times and again with the effect of wars, colonialism, technological developments, wars and regional conflicts in modern times, people are in a constant motion.

In today's globalizing world, we see increased number of people migrate every other day. As more and more people migrate in search of security and opportunity, migration and borders are at the centre of political debate around the world. Mostly, there are political and financial reasons behind that form of mobility as well as security reasons. The consequences of that mobility can be evaluated in two major aspects. The first is based on the spatial alterations in immigrated and settled places, the second most notable result is seen in the sociological and psychic condition of these displaced people related to their adaptation process. People have changed the spaces they inhabited and they themselves have been also changed in time since not only people migrate but also their ideas, beliefs, feelings and lifestyles move among spaces. In other words, culture of people in motion has constructed their heterogeneous beings.

The migration theories can be presented in an order in general from the most classical theories, neo-classical theories to modernization school. Classical theories,

such as “The Laws of Migration” by Ravenstein (1885), are the ones which point out that the migration in the 19th century was resulted from the industrial revolution, in general from rural to urban places where the industry grows. In Everett-Lee’s “A Theory of Migration” (1966), he focuses on some factors that really affect all the migration process, that is, the factors that affect the emergence of first decision of migration, the factor related to the place where people migrated from, the factors about the place where immigrants make their new life, the obstacles occur in the whole process as well as personal effects. Furthermore, there are also neo-classical theories which comprise of Micheal P. Todaro’s model (1969) and the New Economics of Labor Migration (1985) by Oded Stark and David E. Bloom model in which they emphasize on reasons for migration and choice and preferences of immigrants. As for, in Modernization School, theorists generally focus on the dynamism in the social system, which results from migration. William Arthur Lewis’s model of migration in 1950s, for instance, explains that migration is a mechanism which fixes imbalance in social system. He focuses on dynamics of migration in creating a balance in society and says migration decreases pressure of employment where there is much more workforce than wanted, while it also provides necessary workforce in places of emigration. The Dependency Theory firstly proposed in 1949 by Hans Singer and Raul Prebish, on the other hand, evaluates that dynamism by opposing the idea of balance that is to be created by migration. They believe that migration causes unstable flow of capital and workforce which creates an impoverishment of environment, and a more visible imbalance between center and periphery. According to World- Systems Theory proposed by Immanuel Wallerstein in 1970s, through which Wallerstein relates the determinants of migration to structural changes in world markets, migration as a function of globalization causes an increase in economic commitment and emergence of new production models. However, he adds the result is unequally distribution of political and economic power, while cultures, beliefs and social practices are also cline to reproduce those structural inequalities. The labour force demanded by Europe, which industrialized rapidly after World War II, from underdeveloped or developing countries stands as an example for this theory. In other words, Wallerstein (1974) asserts, the so-called center countries developed economically, socially and generally developed the system of capitalist relations. However, peripheral countries are countries that depend on core countries surrounded by these capitalist networks.

Therefore, in the mid-1970s, majority of migrants as refugees had to leave the countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos or Lebanon and Afghanistan. The economic and political change in countries both in Africa and South America resulted in ethnic and religious persecution which led to exoduses. The number of refugees around the world increased from 8 million in 1980 to 15 million by 1989, and according to UNHCR to 17 million in 1991, 23 million in 1993 and more than 27 million in 1995 (Castles & Miller, 1998, pg.87). According to Wallerstein, the cheap labour need of the central countries explains the enterprises of the immigrant admission policies of them. However, as it is discussed in above, after 1990s, all those migration movements were perceived as a threat to nations in political stage.

Today, the world witness waves of migration and the long and difficult journeys that migrants have to make. The media reports thousands of Middle Eastern and African migrants who try to cross Turkey's borders to reach the European Union, or a great number of Central Americans try to cross Mexico to reach the US. As a result, it is possible to see many acts of human trafficking and migrant smuggling networks to appear on the edge of borders all around the world. These waves of migration, which we see in the media and academic studies today, represent the largest migration crisis since the end of World War II. Currently, much of the academic research on the geopolitics of migration focuses on borders as a site of resistance and control, and the experiences of migrants in the countries of destination. In contrast to the traditional migration theories of the past, the central issue in contemporary migration studies is how migrants reach the border and the means, networks, numerous border crossings and suffering that make up the journey to the borders of more developed countries (Mainwaring & Brigden, 2016).

2.2.2.1. Types of Migration

In the migration literature, some researchers prefer to group and examine migration according to the reasons for its emergence. It can also be seen that many factors come together and create migration when it is considered purely cause-based. When we group the act of migration according to the ways it occurs, we can examine it as individual migration, mass migration and chain migration. While the migration of people individually or within family to more developed regions is considered as individual migration, the movement of all or a large part of the community from their

own lands for various social, political, or economic reasons can be defined as mass migration. Chain migration, on the other hand, can be explained as the migration of the mass migrating group using their relations with their acquaintances or relatives who migrated there before.

Migration movements are divided into two basic categories in terms of direction of the movement, namely internal migration and external or international migration. Internal migration could be a voluntary or compulsory migration from one settlement to another within national borders. Internal migration generally involves a movement from rural to urban, from economically unstable to more stable environments, where push-pull factors are heavily influenced. External migration or international migration, on the other hand, is a movement from a settlement within the country to a settlement outside the country, usually with the concerns of economy, employment or security. It is also possible to divide those categories of migration into two sub-categories as compulsory/involuntary and optional/voluntary, according to the decision mechanisms. The voluntary migration is seen in almost every country for financial or educational reasons. People voluntarily migrate to reach more economic opportunities, better living conditions, social and educational opportunities. Those people are generally welcomed by destination countries and fit into the legal frame of border regimes. The main reason for their desire to migrate is their expectation that they will have different employment opportunities, wage rates and living standards as compared to the place where they migrated from (Bilsborrow,2002, pg.77).

Involuntary migration, on the other hand, occurs as a result of another force other than the will of the immigrants in the decision to migrate. It can also occur when immigrants need to escape from a natural disaster such as floods, earthquakes or droughts or a man-made disaster, such as persecution, mass killings, wars etc. that occur in the settlement. In this category, only the push factor is active, and the pull factor is disabled, hence, there is more of a push and control interaction (Petersen, 2016, pg.259). In forced migration which is a subcategory of involuntary migration and can also be called as “displacement”, people who are forced to migrate are actually the ‘objects’ of migration. The decision for migration is taken by others and the immigrants are supposed to comply with it. The reasons for forced migrations again are generally explained as wars, civil wars, or regional conflicts. Besides that, random assaults, massacres, tortures are seen as the common feature of violence in countries

where that kind of migration occurs. Forced migration is generally beyond a social necessity, it becomes a legal and political necessity. It is possible to come across many examples in the world where it is implemented as a state or government policy.

Especially, since the 20th century, forced migration occurs as a result of security concerns of nation-states. For instance, neo-Nazi slaughters in Germany, the disintegration of Yugoslavia, ethnic cleansing of newly emerged European nation-states resulted in search for refuge of millions of people to the nearby countries (Castles & Miller, 1998, pg.3) Current international forced migrations generally take place from the rest of the world towards Western Europe, Australia, and North America. Those groups of migrants unfortunately are not as welcomed and advantageous as voluntarily migrated ones. Relatedly, when EU countries began to remove their internal boundaries through the end of the 1980s, they became concerned about strengthening their external borders to stop mass influx from the south and the east (Castles & Miller, 1998, pg.9). Forced migration, when it is thought as a sub-category of international migration, embodies displaced people, refugees, asylum seekers or illegal immigrants who are border crossers at the same time and it generally emerges a result of regional conflicts.

2.2.3. Borders and Facets of Illegality

The study of borders also reveals various versions of illegal crossings of objects and human beings. Borders have been crossed by illegal immigrants, criminals, or rebellions to find a refuge as well as by commodities to maximize the capitals of criminal transnational networks. That's to say, borders are not merely a place of legal permeability or impermeability but they are also places of illegal and illicit actions. As nation-states make use of technological developments in transportation and communication systems to protect their borders tightly, the criminal networks also do so for their benefits. According to Ramazan Aras (2020), after militarization and bureaucratization of border, both small-scale and large-scale trader patterns in the form of smuggling, human trafficking or suitcase trade are seen as a natural consequence at the borders in general (pg.134). For instance, Turkey's north-eastern borders, e.g., with Georgia and the Soviet Union, were always associated with the suitcase trade, which was to be included in the legal trade channels through border and coastal trade agreements signed by both countries. The eastern border or the south-eastern border,

such as the border between Syria and Turkey, were associated with smuggling activities. The western borders with EU countries such as Greece and Bulgaria have been studied in academia as pathways for the illegal movement of people and cross-border human trafficking, and also investigated as illegal smuggling activities (Aras, 2020), or as illicit suitcase trade or petty trade at the last term.

In their study, van Schendel and Abraham claim that borders as a place of crossing for both communities and commodities, are also places "where illegal flows are naturalized and intersect with the licit" (2005, pg.29). With the effect of globalization and neoliberal politics, while some borders have started to offer advantages for businesspeople, affluent tourists, and travelers, they have also become the place of enforcement for the disadvantageous groups such as migrants, smugglers, and illegal traders. As this idea of illegality or illicitness may differ in meaning in local minds and policy makers, also legal and illegal actions along any border may not be clear and certain for both parties. States are always there to control their borders and border crossings, yet from time to time with some beneficiary concerns they may loosen the control mechanisms, which results in spread of illegal activities. Galemba (2013) in her study on illegal practices at Mexico-Guatemala border, states that "[r]esearch on border populations highlights alternative ways of conceptualizing legality" (pg.280). Again she argues;

> The relation between legality and illegality in the margins is often fluidly interconnected, not a static division. Borders may be sites of intense state violence and inequality, but they can also serve as potential generative sites for revealing new ways of constituting legitimacy and morality, and challenging our perceptions of the status quo (Galemba, 2013, pg.282).

In terms of migrants, state of illegality is decided by the sovereignty of states, thus they establish regulations without considering their culture, memory, and history. The main reasons of migrations today are not economic though, people around the world mainly escape from safety-critical regional conflicts and wars. As a result, migrants who want to find a place to live in security, by even risking their life, try to cross borders illegally. They helplessly use illegal networking such as migrant smuggling and human trafficking and give all their financial accumulation to them. Although they have some justifiable reasons to do so, they inevitably become an object of illegal crossing along borders.

In terms of illegal crossing of commodities, on the other hand, Baud and van Schendel (1997) state that smuggling, as another illegal mobility pattern frequently occurs at borders as;

> a typical economic activity on the border in which the political and the economic come together. It develops whenever a state tries to impose restriction on border trade that are not acceptable to (some of) those living in the borderland and that cannot be enforced (pg.230).

They also claim that it is the state itself who invites smuggling (Baud & Schendel, 1997, pg.230). Restricting trade of some goods that are easily accessible and cheaper on the other side of border or applying high tax rates to those goods such as alcoholic beverages and cigarettes lead to occurrence of some certain smuggling between states at the same border. Furthermore, by the development of facilities such as transportation and communication, it is becoming common for borderland societies to involve in such illegal cross-border trades or informal petty trades and suitcase trades. People on either side of border make profits by exchanging commodities that are more expensive on the other side, although that type of trade can be legalize by states by integrating trade of some common goods into their national economy. Different from other regions in national economy, border regions might need some other regulations in law in terms of trading goods among two border states (Baud&van Schendel, 1997).

As a result, intertwinement of borderlands leads to flow of financial and human resources between states, and for border studies, it is significant to detect how and why they occur. Not on juridical level, but also on *de facto* level, that is, political, economic, social and cultural motivations for those flows are to be investigated. Therefore, it is possible to highlight whether those flows intercut in terms of legality and illegality. Borders as concrete and physical barrier are to be crossed legally or illegally, that's why, they are fortified every other day by high-end technological devices, surveillances, and military patrols. However, in spite of those precautions, states do not achieve preventing illegal and illicit flows completely, yet some are becoming more visible, and some are more hidden. As a result, the facets of legality and illegality are fluid and blurred. Some of those flows are out of law but are not seen or adequately policed by state forces (e.g., smuggling), others are not legally prohibited but may be damaging to national economy of states or may cause unfair competition and thus be

illicit (e.g., suitcase trade). But more importantly, among all illegal practices along borders, illegal border crossings are often met with the most unethical and harsh intervention by governments, without any humanitarian concerns (e.g., human trafficking or migrant smuggling).

2.2.4. Borders and Identity Constructions

Researchers not only become increasingly interested in social, political and economic circumstances around borders, but also tend to explore border culture and identity constructions in border areas. For sure, border residents develop a sense of border identity. One can imagine a borderland as a melting pot of political, social, and cultural identities of different groups which coexist and collide.

To start the discussion on intermingled identities, David Morley and Kevin Robins in their "No Place like Heimat: Images of Home (land)" (2008) say; "In a world that is increasingly characterized by exile, migration and diaspora, with all the consequences of unsettling and hybridization, there can be no place for such absolutism of the pure and authentic". They propose in this world, "there is no longer any place like Heimat" (pg.303). Heimat in the article is a 'homeland', that is an "imagined geography"; it is a place of security and belonging. Morley and Robins assert in the article that to erase the feeling of this homelessness, in the search for a home, we are wedded to the idea of identity which is rooted in regions, nations, languages and we take the culture as the authentic basis for our true identities. However, they add that this defensive identity sees other as a threat. They propose that we all should know "[p]laces are no longer the clear supports of our identity...Through this intermixture and hybridization of cultures, older certainties and foundations of identity are continuously and necessarily undermined. The continuity of identity is broken too" (2008, pg. 298). Both identities of natives and of mobile people who are believed to be uprooted are not and cannot be a pure 'Heimat' identity, rather, these different identities in a way reconstruct themselves in relation to 'other' or in contrast to 'other'.

Apart from the national identity, Stuart Hall in his "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" (1990**)** gives two different ways of thinking about 'cultural identity': The first is to define identity in terms of one shared and collective self which is hidden in 'self' and 'other' dichotomies of the same history. Cultural identity, in the second

sense, unlike the first one, is in constant becoming. It is in between past and present. Rejecting essentialism, Hall claims that it is far from being eternally fixed, being grounded on the past, rather "identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned, by and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past" (1990, pg.225). The identities are a mix of the negotiation between autobiographical material and biographical, that is, it is about how we see ourselves and how we are seen by others. Hall also relates his idea of the necessity of belonging with the problematic idea of space. He summarizes that there is a continuous displacement, displacement of slavery, colonization, and conquest. People one way or another forced to "migrate": "as the prototype of the modern or postmodern New World nomad, continually moving between centre and periphery" (1990, pg.234). In addition, as John Storey asserts, "identities are a mixture of 'interpellation' and 'representation'", that is, identities are not fixed and coherent anymore, they are not place bounded, thus they are in a constant process of becoming, not being (2003, pg.80). As a result, according to Hall, they are "less about 'roots', but the 'routes'" (1996, pg.6). Therefore, for Hall, we inevitably have more hybrid, mobile, and multiple identities. In other words, the concept of identity, following this permanent mood of mobility, becomes a form of production, rather than an output of fixed inheritance. Moreover, it is not about either this or that, it is a mixture, a hybridization of all.

The 'roots', as Hall states, are resulted from memory which is indispensably fragmented, incomplete, and subjective remembering, rather than pure veridical reports of the past. While we tend to keep memories meaningful all the time, they are very vulnerable which can always be reconstructed, forgotten, revised, reorganized. In addition, Halbwachs (1992) proposes that memory is basically a way of bringing the past into the present yet, there is the collective memory, and it is embodied in mnemonic artefacts such as TV series or movies that we are exposed to. These artefacts appear as forms of commemoration by media tools or other kinds of sites of memory like shrines, statues, or memorials (Prager, 2001). In today's communication age, rather than heritage sites or museums, mass media and popular culture constantly produce and serve for memory industries to consolidate representations through which we are led to think, feel and recognize the past. Cinema, TV or mass media, in general, create 'prosthetic memories' - a term first used by Alison Landsberg- to be able to turn the scenes into experiences even for people who did not experience them or did not

have veridical memory of them (1995, pg.176). As an example, depending on this and our main topic, that's mobility, identity, border crossing, and mnemonic artefacts, the movie of Pocket Hercules: Naim Süleymanoğlu (2019) (Cep Herkülü: Naim Süleymanoğlu) is a very successful media tool where we can see best of this memory construction. In that biographical drama about the life of Turkish weightlifter Naim Süleymanoğlu, born and grew up in Bulgaria, his life story is told in relation to the results of the Bulgarianization campaign, which was put into practice at the end of 1984 under the rule of the Bulgarian Communist Party led by Todor Zhivkov, in which the names of the Bulgarian Turks were changed with Bulgarian names by force of the state, which was called the "Resurrection Process" by the official authorities. Throughout the movie, Naim's decision and attempts to leave Bulgaria to announce this situation to the world are told with emotional scenes. The story is about the escape of a very successful athlete to his homeland, Turkey, who wants to be the voice of the oppressed and despised Bulgarian Turks, which deeply affects everyone who watches the movie, especially the immigrants who migrated to Turkey on that time, that's in 1980s, and, also border people on both sides who have personally experienced, witnessed or just listened to the stories of this migration.

While the 'roots' of cultural identity fortify itself with 'prosthetic' memory, as for 'routes', Hall (1996) implies that identity is in the process of becoming, from the Lacan's mirror stage when the kid enters to the world of language and culture; with a desire for erasing that feeling of lack resulted from separation from mother to the end of life. Throughout life, many tools are used to fill that gap and the whole process of life apparently is a way of being in the routes to shape and fulfil our identities. In Erving Goffman's (2009) words, identity is staged or in Judith Butler's (1990) words, it is performed inevitably within the culture. That is, identities are not the expression of human nature, but they are performances in culture. Therefore, one can say the identity of not only an immigrant, but also a native, a resident of culture is an identity that lives with and through fluctuations, it is the result of hybridity. Those identities produce and reproduce themselves through transformation and difference but are nevertheless inevitably affected by different forms of 'memories'.

We have already discussed the fact that normally in the definition of a nation-state, all the citizens of the nation in themselves attribute their national identity to a common origin and cultural ties between them. But the ways in which border peoples

perceive national identity are not limited to this. Especially for the Balkan states that were once together under the Ottoman Empire, the borders of the nation-states after the empire and the national identities they constructed within it have been quite fluid (Avdikos, 2013, pg.397). Even after the Ottoman rule, the way of perceiving national identity is not flat and smooth. Starting from the Balkan wars, through the Second World War, the Cold War era, the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and the post-communist era, the place and importance of the 'other' in the constructions of national identity of the inhabitants of almost all Balkan states bordering each other has constantly changed. Local memories exist beyond the grand narratives of official history, and they can provide insight into historical events as well as the expectations and policies of the national state. It is necessary to recognize that the Balkan Peninsula is in a conflicting situation. Using the idea of cultural identification as a broader framework to understand all cultures and their commonalities would be a very beneficial approach. That's way, we may avoid using national identity as a central notion, which gives rise to a lot of misunderstandings, censorship, and mistrust. Beyond these, memory is a need for any researcher working with populations and cultures that have experienced turbulent histories. Official memory, as recorded in national histories, is often the product of political expediency. For instance, in his study on the Greek-Bulgarian border, Avdikos states;

> throughout the Balkans there seems to be a widespread sense of a converging cultural identity, which is attributed to centuries of living in proximity, as well as to migrations. This cultural identity, which is the outcome of cohabitation and interaction over the centuries, was considered dangerous for the formation of a homogeneous national narrative, and for this reason it was replaced gradually—and even violently—by the national identity, as condensation of all the elements that differentiate it from whatever lay outside the borders, or even inside but which could not be fitted into the cultural homogeneity (2013, pg. 401)

According to Wilson and Donnan (1998), "borders inflect these identities in ways not found elsewhere in the state... Borders are contradictory zones of culture and power where the twin processes of state centralisation and national homogenisation are disputed" (pg.25-26). Therefore, it is important to see "borders as a place for researching the structures and agencies of the state and the ways in which national and other identities provide meaning and order to the forces of state" (1998, pg.26).

Consequently, more recent literature considers borders to be social territorial constructs that reflect the discourse and practice of identity. Now the focus is not just on taking their existence for granted, but on how they are socially constructed. However, it is not a total deconstruction of the old, rather it is a reconstruction. The borders are not only fixed, bounded, fully granted, and sharply divisive anymore but also in some places they are blurred. As it is discussed above, it is not possible to reify space, identity and culture as if they belong to certain nations and countries dwelling in certain bordered geography since the beginning of history. Languages, values, beliefs, and as well as identities are intermixed all around the world. People are constantly in motion practically or metaphorically. We are on a free-floating earth. In any piece of land, there are different experiences of displacement and bordering because of different reasons. Therefore, to have a unique culture, or a pure identity in a certain place and to sustain it till the end of time is an illusion. Nobody wants to put himself in a bell glass to preserve her/his culture and cultural identity. Furthermore, borders are not straight lines that are totally strong or loose, they are like ropes that are constantly fluctuating, stretching, being cut in some places, and being patched in others. Therefore, wherever they stretch or break, new interactions occur, new hybrid cultures and identities are formed.

2.3. The Historical Geography of Contemporary Turkey and Her Borders

2.3.1. Turkish Border Regions and Their Formations from a Historical Perspective

The borders of Turkey have been talked upon the National Pact of 1920 (*Misak-ı Milli*) which was signed by the last Ottoman parliament and became the first motivation of the Turkish Independence War. We can understand the importance of this treaty in terms of the building a nation-state from Mustafa Kemal Atatürks's statement on it; "It is the nation's iron fist that writes the Nation's Oath which is the main principle of our independence to the annals of history". The document, which consists of six sets of decisions that determine the foreign relations of the state, is generally seen as the most determining factor in drawing the borders of the country.

Although the borders of the country have taken today's shape after some wars and treaties, communities of Turkish origin living in neighboring countries and minorities in the Ottoman Empire and later in the Republic of Turkey were constantly

forced to cross these borders, move and migrate due to political reasons. To start with the formation of the border of Turkey historically, the border between Turkey and Bulgaria was determined by the İstanbul Treaty signed by the Ottoman Empire with Bulgaria on September 29, 1913, and it maintains its validity until today. In 1923, with the Treaty of Lausanne, today's borders of Turkey both in the east and west including Syria, Iraq, and Greece were drawn to a large extent. Later the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 caused the emergence of newly established countries like Georgia and Armenia next to Turkey's eastern border. However, Turkey's current dynamic borders are heavily influenced by the refugee crisis, illegal crossings, and unilateral visa exemption on its border with the European Union, as well as civil unrest and war in neighbouring countries on its eastern borders.

Through the Eastern border, in the 2000s, Turkey handled numerous asylum seekers from Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and the mass influx of Syrian immigrants after the crisis occurred in 2011. More than 80,000 Iraqis have fled to Turkey due to the unstable situation in Iraq in 2014. The number of Syrian immigrants has reached one million living in Turkey by 2014 and then to almost three million by 2017. According to the official figures, as of January 25, 2024, the number of registered Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey reached a total of 3,186,561 (İçişleri Bakanlığı Göç İdaresi Başkanlığı, 2024). Those people temporarily settled in refugee camps in the provinces that are close to the border and later generally settled mostly in İstanbul, Gaziantep, Hatay, Şanlıurfa, Adana and Mersin.

Specifically, as the main concern of this study, Turkey and Bulgaria border has been dramatically crossed by Bulgarian Turks in various phases of history. During the Russian War (1828–1829), about 30,000 Bulgarian Turks came to Turkey, later again in Russian-Turkish War, about 750,000 immigrants left Bulgaria though about a quarter of them died along the way. More than 200,000 Turks remained within Turkey's current border, and the rest were sent to other parts of the Ottoman Empire. That's why; in 1900, the one-third proportion of Turkish citizens in Bulgaria fell to 14.2% as a result of these migrations. Then, during the Balkan Wars and World War I, a large number of Turks continued to migrate to Turkey in line with the compulsory population exchanges between Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey. By 1934, the Turkish population had declined to 9.7% of Bulgaria's total population and continued to decline in the next decades (Şimşir, 1986).

After World War II, with the effect of communist rule, migration from Bulgaria ended to a great extent. However, in the early 1950s and 1960s measures against Turkish citizens such as high taxation, and nationalization of private minority schools in the name of modernization of Bulgaria put great pressure on the Turkish minority to migrate from Bulgaria, thus bilateral agreements were made to regulate the outflow of Bulgarian Turks. In 1950, the departure restrictions were relaxed, and many Turks have left the country**.** In August 1950, the Bulgarian government announced that 250,000 Turks had applied for immigration and insisted on leaving the country in three months. However, Turkish officials said the country could not accept these figures in such a short period of time and closed the border the following year (Değerli & Karakuzu, 2016). By the end of 1951, about 155,000 Turks had left Bulgaria due to continued pressure on the Turks (Kurat, 1975; Tanoğlu, 2011). Most of them either gave up their property or sold it at well below its value. Most of these migrants settled mainly in the Marmara and Aegean regions, with the help of land distribution and housing provision of the time. In 1968, another agreement was reached between the two countries, where relatives of those who had emigrated until 1951 reunited with their separated families, and during the next ten years another 115,000 people left Bulgaria and came to Turkey (Kurat,1975). The latest wave of Turkish immigrants began in 1989 with a major escape, the so-called "big excursion", when the Bulgarian Turks fled to Turkey from a forced assimilation campaign. This marked a dramatic climax of long-standing tensions within the Turkish community living in Bulgaria. The pressure was intensified in the winter of 1989 by the Bulgarian government to force the Turks to change their Turkish names to Bulgarian names. That is, the campaign began with a ban both on speaking Turkish in public places and on wearing traditional Turkish clothing, followed by a compulsory renaming campaign (Özlem, 2008).

In May 1989, Bulgarian authorities began the deportation of the Turks. Turkey opened her border with Bulgaria on June 3, 1989, by the command of the president of the time, Turgut Özal. However, on August 21, 1989, Turkey reintroduced visa requirements for Bulgarian Turks. It is estimated that about 360,000 Turks had migrated to Turkey in that short period. Furthermore, after the collapse of the Bulgarian communist regime and the restoration of Bulgarian citizens' freedom of travel, about 218,000 Bulgarian Turks left the country for coming to Turkey. The subsequent wave of immigration was caused by the ever-deteriorating economic

situation. In addition, as a result of the first democratic elections won by the Communist Party, which was renamed in 1990, 88,000 people left the country, most of them were Bulgarian Turks (Parla, 2006; Özlem, 2008; Danış&Parla, 2009). Immigration to Turkey increased again in 1992 on a large scale. But this time, they were pushed for economic reasons with the decline of Bulgaria's economy affecting predominantly ethnically mixed regions. Bulgarian Turks left without state subsidies or other forms of state aid and experienced a serious recession. In conclusion, according to the 1992 census, between 1989 and 1992, about 344,849 Bulgarian Turks migrated to Turkey, which significantly reduced the population of southern Bulgaria (Heper&Criss, 2009). During this period of more than 100 years, Turks, who came to Turkey by escaping from Bulgaria's oppressive attitude, settled in the cities such as İstanbul, Edirne, Tekirdağ, Kırklareli, Bursa and İzmir. Most of these cities were chosen for settlement because they were border towns in close proximity to Bulgaria. Another reason for choosing these towns was that the climatic conditions were similar to those in the immigrants' countries of origin, as most of them worked in agriculture. It's told by local-residents in Turkey's Thrace region that they migrated to Turkey after leaving their houses and belongings and they could only take seeds of their crops with them in their pockets to cultivate wherever they could settle after migration.

2.3.2. Political Upheavals in Turkey's Border Management

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, Turkey's nation-state established its national territory without considering cultural, ethnic, religious aspects, which resulted in fragmentation of all economic relations, life patterns, and cultural exchange of communities for years. That's to say, the communities were arbitrarily separated in the order of the newly established nation-state. In the following decades, with the effects of war, poverty, and lack of economic sustainability, the disappearance of social, cultural, demographic, ethnic, and religious networks between neighbouring places have been a problem of all time. Furthermore, the nation-state project of the Turkish Republic condensed the political boundaries through the Turkification projects and caused a traumatic separation of societies and rearranged the social structure because of its idealistic and political rhetoric and border security policies. Despite the recent development of literature on border and border research in Turkey, many important questions about social, cultural, political, and economic

relations remain unanswered and can only be realized through extensive ethnographic research projects.

Turkey has always had a strategic geographical position. Specifically, when we think about the Turkish-Bulgarian border, Turkey has been a complete transition country. It served as a gateway for Turks living in the Balkans and Bulgarians living in Turkey, both during the Ottoman period and post- First World War or the Cold War years. Even today, it is possible to see this border as a 'door of hope' for immigrants. Because Turkey is a strategic key country used by immigrant and refugee groups from the Middle East for transition to Europe. All of these have made the Turkish-European border a field where important data can be collected for contemporary border studies in general. This dynamism on the border, which spanned a long period of time, has shaped the border people, the culture and identities of the people who have lived in Thrace for decades, as well as the perspectives of the people living in Anatolia towards those people there. The Balkans, which includes the southeast of Europe including countries like Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece and the northwest of Turkey, including the provinces of Tekirdağ, Edirne, and Kırklareli on the border, are defined through a common 'Balkan culture' discourse.

Turkey, which has gone through all these processes, is not completely neither affiliated with Europe nor completely outside of it since it has never been colonized by a European nation, but it is often seen as the 'other' of Europe. For that reason, in terms of the security of the borders, Turkey is seen by Europe as a country that poses a danger to the West. This orientalist gaze shows how mobility and border crossings of some are seen as a threat. Since Turkey is a transit country to Europe, it has been subjected to constant criticism by Europe in terms of its elastic border management, which has some inhumane consequences in terms of immigrants and refugees. Western countries want to sort out the immigrants as those who can be benefited or not and take them to their countries accordingly, and they sometimes strengthen or sometimes make their firewalls flexible with a win-win logic. According to Shosanna Fine in her *Borders and Mobility in Turkey* (2018), Turkey has been accused by the EU as it couldn't succeed to govern the mass flux of migration. Fine implies that Turkey has been under the supervision of the EU since the 1990s and member states have criticized that Turkey has not done enough to prevent immigration of refugees who use Turkey as a bridge to Europe. According to Fine, numerous politicians expressed their fear of

unwanted migrant "invasion" across Europe transit from Turkey (2018, pg.10). Turkey's border and immigration management are also heavily criticized by some in its domestic politics. After the Justice and Development Party (*AKP*) came to power in 2002, Kemalist and republican politicians, who had previously adopted westernization politics, but later adopted a more anti-Western and nationalist attitude, criticized the neoliberal and neoconservative political Islamist attitude of the ruling party, which aimed to enter the European Union at that time.

Till the end of the 2000s, Turkey was receiving praise from both the members of the European Union and the United States for being a 'model for how to be a Muslim country' for other countries in the Middle East (Turkey a model Muslim democracy: Bush, 2004). Besides, in terms of illegal crossings, Turkey is a key country for the security of the EU's external borders and migration management. For that reason, although Turkey is not a full member of the Union, the EU has conducted a series of negotiations with Turkey on the implementation of the Integrated Border Management (IBM), which is a system in external differentiated integration and was introduced after the EU's Schengen arrangements in the 1980s with the cooperation and coordination of member states in the management of the Union's external borders. However, with the emergence of the Arab Spring in 2011, Turkey's relations with Syria, Egypt and Israel deteriorated, which resulted in some problematic practices of Turkey through its border. Therefore, the EU's border cooperation activities with the IBM have been carried out with a more security-oriented approach towards third countries by focusing on "control" and "prevention" in response to irregular migration. In this context, Turkey is an important actor for the EU in the Eastern Mediterranean when it comes to controlling irregular migration routes to Europe (Yıldız & Turhan, 2022). In addition, with the agreement signed between Turkey and the EU in 2016, Turkey took on the mission of keeping incoming refugees within itself, which has made the country known as a ‘safe’ country by Europe again (European Council, 2016).

Turkey’s recondite shifting position on the international stage combined with its key geographical position as an important entry point for migrants and refugees to Europe makes the country a perfect sample for scholarly investigation on the issue of the border. Throughout its history, Turkey has seen numerous border crossings and has been addressed as a land with a "migration problem” in spite of its claim of strengthened fences and walls all around Turkish border. Police and patrol operations

as well as European border management agencies have been on the rise along the Turkish-European borders and the Aegean Sea to check the operation within the maritime boundaries. Nevertheless, Turkey has become the most notable country all around the world with its great number of irregular immigrants. Therefore, Turkey with its very flexible borders provides a rich environment where one can deepen the understanding of the issue of borders.

2.3.3. The Appearance of Refugees, Asylum seekers, and Irregular Immigrants along Turkey's Borders

From the Ottoman times to 1980s, Turkey let in various groups of immigrants who were mostly ethnic Turks. Looking specifically at the waves of migration after 1989, Castles and Miller (1998) found out that most migration took place from Eastern Europe to Western Europe, or in general from the south and east to the west of Europe. However, Castles and Miller note one exception among others as an example of intra-regional migration, and that is the migration of 350000 Bulgarian Turks to Turkey in 1989 in a west-to-east movement, fleeing Bulgaria's repressive regime (1998, pg.110-111). According to Castles and Miller, "Turkey is both a country of emigration and immigration", since in 1960s and 1970s, millions of Turkish workers also migrated to Western Europe (Castles & Miller, 1998, pg.6). Examples of external migration in Turkey also include non-Muslim minorities who had to leave the country after the Second World War with the internal conflicts and repressions towards religious and ethnic minorities and workers who went to various western countries during the 1960s and 1970s.

However, in the last 20 years, according to Kirişçi and Karaca (2015), Turkey has increasingly become an 'immigration receiving country'. Especially the Syrian immigrants, whose number reached about 1 million in 2014, can be said to be the most intense of the three important 'mass influxes' that Turkey has experienced (Kirişçi & Karaca, 2015). The first of these is the migration of approximately 350,000 Bulgarian Turks and Pomaks who were forced to emigrate by the repressive communist regime in Bulgaria in 1989, which also constitutes part of the research group of this study. During this wave of migration, Turkey opened its borders to the immigrants and developed policies to support the integration of this group of their "racial kin" into Turkish society and quickly prepared the necessary legislation for them to obtain

Turkish citizenship (Parla, 2003; Kirişçi&Karaca,2015). The 1934 Law of Settlement, which also provided the tradition of convenience for immigrants of Turkish ancestry and culture, also manifested itself in this migration. However, as Kirişçi and Karaca (2015) state the mass asylum request of mostly Kurds, and some Iranians who came to the Turkish borders fleeing from the persecution of Saddam Hussein from Northern Iraq in 1991 was not met with the same enthusiasm and tolerance, and a solution was tried to be found through international diplomacy in the form of creating a 'safe zone' in the north of Iraq. The third of those influxes, that's, the crossing of Syrian immigrants across Turkey's borders, which started in 2011-2012 as the largest and longest lasting mass migration, was initially welcomed with tolerance by both political leaders and the public. However, the prolonged civil unrest in Syria has resulted in both a significant increase in the number of immigrants coming to Turkey and a gradual loss of tolerance for them (Kirişçi & Karaca, 2015). Moreover, it is believed that the south-eastern border of the country with Syria has largely lost its security. And the fact that the Syrian immigrants, along with many other irregular migrants from Africa and the Middle East, want to leave the country illegally has caused the issue of 'illegal migration' to become a problematic issue in Turkey.

Turkey has become a place of refuge for ethnic Turks, and Muslims facing oppression in Eastern Europe, as well as for Kurds who search for a refuge to escape from Iran (Castles & Miller, 1998, pg.6). Not just in Turkey, but all over the world, economic problems and poverty, social conflict and political turmoil have increased migration waves from the south and east to the north and west. In that sense, Ahmet İçduygu (2015) states that while European countries are the main areas of attraction, Turkey, which borders Europe, is affected by irregular migration waves both as a destination and transit country. In other words, after the 1980s, there has been an intense flow of migration to Turkey and to developed western countries through it. The proliferation of this type of migration and the country's position as a transit country has led various kinds of 'irregular' migrations, which involve different groups of immigrants crossing borders through 'unregistered' means.

So how should we name the different groups of immigrants who have flocked to Turkey from all over the world due to its strategic geographical location, according to the direction they come from and the destinations they want to reach? It is also

significant to touch upon the issue of naming different migrants who come to Turkey for asylum or who want to use the country as a transit country to cross to Europe.

To start with, UNHCR defines a 'refugee' as "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group" (USA for UNHCR, n.d.) Asylum seeker, on the other hand, "is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed" as it is defined by UNHCR (n.d.). While 'refugee' as a political status is given immigrants as they escape war, persecution or natural disaster, to whom UNHCR provides funding for transportation to host country, and government of host countries provides funded resettlement organization such as housing and job assistance; an asylum seeker is an immigrant who finds a safe country by himself either via visa or a port of entry, and who has no government funding for housing and who has no work permit at all (Dash Network, n.d.) That's why, host countries preserve a right for deportation of asylum seekers. Additionally, most of the countries especially in Western Europe grew scepticism toward asylum seekers as they are in fact economic migrants but using the claims of persecution. As a result, those countries strengthened up the entry rules for asylum seekers and many European countries like the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Spain, Belgium, Austria, Portugal, and Netherlands arranged international agreements to restrict the entry of asylum seekers whose request is "manifestly unfounded" (Castles & Miller, 1998, pg.89).

Grouping migration to Turkey as (1) irregular migrants for work, (2) irregular transit migrants, (3) asylum seekers and refugees, and (4) regular migrants, İçduygu states that Turkey's ability to manage these migrants is an important stage in the country's integration process with the EU (2015). In fact, transit migrants who use the territory of a country to travel to a more developed country, especially in the case of Turkey, generally aim to go to the EU countries. However, mainly within that category of transit migrants, the 'illegal' migrants caught at the border trying to cross illegally, who will be frequently mentioned and encountered in this study, represent a group that moves back and forth between the legal and illegal status. That's, it is possible to categorize irregular transit migrants as those who are under temporary protection or who come to Turkey without valid documents, or asylum seekers whose refugee claims have been rejected and are expected to leave the country. However, migrants

who fall into this transit migrant category are labelled as illegal migrants in their any attempt to cross the borders of country illegally. Considering the countries of citizenship of irregular migrants in Turkey, it is possible to include most of them in the category of illegal migrants who are caught while attempting to enter the country through Turkey's eastern and southern borders and who use the country as a bridge to cross to the western and northern countries illegally. However, there is a confusion in naming different migrants who come to Turkey seeking asylum or who use Turkey as a transit country to cross to Europe. In other words, there are differences between the terms used by the public and those used in the media or for legal reasons. Although those who have fled the chaos in Syria, Afghanistan or various Middle Eastern countries are readily referred to as refugees and asylum seekers in public and political discourse, recently, especially in the media and political discourse, these terms are avoided and the terms 'irregular' migrants or 'transit migrants' are often used instead. All these confusing categories of immigrants and terms are presented and discussed in detail in the following subchapter.

2.3.3.1. The Legal Status of Refugees in Turkey in Detail

After the World War II, the United Nations to recognize the rights of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries, declared its United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in 1951. This convention and protocol, also known as Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951, has been a centrepiece in the protection of the rights and status of asylum seekers and refugees. Firstly, the convention was limited to the scope of the refugees within Europe, the extent of which was enlarged removing the geographical and temporal limits by an amendment signed in 1967. Turkey, though being included in 1951 protocol was annotated to the convention stating that “Turkish Republic signing this convention states that, so far as the commitments accepted by it under the Convention are concerned the term events occurring 1 January 1959 in article 1, part A, shall be understood to refer to events occurring in Europe before 1 January. It does not therefore intent to accept any connexion with events occurring outside Europe” (UN General Assembly, 1954, pg.196). Therefore, Turkish Republic has preserved the right of protection of geographical rights by using the optional right provided by Article 7 of the Protocol in the 1967 amendment. To summarize, The UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees entered into force in 1964 after being decided at a special conference held in

Geneva on 28 July 1951. The Refugee Convention was completed by the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, which entered into force in 1967. Asylum and human rights expert Dr. Hendrik Cremer, while answering the questions by Anke Rasper (2016) from Deutsche Welle, said that the Geneva Convention is of great importance today as it was then and that it forms the basis of international refugee law, and also European asylum law. However, the Refugee Convention of 1951 only applied to post-World War II European refugees. Then, with the additional protocol in 1967, its scope was expanded both in terms of time and geography. Hendrik Cremer states that there are 149 countries that are party to the Convention or Protocol. All the EU members have signed the Geneva Convention and this convention forms the basis of European asylum law. Article 18 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights grants the right to seek asylum under the Geneva Convention on Refugees. However, there are also obligations for countries that have not signed the convention or protocol. Although Turkey has signed the Geneva Convention, she put a 'geographical reservation'. Turkey recognizes the Refugee Convention only for refugees from Europe. In other words, she does not apply it to those coming from other countries such as Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and, Eritrea etc. As a result, refugee status is not granted to non-European refugees in the Turkish legal system (UNHCR, n.d.). To state some issues of the Convention agreed upon by state parties briefly,

- According to the Convention, a refugee is defined as someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.
- The Convention is both a status and rights-based instrument and is underpinned by a number of fundamental principles, most notably non-discrimination, non-penalization and *non-refoulement.*
- The principle of *nonrefoulement* is so fundamental that no reservations or derogations may be made to it. It provides that no one shall expel or return ("*refouler*") a refugee against his or her will, in any manner whatsoever, to a territory where he or she fears threats to life or freedom.
- In particular, the Convention does not apply to those for whom there are serious reasons for considering that they have committed war crimes or crimes against

humanity, serious non-political crimes, or are guilty of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

As stated above clearly, the geographical restriction issue was left to the discretion of the states after the amendment of 1968, and it was ensured that the countries that wished could grant this status only to those who came from Europe and that the countries that wished could grant refugee status to those who came from non-European countries without any geographical limitation. Since the Republic of Turkey continued to apply the definition of refugee in the convention by complying with the geographical limitation after this amendment, today, Turkey still grants refugee status to foreigners who seek asylum due to the events taking place in Europe. The scope of the European geography consists of the countries included in the Council of Europe (Şen & Serdar, 2021)

To sum up, although refugee status is a type of international protection granted only to those coming from Europe, there is still confusion in terms of that status in Turkey. According to current legislation, refugee status is an individual status and is not applied in cases of mass influx, that's why, the definition of "refugee" is misused for Syrians and many other transit or irregular immigrants reside in Turkey. In other words, neither Syrians nor any other citizens coming from non-European countries can't be accepted as refugees or conditional refugees or as subsidiary protected immigrants. The only status that can be given to non-European citizens coming to Turkey for various reasons is "temporary protected" status. In Turkey, the Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection, enacted in 2013, provides for "temporary protection status" for the immigrants coming outside Europe. Article 91 of the Law states that "Temporary protection may be granted to foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, who are unable to return to the country from which they left, who come to or cross our borders *en masse* in search of urgent and temporary protection." This article clarifies the legal status of immigrants, especially Syrians and Afghans, who come to our country in mass influxes. Besides, Articles 10, 11 and 12 of the Law on the duration of the "temporary protection status" stipulate that the Council of Ministers will decide on the beginning and end of this period and that temporary protection will end if the protected person leaves Turkey voluntarily or seeks protection in a third country (Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu, 2013).

Furthermore, the Republic of Turkey aims to send those immigrants who are in 'temporary protected status' to their homes and safe areas by establishing the necessary diplomatic relations and contacts with the countries (Topal, 2015). That's why, Turkish authorities want media tools and academia to call those immigrants 'guests' or 'temporary protected' immigrants in order to get rid of the responsibilities and legislations that the government would have in case of their being accepted as refugees or asylum seekers. Besides, if the Turkish government accepted immigrants coming from the Middle East or any African countries as refugees, they would not be able to send them to their countries.

However, almost all the irregular immigrants in Turkey, both in international media and academia, are generally called as refugees in public discourse and media tools. That's why, there has been an expectation towards Turkey to give the right of those people as refugees in addition to keeping them within Turkey's borders and preventing them to flee to European countries. Furthermore, as the European Union countries frame Turkey as a 'safe country' to keep those immigrants away from EU's external borders, on 18th March 2016, Turkey and the EU had an agreement to stop the flow of irregular migration to EU countries via Turkey. To sum up the 9 items of reciprocal action plans of the EU and Turkey (European Council, 2016);

1) All new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands as of 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey.

2) For every Syrian being returned to Turkey from Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU.

3) Turkey will take any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes for illegal migration opening from Turkey to the EU and will cooperate with neighbouring states as well as the EU to this effect.

4) Once irregular crossings between Turkey and the EU are ending or at least have been substantially and sustainably reduced, a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme will be activated.

5) The fulfilment of the visa liberalisation roadmap will be accelerated *vis-à-vis* all participating Member States with a view to lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the latest by the end of June 2016, provided that all benchmarks have been met.

6) The EU, in close cooperation with Turkey, will further speed up the disbursement of the initially allocated 3 billion euros under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey and ensure funding of further projects for persons under temporary protection identified with swift input from Turkey before the end of March.

7) The EU and Turkey welcomed the ongoing work on the upgrading of the Customs Union.

8) The EU and Turkey reconfirmed their commitment to re-energise the accession process as set out in their joint statement of 29 November 2015. They welcomed the opening of Chapter 17 on 14 December 2015 and decided, as a next step, to open Chapter 33 during the Netherlands presidency.

9) The EU and its Member States will work with Turkey in any joint endeavour to improve humanitarian conditions inside Syria, in particular in certain areas near the Turkish border that would allow for the local population and refugees to live in areas that will be safer.

The 2016 action plan mentioned above was the third meeting of the EU and Turkey, as it was clearly stated in the introduction part of the plan that "this was the third meeting since November 2015 dedicated to deepening Turkey-EU relations as well as addressing the migration crisis". The overall topic of those meetings on 15 October 2015 and 29 November 2015, was about refugees and migration management, as part of a comprehensive cooperation agenda based on shared responsibility, mutual commitments, and delivery between two accession parties.

For the action plan signed in 2016, Cremer, , in the interview of the Deustch Welle in 2016, also asserts that looking at the current implementation of the Geneva Convention, it is clear that human rights have been violated. People who have fled their country, come to the Greek islands from Turkey, and set foot on European land for the first time, are directly detained. As Cremer foresees there is also the danger of people being deported from Turkey to back their countries, such as Syria or Afghanistan. In fact, according to Cremer, the Geneva Refugee Convention prohibits chain deportations. For this reason, the deportation of refugees from Greece to Turkey cannot be allowed. Cremer states that there are some countries in Europe that do not feel bound by the Geneva Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights.

In this way, he claims that by closure of the Balkan route, some European countries also close their borders and thus some countries are fundamentally opposed to accepting refugees for nationalist or even very selfish reasons. He also denotes that the agreement reached with Turkey also makes it clear that Europe is increasingly trying to shed this responsibility. He advocates the idea that the responsibility is also wanted to be thrown into Turkey, which has already accepted the largest number of refugees in the world. He concludes the interview as it is clear that many people will flee to Europe while wars are taking place in front of Europe's door. Europe is passing the test in the security of its borders regard, but it is not able to cope with the difficulties in humanitarian terms.

Moreover, to resolve the migration crisis especially in the border region between Turkey and the EU which comprises of member countries, Greece and Bulgaria as well, Turkey and the EU also signed an implementation called Visa Liberalisation Dialogue, The EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement on 16 December 2013. The main objective of this agreement is to establish, on the basis of reciprocity procedures, for the rapid readmission of the persons who do not or no longer fulfil the conditions for entry to the European side. The agreement includes provisions related both to the readmission of the nationals of the EU Member States and Turkey, and to the readmission of any other persons (including the third country nationals and the stateless persons) that entered into, or stayed on the territory of either sides directly arriving from the territory of the other side. To fulfil the requirements of this agreement, thirty removal centres have been established in Turkey, two of which are temporary. In this context, Pehlivanköy Removal Center was established in Kırklareli, under the Ministry of Interior of the Turkish Republic to provide refuge and to carry out asylum procedures for the ones who are apprehended as ‘illegal immigrants’ along the borders between Turkey and Europe. The center with a total construction area of 17.000 m² consists of dining halls, sports and conference halls, the offices of the General Directorate of Migration Management personnel, 126 accommodation rooms with a capacity of 756 people as well as technical facilities, such as a transformer building, and a wastewater treatment plant. The center is to carry out works and procedures related to the deportation of illegal immigrants from Turkey, and of the victims of human trafficking according to General Directorate of Migration Management, Law No. 6458 on Foreigners, and International Protection.

Another organization linked to the EU in this sense is FRONTEX. FRONTEX defines itself as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, which supports EU Member states and Schengen-associated countries in the management of the EU's external borders and the fight against cross-border crime. As a moderately autonomous institution, FRONTEX cooperates directly with the border authorities of third countries as well as EU Member States in technical and operational areas. A memorandum of understanding was signed between FRONTEX and Turkey for the first time in 2012 and the Turkey-FRONTEX Risk Analysis Network (TURAN) was established soon after. Through this Memorandum, Turkey and FRONTEX have cooperated on a number of issues, including the regular exchange of data and risk analysis on border management, as well as the training of experts in this field. However, after 2020, FRONTEX's cooperation with Turkey came to a halt as there were reports (Swingler, 2021) that FRONTEX turned a blind eye to cases of "push-back", especially at the Greek and Bulgarian borders (Yıldız & Turhan, 2022), resulting many cases of injuries and deaths along the land or sea borders between Turkey and the European Union.

2.4. An Overview of the Turkish-Bulgarian Border and the Thrace Region

2.4.1. Population Exchanges Between Turkey and Bulgaria in the Early Twentieth Century

The departure of Turks from Anatolia's Oghuz and Kipchak tribes to Bulgaria which was Ottoman lands at the time dates back to the 14th century. However, starting from the 19th century, the Turkish population there had to return for various reasons. The first migration movement of Bulgarian Turks to Turkey took place within the framework of the "War of 93", the Russian-Turkish War (1877-1878). In other words, the great migration after The Ottoman-Russian war (1877-1878) emerged as a result of the brutal defeat of the Ottomans from the Balkan land. (Şimşir, 1986, pg.200) With the Treaty of Berlin (1878) signed at the end of the war, the Ottoman Empire lost a lot of territories and lost its influence in the Balkans to a large extent. More than one million Ottoman citizens in the Balkans and the Caucasus became refugees, and there were huge waves of migration to Anatolia during and after the war. In the Berlin treaty, although there were the articles stating that the rights of the property, security of life, liberty, freedom of religion, etc. of the Turks would be ensured in the newly

established Bulgarian principality, contrary to expectations, a brutal Bulgarian attack on the Turks began in 1879 (Şimşir, 1986, pg.41) Armed Bulgarian gangs attacked Turkish villages, destroyed Turks' houses, raided and confiscated their property, and kidnapped their animals. Those who resisted torture were beaten, and the Bulgarian gangs committed acts that resulted in injury and death. As a result, the Turks wrote their complaints to the Bulgarian authorities, yet they came to nothing. (Şimşir, 1986, pg. 203). After these atrocities, the Turks sold their possessions at low prices, and they were obliged to migrate. According to Şimşir, 18.033 Bulgarian Turks emigrated from the port of Varna. In addition to sea migrations, land immigration convoys came to Edirne as well. As a matter of fact, Şimşir states that 74,753 Turks in total migrated to the motherland, Turkey between 1886 and 1890 (Şimşir, 1986, pg.205). Since the Treaty of Berlin (1878) did not foresee an effective sanction for the protection of the rights of the Muslim population in the lands abandoned by the Ottoman Empire, the wave of immigration that started with the War of 93 continued regularly afterward. From the foundation of the Bulgarian principality which was a *de facto* autonomous state but *de jure* under the rule of the Ottoman Empire by the Treaty of Berlin (1878) until the Balkan wars (1912-1913), for almost 25 years, immigration to Turkey continued in huge numbers (Şimşir, 1986, pg. 206). Later on, the second great migration occurred with the outbreak of the Balkan wars (1912-1913). 200,000 people lost their land in Bulgaria during the wars and Bulgarian Turks had to leave their homes and migrate to Turkey. It is evident that from the 1912-1913 Balkan Wars to the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), there was a constant change in the ethnic structure in Thrace, in the northwest of Turkey today. The migrations, exchanges, Turkification policies, and settlement policies in the early Republican Era kept the region under the influence of constant immigration waves and sociological changes as well. Hence, the concept of emigrant (*muhajir*) has become a concept that is associated with the region.

In addition, all those migration fluxes resulted in various laws and regulations about the travel rights and border crossings from Ottoman Empire to Republican period. In the mid-19th century, passport regulations *(pasaport nizamnameleri)* were established in the Ottoman Empire in order to control travel within and outside the country, and the documents issued in this context were called passports*, tezkere/ mürûr tezkeresi, pasavan* or travel warrants. To put it more precisely, from the 19th century onwards until the collapse of the empire, the most commonly used documents for

travel, in addition to passports, were the travel documents such as *mürûr tezkeresi* and *pasavan* (Akkoç, 2019). *Mürûr tezkeresi* was an internal passport for traveling from one place to another in the Ottoman Empire (Turna, 2013). *Pasavan* [2], on the other hand, was a document issued to those traveling between two bordering countries in the Ottoman Empire (Turna, 2014). It is possible to say that the reasons for the emergence of the *pasavan* were daily and economic. The *pasavan* document was invented for those who lived along the borders and traveled frequently due to their work and land (Akkoç, 2019). The first process in the emergence of the use of *pasavan* in the Ottoman Empire started due to nationality and land disputes in Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia (Bay, 2017). Like other travel documents, *pasavan* documents were sent in line with the needs of the provinces. For example, according to official documents of *Manastır Nüfus Nezareti*, on March 13 1906, 549 *pasavans* for Bulgaria, 20 for Eastern Rumelia and 7 for Greece were issued. These records denote that all those travel documents were based on the security concerns about the borders at the time (Akkoç, 2019, pg.30).

In the previous chapters, I have explained with numerical data the migration of Bulgarian Turks to Turkey from the early 1900s until the 1990s. As the main concern of this study, all these changes should also be considered specifically in the context of Kırklareli known as Kırkkilise (*Kırklareli sanjak*)[3], which was a *sanjak* center connected to Edirne province then. It was captured by the Russians in the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War. After this war, according to one of the articles of the San Stefano Treaty signed on March 3, 1878, Kırkkilise was left to the newly established principality of Bulgaria. However, according to the Treaty of Berlin signed on July 13 of the same year, the city was returned to the Turks. As a result, after the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian war, the migration movements from the Balkans to Anatolia affect

[2] A *pasavan* is not a document that allows a person to pass from his/her own country to any other country. The country to which the *pasavan* allows passage is specific. These transitions take place directly as a result of the agreement of the two states. According to Article 19 of the Republic of Turkey's Passport Law No. 5682, *pasavans*, administrative letters and border crossing documents are still issued to citizens today as valid documents instead of passports. According to the same law, "*Pasavans* or similar documents are issued to Turkish citizens to be used instead of passports within the border areas of the bordering countries with the Republic of Turkey. Their form, manner of issuance, validity period and to whom they shall be issued shall be jointly determined by the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs in accordance with the provisions of the agreements made or to be made between the Republic of Turkey and the relevant states".

[3] The city, which was known as *Kırkkilise* before the proclamation of the Republic, took the name Kırklareli with the decision taken at the 20 December 1924 Parliament session.

the city in terms of population. Some of the Turks who escaped from Bulgaria and came to Thrace were first settled on farms around Kırkkilise *sanjak* bought by the government and then in newly established villages. According to the census made in 1888, the whole population of Edirne province was 119,943 while the number was detected to be increased to 145,883 in the 1898 census. The population of the central district, in Edirne province, consisted of 20,546 Muslims, 18,626 Rums, 57 Armenians, 19,989 Bulgarians, and 786 Jews at that time (Doğruöz, 2021). The population of Kırkkilise *sanjak* increased by about 7,500-14,000 during the second half of the 19th century.

Kırkkilise was occupied by Bulgarian forces on 24 October 1912 at the beginning of the Balkan War. As a result of the 1st Balkan War, the Thrace border of the Ottoman Empire withdrew to the Midye-Inos Line, excluding Edirne and Kırkkilise (see *figure 1*). Although the city was taken over by the Bulgarians in the 1st Balkan war (1912), the Bulgarians were completely displaced from Kırkkilise on 21 July 1913 as a result of more than a year of resistance and war during the 2nd Balkan war (see also *figure 1*).

Figure 1: The borders of Thrace after the Balkan Wars I-II (1912-1913)



Source: *Schevill, 1915.*

However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the population of Kırkkilise, which consisted mainly of Greek, Christian, and Jewish minorities, decreased due to exchanges during the Balkan Wars. Furthermore, at the end of the 1st Balkan War, the Turks, who remained in the outer border in Bulgaria and Greece, were forced to return to the Ottoman lands, leaving their fields, houses, and almost all their material assets due to the persecution they lived in the region. According to the Istanbul Treaty (1913) signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Bulgarian

Kingdom (1908-1946)[4] at the end of the 2nd Balkan War, the two governments agreed to facilitate the voluntary and mutual exchange of the Bulgarian and Muslim peoples on both sides and their property in a 15-kilometer zone along the entire border. It is known that nearly 100,000 Bulgarians immigrated from Kırkkilise in accordance with this treaty. Kırkkilise, which was also occupied by the Greeks on July 26, 1920, during the years of the War of Independence, was taken back on November 10, 1922. At the beginning of the Republic, it was turned into a provincial center and took the name of Kırklareli in 1924. The ethnic mosaic created by the Muslim, Bulgarian, Rum, Jewish, and Roman communities that Kırklareli hosted throughout history set an example for the multinational structure of the Ottoman Empire. These communities, which had lived in peace and brotherhood for many years, began to break down under the influence of nationalist movements in the 19th century, and after the Balkan Wars, hence the balance in the region changed completely (Doğruöz, 2021).

Thrace in general was the land that collapsed with great damage at the end of the Ottoman-Russian wars, the Balkan Wars, and the First World War. As a result of the 1912-1913 Balkan wars, Ottoman Empire lost a wide territory in the central and southern Balkans and Rumelia as mentioned above. According to Çağaptay (2002), in a few months during the Balkan Wars, the Ottoman Empire lost 69 percent of its population and 83 percent of its territory in Europe. In addition to territorial losses, there was excessive persecution of Ottoman Muslims from the Balkans. After the Second Balkan War, the remaining part of Thrace in Rumelia was called Eastern Thrace, and today it is the region that includes Edirne, Tekirdağ, Kırklareli and some parts of İstanbul. The Ottoman Empire, which had dominated part of Europe since its establishment, lost its wide amount of land in Rumelia and the Balkans and also its huge amount of Ottoman-Muslim population except few provinces in Eastern Thrace. This crushing experience of the Balkan Wars resulted in a wave of nationalism among Ottoman Muslims. According to Çağaptay (2002), there was a serious contraction in the multinational and multicultural structure of the Ottoman Empire, which had been going on for centuries. Hence, he states that the high-level administrators, soldiers, and intellectuals of the period, by highlighting the Turkish elements in the empire through

[4] It was established when the Bulgaria Principality, which took Eastern Rumelia from the Ottomans in 1885, became a kingdom on October 5, 1908. Bulgaria declared its independence against the Ottoman Empire *de jure*.

nationalist propaganda of the Committee of Union and Progress (1889-1918), took steps to make the language of education in the country completely Turkish in order to spread Turkish nationalism in Anatolia and Thrace. Besides, various political steps were taken with the aim of Turkification and homogenization of the nation. One of these for Çağaptay as well, was the Treaty of Istanbul (1913) after the Balkan Wars, which restored the dominance especially in Eastern Thrace because, as mentioned above, in accordance with this treaty, it was decided to exchange the Turks and Muslims in Bulgaria with the Bulgarians in Thrace. Of course, this situation reinforced the idea that Anatolia and Thrace are Turkish homelands (Çağaptay, 2006, pg.8-9).

Migrations also continued during the Republican period. As the Ottoman-Turkish Muslims poured into Turkey, Ankara needed legislation to cope with that huge influx. Therefore, for the first time in history, the migrations from Bulgaria were arranged by an agreement called the "Turkish-Bulgarian Residence Agreement" signed in Ankara on 18 October 1925. Çağaptay (2006), who examined the immigration strategies of the Turkish Republic between the 1920s and 1930s, stated that the main criterion for the government's immigration acceptance was Islam (pg.82). As an argument supporting this view, he puts forward the following article in the treaty (1925) that Ankara signed as a treaty of friendship with Sofia;

> Whatever language they spoke, Muslims born in Bulgaria who had immigrated to Turkey in the past were Turkish citizens. On the other hand, Turkish citizens who spoke Bulgarian and were Christians would be accepted as a Bulgarian minority by Turkey (2006, pg.83).

In addition, Danış and Parla (2009) also emphasize that in the early Republican period, the emphasis on national belonging was made over Islam, but from the 1930s it was made over ethnicity (pg.133). For this reason, according to Danış and Parla, agreements were made to facilitate the acceptance of Balkan immigrants and their transition to Turkish citizenship, and immigrant groups belonging to the Turkish race from the Balkans had a relatively privileged position. The Republicans attributed the advocacy towards these immigrants from the Balkans both because they were of Turkish origin which acted a glue for Turkish nationalism and because they were a group that represented Europeanism and ties with Europe (pg.134). Besides, Keyder (2005) sees the manpower coming to Turkey as qualified manpower for the newly established state, which suffered a significant loss of population as a result of the

ongoing wars. For him, the transfer of capital and property of the minorities who were sent from the country to the newcomer Turks enabled the transfer of the bourgeoisie, which was under the rule of the Rums, to the local Muslims. On the other hand, according to Bora and Şen (2009), the New Republic was founded on a militant forgetting to erase Rumelia -which was never fully nationalized and Turkified- from memory together with the Ottoman Empire. Danış and Parla (2009), in their article, revealed that this dilemma was an attitude towards mixed/cosmopolitan Balkan immigrants who started to be seen as threatening the pure identity of Anatolian people and Turkishness, which has been adopted by conservatives since the 1940s.

Since Thrace region in Turkey is a border neighbor to the Balkans in Europe and therefore one of the regions with the highest immigrant and minority population, it was of great importance to make a development plan specific to the region, which lost most of its population by population exchanges and wars and whose production activities were almost stopped. Therefore, the first resettlement law, *"İskân Kanunu"* (Nr 885), affecting all immigrants over the country, was adopted on May 31, 1926. The resettlement policy followed under Atatürk's rule had two main objectives. Firstly, it was to strengthen the Turkish culture, to bring immigrants who were loyal to the Turkish culture to the country, to increase the population of Turkish culture, and namely to strengthen the Turkish culture. The second objective was to achieve an equally distributed population in the country in terms of economic, political, and military services. With this law, Pomaks, Bosnians, and Tatars were considered to be included in the Turkish culture, and the reunion of Albanians, who were registered when they came to Turkey before, with their families staying outside would also be fulfilled (Atatürk Ansiklopedisi, n.d.). Çağaptay (2006) also states that this law started by defining who could qualify as an immigrant and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) decided that Turkish "*hars*", that is, Turkish culture must have been the basis of future immigration to Turkey. Therefore, according to the second article of the law, those who don't share the Turkish '*hars*' would not be accepted as immigrants (Çağaptay, 2006, pg.85). Here, Turkish '*hars*' as a concept refers to common religion and language as well as common history and belief as in Ziya Gökalp's nationalist agenda. In fact, this law clearly accelerated the immigration of Muslims with Turkish origins to Turkey, while it excludes non-Muslims and non-Turks. Moreover, in order for the resettlement to be successful in a regular way, first

of all, the people to be settled, had to know Turkish culture and art in certain levels, and then the natural and economic conditions of the place to be settled, so the appropriate settlement system had to be well chosen under these circumstances. For this reason, the government felt the need to prepare a new law in order not to undergo the problems it faced before. As a result, the government passed The Settlement Law of 1934, which had a great impact on migrations that started in 1933. These migrations were supported by the state itself since it was very important to operate its empty lands and increase its population, to save its elements outside and especially in the Balkans, and to gather and organize the elements outside of Turkey within national borders. Hence, while preparing Law No. 2510, the definitions of immigrants and refugees were explained in detail and their acceptance conditions were determined with that understanding. As a result, the influx of immigration started in a wider way from Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania. With that law, it was also aimed to relocate the families that lived in different places during the previous population exchanges and to eliminate the fragmentation in the families afterward. Tax relief was also brought to those new immigrants since it was aimed to accept immigrants from the Balkans and other places without difficulty. In this period, the immigrants who came to Anatolia from Rumelia increased the Muslim population of Anatolia in proportion to the non-Muslim populations in the places they settled, all of which meant facilitating the idea of a homogeneous state (Atatürk Ansiklopedisi, n.d.).

After all those migration processes, hundreds of Muslims, Turks, Pomaks, Bosnians and Albanians came to Thrace and Anatolia, but the aim of the Turkish Grand National Assembly was to sprinkle non-Turkish minorities among them, especially in places where the Turkish population in Anatolia is high, ensuring that minority population in any region did not pass ten percent. In other words, firstly it was crucial to solve the population problem as population density decreased by half after the wars. It was also aimed to adopt appropriate resettlement policies for the systematic placement of immigrants from the Balkans in Thrace. As Ayhan Aktar states in his book on anti-minorities wealth tax and nationalism in Turkey (2001), all these developments show that while the Turkification policies implemented in the 1920s remained at a *de facto* level, *de jure* arrangements were made in these practices in the 1930s. According to Aktar (2001), Turkification policies, which started to be implemented especially in the 1930s, aim to put the Turkish ethnic identity's

dominance and weight at every level and without compromise. Again Aktar (2001) states that in the 1930s, the campaigns of single-party Republic against minorities became widespread as a state policy such as "Citizen, Speak Turkish!", and the implementation of economic policies such as wealth tax also became predominant anti-minority activities. In fact, for Aktar, all these sanctions did not fit well with the nationalist framework drawn by Ziya Gökalp, which was thought to be adopted by the Kemalists. According to Aktar (2001), Gökalp formed Turkish nationalism over the concepts of cultural ideal, national unity and social solidarity, but the basic criterion for Gökalp was cultural (*harsi*) integrity. In this case, Aktar argued that Gökalp's thought was valid for the multi-ethnic and multi-religious structure in Turkey in terms of both nationalism and modernization. Contrary to what the Republic adopted in its early immigration policies, according to Gökalp, Islam should not be a prerequisite for Turkish nationalism, but only a tool that can create holistic moral norms. Aktar (2001) attributed the exclusionary policies towards non-Muslim minorities that developed from the mid-1930s to the early 1940s to the idea of "being included in the Turkish ethnic group", which the ideologues of the one-party regime (*CHP*) adopted as the criterion for inclusion in the national community during this period, instead of Gökalp's definition on a cultural and civic level. Aktar also states that in this new formulation of Turkish nationalism, non-Muslims, who were included in the category of "others", were regarded as "half citizens" and perceived as "foreigners" and "guests", even though they were legal citizens (2001).

2.4.2. The Events Across Thrace: The Issues Surrounding Regional Politics Before WWII and the Impact of the Rise of the Nationalist Movement in Turkey on Local History

1934 Thrace events (Thrace Pogrom) was greatly affected the Jewish minorities living in Thrace for years. Under this title, I will try to explain the reasons that triggered this event, which emerged as a result of anti-minority policies of the state, which I mentioned briefly above with the views of different authors.

Haluk Karabatak (1996) in his article on the topic summarizes the emergence of the Thrace events as follows. The events that started in Çanakkale on the night of July 3 and continued on July 4, 1934, later spread to all Thrace. Especially in Kırklareli, on the evening of July 3, the doors of the houses where the Jews lived were

broken and the windows were stoned. The Jews either fled to the countryside or took shelter in neighboring Turkish houses. On the morning of July 4th, they got on the train and went to Istanbul. Jewish homes and shops were all looted. (1996, pg. 7-8)

For sure, there are various discussions about how and why such an event arose in Thrace. To start with, according to Çağaptay (2002), campaigns for Turkification of minorities such as "Citizen, Speak Turkish in the Homeland" were supported by various publications and caused a radical transformation for the Jewish minorities in Thrace. For instance, the journal *Orhun*, published in Edirne by Hüseyin Nihal Atsız, one of the leading figures of Turkish racism, was believed to lead the anti-Semitic publications. According to Çağaptay, in the subsequent issues of the journal, which started publication in 1931, Atsız described the communists and Jews as the two enemies of the Turks and wrote articles implying that we would solve this problem by abducting the Jews from our country, if not by killing them like German Nazism. Çağaptay (2002) cited Cevat Rıfat (Atilhan)'s *İnkılap* journal as the second example of anti-Semitic journals. This journal, which started the publication in Izmir in 1933, stated in its May issue that the Jews betrayed the Turks during the Balkan Wars and the First World War (Çağaptay, 2002). For him, Atilhan accused the Jews of not speaking Turkish, not shopping at Turkish stores, and not employing Turks, and he wrote articles questioning how Turkish youth trust this community, which was hostile to Turkish culture, Turkish civilization, and Turkish nobility. Çağaptay also states that after Atilhan moved the magazine to Istanbul, he continued his anti-Semitic articles praising Nazi Germany. On the other hand, in his book, which also includes the Thrace events, Ayhan Aktar (2001) argues that showing these publications as the initiator of the events would not be a realistic approach due to the inadequacies in the communication and transportation network and the low literacy rate at that time. According to Aktar, these events should be evaluated within the political conjuncture of the period. Referring to Haluk Karabatak (1996)'s article published in History and Society magazine, Aktar says that the conjecture, which was active in domestic politics then, was supporting the "Great and Glorious Turkish Nation" projects of that time, such as the "Turkish History Thesis" and "Sun Language Theory". Again, cited from the publication of Karabatak (1996), Aktar stated as the evidence to his claims that the interviews of the *CHP* general secretary of that time, in which they showed admiration towards German Nazi youth organizations, and their efforts to base the social structure

in Turkey on race, was also a statement included in the abovementioned Settlement Law of 1934. However, Aktar still states that Karabatak's interpretation of the Thrace events only in terms of the domestic conjuncture is incomplete and even wrong both in evaluating the political understanding of the Kemalists and in explaining Thrace events. Likewise, the thing that Aktar does not find sensible was that Avner Levi's explanation of the events with the Nazi propaganda which was effective and started to spread in Europe at that time. As the third publication which is in the same direction with Karabatak and Levi, Aktar criticizes Zafer Toprak's article, as he treated these events as an isolated incident that was provoked by a few 'looters' as a result of the *CHP*'s misdirection of the regional organizations in Thrace without the knowledge of the Ankara administration.

Aktar especially refutes the claim that the Ankara administration was unaware of the possibility of the event beforehand, by citing the petition of the Jewish community sent to the government on May 25, 1934, to express the discomfort they felt about the anti-Semitic publications months before the event. Likewise, Aktar explains that on 24-25 June 1934, Atatürk, the prime minister of the time, İsmet İnönü, and the Shah of Iran came to Çanakkale with an official visit, and here they listened to the complaint of one of the pioneers of the Jews community of Çanakkale, known as *Deli Salamon.* Moreover, he claims that Atatürk also met with representatives of Jewish communities on July 3rd in İstanbul. According to Aktar, unfortunately, the emergence of the Thrace events and the elimination of their bad effects came about with the knowledge and guidance of the administration. Aktar, by presenting the relevant document in the British Foreign Affairs archive, stated that the government had first verbally informed the local administrators of its goal of clearing Thrace from the Jews. In addition, this scenario, which should have been played out gradually, resulted in Thrace Pogrom because of the ebullience of the local administrators and the officiousness of the "*tosuncuk*"s in the local sports clubs. In the report that Aktar presented together with the same document, it was stated that the government had already decided to gradually transfer Jewish elements from strategically important places with the Settlement Law of 1934, but the local authorities hastily resorted to brute force, out of the government's aim, as they wanted to get wealthy elements of the Jewish population, all of which resulted in the Thrace events. Therefore, it can be concluded that although the government was not directly involved, it had an influence

on paving the way for the events and was aware of them beforehand. Besides, in the same report, it is stated that the start of the new military casinos established in Thrace at the end of June and sending of military units to the Bulgarian border excited the local population. Furthermore, Aktar unlike others, that is, unlike the reasons expressed by Haluk Karabulut, Avner Levi and Zafer Toprak in their writings, believes that there was the influence of Fascist Italy's imperialist expansion policies in those days, rather than the anti-Semitism wave spread by Nazi Germany. By quoting the American Ambassador Skinner's report titled 'Turkey is Arming' on May 22, 1934, in which he said that Italy had its eye on Anatolia and especially on Antalya region, Aktar states Atatürk believed that the Italians could not do such a possible attack by landing troops in Antalya, but they could only do that by a collaboration with Bulgaria. Atatürk also elaborates his idea that the Italians, by forming a union with Bulgaria and going from there, aim to reach to Thrace and from there to the Straits, by cutting off Turkey's relations with other Balkan countries. As a result, Aktar argues that the Thrace events can only be explained by considering the tension in Turkey-Italy relations and the strategic importance of Thrace in that way. Considering article 9 of the 1934 Settlement Law, which is "Nomads who are not affiliated with Turkish culture are intended to disperse and settle in towns and villages with Turkish culture and it is also aimed to remove those whose espionage is detected from the borders". As a result, it can be detected that the government prepared the ground for the events in Thrace by considering the possibility of these Jewish minorities living close to the border in Thrace cooperating and spying with the Italians and Bulgarians.

Here, in addition to all these studies, I would like to mention a more recent article on the topic by Erdal Aydoğan (2018) titled “The 1934 Jewish Pogroms in Thrace in The Light of New Documents”. To start with the historical process, at the end of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), the Thrace lands were shared between three states, Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey (Özmen,1948). While friendly relations with Greece prevailed in the first years of the Republic, Bulgaria entered a political atmosphere that was dissatisfied with the new borders drawn and demanded the change of these borders, since Bulgaria lost its exit to the Aegean Sea during the territorial distribution at the end of the First World War. With an attitude that prevented reaching a consensus among the Balkan states during the Balkan conference convened in 1930-1933, Bulgaria withdrew from the conference. As a result, Greece, Turkey, Romania,

and Yugoslavia formed the Balkan Atlantic on February 9, 1934, and made agreements on cooperation to secure the borders of the four countries.

Meanwhile, the rising fascist regime in Bulgaria posed a threat to Turkey. Bulgarian Thrace Committee members were publishing articles about seizing Thrace with gang attacks in their publications like *Trakya* and *Straj* newspapers. The head of the Thrace committee, Gospodin (Ormanciyef), declared that the friendship between Turkey and Bulgaria would only be possible if the Turk-Bulgarian border was determined as the Midye-Inos line (Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Cumhuriyet Arşivi, 1934). In addition to such actions of the committee, which did not recognize the Ankara agreement (1925) signed between Bulgaria and Turkey, the Bulgarian communities operating in a similar way were following policies of pressure and intimidation against the Turkish communities living in Bulgaria. This situation negatively affected the local people living in Turkish Thrace as well as the Turks living in Bulgaria, especially the immigrants settled on the borders. All these developments highlighted the necessity of taking new measures for the Thrace region. It was also crucial to prepare an environment in which the population in the region would feel safe because the war environment that lasted for a century left indelible traces in the memory of the Thracian people. In this context, a sentence by a Thracian villager, nicely summarizes the population changes and invasions in the region; "I sowed, Bulgarian reaped, Bulgarian sowed, I reaped; I sowed, Greek reaped, Greek sowed, I reaped", which shows the pessimistic and insecure environment in the region, the fact that the feeling of belonging was completely lost (Burgaç, 2010). Re-establishing the balance and stability in the region became quite essential. Just like the establishment of the 1st General Inspectorate against the Sheikh Said Rebellion in the East, the Turkish government decided to establish the 2nd General Inspectorate on 19th February 1934 in Thrace. The mandate of that inspectorate covered Edirne, Kırklareli, Tekirdag, and Çanakkale provinces. The major goal of the Thrace Inspectorate was to provide a centralized military administration in an area of the country nearby Bulgaria, the chief revisionist power in the post-First World War. Çağaptay (2002), while evaluating the establishment of these inspectorates, argues that they were established to prevent internal conflicts, and to spread and consolidate Turkification activities, rather than preventing threats that may come from outside. Likewise, on foreign policies of the time, the opinion that these inspectorates had a direct or indirect effect on the Thrace

incidents that broke out in 1934 targeting the Jewish minorities in Thrace, was already dominant.

In his study, Erdal Aydoğan (2018) does not attribute the events in Thrace to the effects of the Fascist Italian regime, Nazi Germany, and anti-Semitic media organs mentioned above. According to him, the events were triggered by the Thrace General Inspectorship, with a few documents found in the private archive of the Thrace General Inspector İbrahim Tali (Öngören) Bey. According to Aydoğan, the government, which wanted to solve the political and social problems in Thrace, that is, in Edirne, Kırklareli, Çanakkale and Tekirdağ as a whole and established the new inspectorate there in 1934. Immigration from the Balkans, their settlement, and the solution to problems in the region were among the services expected from the new General Inspectorate established in Thrace. To achieve this, it is understood that it was intended to benefit from the experiences of İbrahim Tali Bey, who was the First General Inspector before. İbrahim Tali Bey, who had the title of Istanbul deputy at that time, was appointed to the "General Inspectorate of Thrace" with the proposal of the government with the decree of 18 March 1934 numbered 2/303. Aydoğan (2018) states that after Thrace General Inspectorate was established in 1934, some anti-Jewish incidents began to occur in Western Anatolia and especially in Thrace in the spring months. As soon as General Inspector İbrahim Tali Bey started his duty, he carried out radical solutions that he thought would be in accordance with the state ideology, based on his own experiences, which he had accumulated over the years. As İbrahim Tali Bey arrived in the region, he realized that the economic activities here were largely in the hands of the Jews and that they dominated the local markets. In addition, İbrahim Tali, in his letter sent to governors of the states in Thrace, warn them about contracting works in the new garrisons to be established in Thrace should not be left to the Jews by large and small Turkish enterprises, which is one of the most important duties ordered by the Turkish revolution (Aydoğan, 2018). Therefore, as the most striking declaration by İbrahim Tali, according to Aydoğan (2018), the letter to the governors of provinces sent on June 11, 1934, about the Jews, was a very important data that could enlighten the Thrace Events. I will summarize some items in the letter sent by the General Inspectorate on June 11, 1934, that Aydoğan draws attention. In the letter, Inspectorate İbrahim Tali Bey requested Turkish governors in Thrace not to allow Jews to open new stores and shops in provinces, districts, townships, and villages with the

measures of the villagers and the local community, and he wanted them to inform the inspectorate immediately of those who would come to the inspectorate area to resettle and do business, and he requested to be informed by the reports about the occupations of those Jews in the province, their families and their names in a short time. In this directive, which began as "To the Governor, Gentlemen"; İbrahim Tali warned the authorities about the Jews in Thrace who took advantage of the capital in their hands and took action to seize the military supply for new garrisons. For him, it was important to take precautions against the issues mentioned. İbrahim Tali clearly stated that from this moment on, he would be very saddened to hear that any tender offer for schools and other state institutions, even if it belonged to the smallest job, had been given to someone other than a Turk (Aydoğan, 2018). The period when the instructions were given corresponds to the period when Turkey took military measures in the Thrace region against possible external threats mentioned above. Hence, according to Aydoğan (2018), keeping Jews away from military facilities and public tenders and being treated as agents of foreign states should be considered as initiators of Thrace events. It is evident that Aydoğan in line with Aktar (2001) believes that in the event of a possible attack on Turkey, there was a concern about the espionage activities of the Jews in the region. The efforts to protect the Turks against the Jews in these matters and to ensure the existence of the Turks in all areas of the economy, and moreover, the dictation of the duties to the governors to be done in this direction seem to give clues about what would happen in about a month in Thrace. As a result, the events that started in Çanakkale spread to the whole of Thrace in a short time. The events that took place in Kırklareli on July 3 had a greater impact. The houses and workplaces of the Jews were looted. As a result, the Jews living here took refuge in Istanbul by train. Such incidents that took place in Çanakkale and Kırklareli, continued in Gallipoli, Uzunköprü, Edirne, Babaeski, and Lüleburgaz. As these events escalated, Chief Deputy İsmet İnönü gave the instructions to the government to take over the events. He instructed the Thrace General Inspectorate not to allow any form of coercion or harassment, and consequently, Thrace General Inspector İbrahim Tali conveyed the same instruction to governorships (Aydoğan, 2018). Based on all these developments, Aydoğan reached the following conclusion that it was clear from all that the main reason for the Thrace Events was not only fascist policies. The main reason was the economic crisis in the region as well as in the whole country. To get rid of the

economic downswing in the region, it was the actions of some beneficiaries who wanted to usurp the properties of the wealthy Jews.

In conclusion, both Aktar (2001) and Aydoğan (2018) claim that the Thrace incidents were actually carried out more with an economic and military concern, an anti-Semitism motivation. Mehmet Bozkurt, in his article published on the Sol newspaper's website in 2021, stated that the Jews described this event as *'La Furtuna'* which means 'storm' in their own language. He asserts that after the events calmed down, a Police Chief who had loot in his house and the Gendarmerie Commander who was negligent in the incidents were assigned to other places, some people from the public as well as the Mayor of Kırklareli and the chairman of the chamber of commerce were arrested in 1934. Unfortunately, he asserts that Ibrahim Tali explained that the Jewish issue was resolved in a radical way and Thrace was breathing a sigh of relief. To be concluded, at the end of Thrace Pogrom in 1934, as in Erol Haker's valuable book *Once Upon a Time Jews Lived in Kırklareli* (2002), he states that there were approximately 1300 Jews living in Kırklareli in 1912, yet he found only seven Jews during his visit to the city in 1997. Today, there is only one Jewish family of three in Kırklareli.

2.4.3. The Turkish-Bulgarian Relations After 1950 and the Emergence of New Wave of Migrations

While the events experienced in the newly established Republic and single-party periods affected Thrace in this way, the region faced a new migration movement in the 1950s. Before moving on to these migrations, I would like to take a look at the political conjuncture of the two countries at that time.

After the single party period, in 1946 Turkey switched to the multi-party period. At the same time, after the communist revolution in 1944 in Bulgaria, Bulgarian government started to work to introduce and impose the new regime on society. Later, in 1952, Turkey entered the Korean War and joined NATO. In spite of sociological and cultural changes in Thrace after the history of migrations mentioned in the previous section, non-aggression policies between the two countries continued thanks to the agreements between Turkey and Bulgaria during the World War II, between 1939-1945, and there was a stagnant period in terms of migrations. However, the communist regime that dominated in Bulgaria after the war took heavy taxes from

the Bulgarian Turks, the Turkish farmers were asked to give a large part of the goods they produced to the state, and the young Turkish children were recruited into worker-soldier battalions and were overwhelmed by heavy-duties. Parla (2003) also states that in particular the Communist Party initiative of the 1950s aimed at disseminating education, ensuring medical care, and promoting cultural activities and publications in Turkish. However, they became very harsh in order for integrating Turkish minorities and establishing a socialist consciousness to overcome ethnic isolation. In particular, because of the arrest of Turks in 1946, the nationalization of Turkish schools, and the expropriation of the lands of the Turks, the Turks in Bulgaria applied to the authorities of Bulgaria, to the USA, and to Turkey to migrate in 1947-48. (Şimşir, 2009, pg. 232). Reacting to the help of the Turkish embassies, Bulgarian authorities prevented the citizens who went to the Turkish embassies for visas, which resulted in tension between the two countries (İnaç&Yazıcı, 2018, pg.83). Another incident that escalated the tension between the two countries was the Bulgarian terrorist attacks towards two Turkish planes and the Turkish Consulate in Plovdiv in 1948. After this event, Turkey and Bulgaria mutually expelled their military attachés immediately. In addition, Turkey's following a pro-western policy and sending troops to the Korean War caused great anger in Bulgaria. In order to punish Turkey for collaborating with the West, Bulgaria sent a diplomatic note to Turkey that they will expel 250,000 citizens of Turkish origin from the country within three months, which brought the relationship between the two countries to the breaking point (İnaç&Yazıcı, 2018, pg.83). Turkish-Bulgarian relations, which were not very good before were completely destroyed in 1950 as the Bulgarian Government violated the provisions of the 1925 agreement and illegally made people such as Gypsies and Coptic *(Kıpti)* without visas cross the Turkish borders. As a result, Turkish authorities kept the border closed to immigrants sent without a visa (Tuğlacı, 2003, pg.43).

The Democratic Party, as the ruling party of the time, has made a new decision on immigrants in the face of these sanctions on the Bulgarians. On the 1st January 1950, it was decided that all those immigrants coming from Bulgaria to Turkey would be placed in the category of "resident immigrants". As of this date, all immigrants coming from Bulgaria to Turkey started to be given visas, which made the migration to Turkey more attractive for Turks in Bulgaria who want to get rid of oppression (Pınar, 2014). At that time, those who wanted to cross from Bulgaria to Turkey had

problems in selling their immovable properties, because the government could confiscate any property they wanted to sell for any reason. It was also said that the gold and money they wanted to take with them were confiscated. The situation was also explained by the photo of 'immigrants in fur coats' (see *figure 2*) posted by the Mayor of Kırklareli, Mehmet Siyam Kesimoğlu, on social media on 8th June 2019. Sharing the photograph taken by LIFE magazine photographer Jack Birns at Edirne Train Station in 1950, Kesimoğlu captioned his post as such, "These women, who would never have the opportunity to wear fur in their lifetime, were selling what they had and buying furs with their money; When they went to Turkey, they could have saved at least some money by selling the fur" (my own translation).

Figure 2: "Migration" - 1950 Turks in Fur Coat



Source: *Kesimoğlu, 2019.*

However, on 17 November 1951, due to Bulgaria's non-compliance with the immigration conditions, the Turkish government closed the border once more. As Bulgarian authorities kept sending immigrants and Gypsies without visas, the government stressed that the ban would remain in effect until this situation is taken into account by Bulgarian officials (Pınar, 2014).

Migration movements from Bulgaria to Turkey depending on Turkish-Bulgarian relations continued at regular intervals between 1950 and 1951. As a result,

according to data gathered from American archives, 45.346 immigrants came in 1950 and 101.719 immigrants came in 1951 with a total of 147.065 (Değerli & Karakuzu, 2016). The Turkish population in Bulgaria, although they were forced to migrate with the pressure applied little by little in the previous years, between 1950 and 1951 as Bulgarian authorities received the support of the Soviet Union, they were exiled to the border gates and subjected to forced migration. More than 100.000 Turkish emigrants came to Turkey over the years, but the migration once forced by Bulgaria was stopped with the increase in Bulgaria's need for labor in 1951, therefore there was no other wave of immigration until 1968. However, approximately 156.000 Turks had immigrated to the homeland in 1950-51 migration period, and most of them had to have left their families and relatives in Bulgaria. The comers planned to take their relatives in a short time, but as the Bulgarian government closed the border with economic concerns and loss of labour force, the families stayed separated. Hence, they wrote letters to Turkish ministries informing them of the situation. The Turkish government then negotiated with the Bulgarian government for two years to cooperate, and finally, on March 22, 1968, the foreign ministry of the two states had signed 'Immigration of Close Relatives Agreement'. According to this agreement, relatives such as parents, grandchildren and grandchildren of earlier immigrants could migrate to Turkey for reunion with their families. Therefore, 130.000 Turks migrated to Turkey after 1968 (İnaç & Yazıcı, 2018). As Parla (2003) stated;

> between 50,000 and 130,000 immigrated after 1968, following the treaty to unite separated families. These migrations depended not only on the political regimes in Bulgaria, but also on those in Turkey, with the latter's attitudes towards its 'racial kin' (*soydaş*) ranging from welcoming to indifference to reluctant acceptance, contingent on the political and economic climate (2003, pg.562).

The similar assimilation movements to the immigrants carried out intensively by the Bulgarian communist regime in the 1950s, reached their peak in the mid-1980s. With an assimilation campaign called the "rebirth campaign" that began in 1984, the Bulgarian communist regime, led by Todor Zhivkov, began a systematic effort to force the Bulgarian Turks to have Slavic names, banning the use of Turkish in public spaces and finally denying Turkishness in Bulgaria (Parla, 2003, pg.562). Between 1985 and 1989, Bulgarian Turks resisted the policy of changing Turkish names and surnames to Bulgarian ones, and other assimilation campaigns by Bulgaria, as a result, some of

them were even imprisoned in the prison on Belene Camp, established in Belene island. To draw attention to these brutal policies of Bulgaria, the Turkish radios and TVs broadcasted a series named "*Belene Adası*" (*Belene Island*) on the policies of the Bulgarian government against Bulgarian Turks. Partly in response to international protests, and mainly because it was a favourable propaganda, in 1989, the Turkish ruling party, led by Turgut Özal, announced that Turkey would open its borders to Bulgarian Turks. Turkish compatriots, who came from Bulgaria in 1989, were first settled in temporary centers in Kırklareli, Edirne, Tekirdağ, Balıkesir, Istanbul and Bursa. Some of them were placed in guesthouses belonging to public institutions such as schools, hostels and dormitories. For the first immigrants who came in 1989, a total of 850 houses were built, 450 of which in Kırklareli, 200 in Edirne, 100 in Tekirdağ and 100 in Manisa (Çetin, 2008, pg.257). While between 1951-1960, for the immigrants from Bulgaria, 11.742 housing had been built and distributed to their owners (Geray, 1962), for the ones arriving in 1989 it was planned to build 40.000 houses by Housing Administration but only 23.495 of them could be delivered to their owners (Çetin, 2008, pg.257).

In the report by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2008) which investigated the Bulgarian politics of that time, interviews with those who stayed in the Belene Camp and those who were exposed to Bulgarian assimilation between 1984 and 1989, it was understood that between these years, approximately one million Turks were subjected to oppression and persecution due to the "Bulgarization" policies and were sent to prisons and camps. The policies in Bulgaria launched were not only for those who were alive but also for those who were even dead. The names of survivors and deceased relatives were all wanted to be changed. The tombstones written in Turkish-Arabic were broken and the graves were destroyed, and Muslims who died were buried in Christian cemeteries.

It is known that approximately 350,000 Turks were forced to migrate to Turkey between May and September 1989 to make Bulgaria a mono-ethnic country. Although this migration occurred at the end of the 20th century, it was a deportation event that could only be revealed later, mostly through memories, films, and books, due to the attitude of the Bulgarian communist regime to prevent the publication of the event in the media, preventing the world or Turkish press from entering the country and making publications about the event (Feyzioğlu, 2019; Türker, 2004). For example, in the *32.*

Gün broadcasted in 1989, the broadcaster of the program, Mehmet Ali Birand, stated that they wanted to go to Bulgaria for research on the topic, but they were not allowed by Bulgarian authorities, that's why the journalist Birand and his team cooperated with the British television ITN, but the reporters of that television were also prevented of taking pictures and making interviews in Bulgaria on this subject. He states that the British reporters were even taken into custody twice by the Bulgarian police (Birand, 1989).

According to a study by a Bulgarian researcher, Magdelena Elchinova (2011), she also claims that, about the exodus of Turks from Bulgaria, the large-scale migration was a result of the so-called "revival process", which was actually a large-scale assimilation campaign instigated by the Bulgarian Communist Party against the Turks in late 1984. According to her, that period implies one of the most important periods in Bulgaria's history, that's, the period of national revival in the late 20th century. That was the time when the Bulgarian intellectual elite sought autonomy for the church, made the education totally in Bulgarian, and finally liberated from the rule of the Ottoman Empire when national thought was formed among the Bulgarians (Elchinova, 2011). From Elchinova's point of view, at the local and individual levels, the impact was even greater, and the number of Turks inhabited in the region changed the country dramatically, and the lives of so many totally changed as a result of the exodus. Therefore, according to many political analysts, exodus became one of the main reasons for the end of Bulgarian national socialism a few months later. Therefore, after the Zhivkov government was overthrown, the Turks, who heard that some rights were given to the Turks back, started to return to Bulgaria again. The reason for those returns, according to Parla (2003), was the fact that these Turkish immigrants, who had been persecuted in Bulgaria because they were Turkish, were also marginalized in Turkey because they were Bulgarian immigrants.

2.4.4. The European Unionization of the Border in the Last Two Decades

In Europe, the need for founding an organization capable of overcoming national antagonisms stemmed from the resistance movements that fought against totalitarian regimes of the states during the Second World War. Therefore, in 1951, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established with six members including Belgium, Federal Germany, Luxembourg, France, Italy, and the

Netherlands. The success of the Six led the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Ireland to apply for membership of the Community. The Community expanded southward with the accession of Greece in 1981 and Spain and Portugal in 1986. Thus, the number of members reached to twelve. The unification of the west and east side of Germany on November 3, 1990, following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the liberation of Central and Eastern European countries from Soviet control and their democratization, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 completely changed the political structure of Europe. Determined to strengthen their ties, member states began negotiations on a new treaty, the main features of which were agreed at the European Union Summit in Maastricht on 9-10 December 1991. The Maastricht Treaty, also known as the Treaty on European Union, entered into force on November 1, 1993. In 1995, with the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden, the number of members of the European Union increased to fifteen. In 2004, the biggest wave of enlargement in the history of the European Union took place, with ten new countries such as Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia joining the European Union. In 2007, the number of EU member states increased to twenty-seven with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania. In 2013, with the accession of Croatia, the number of EU member states reached twenty-eight (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Avrupa Birliği Başkanlığı, 2022).

The fundamental goal of the European Union is to achieve social, economic, legal and territorial cohesion between member states. Therefore, with the help of treaties signed by member states, they aim to achieve consistent and cooperative investments, growth, funding, and cross-border management. Marin and Dimitrov (2018), who compare the positive and some negative effects of Bulgaria's being a member of the EU, have listed road infrastructures, foreign investments, the stabilisation of the Bulgarian agricultural sector, development of tourism, increased opportunities for Bulgaria's higher education as the positive effects of membership. As for the negative aspects, it is said that the depopulation of the Bulgarian nation comes first, as the labour market in other European countries attracts Bulgarian citizens (Marin & Dimitrov, 2018).

After almost centuries of political fluctuations, internal turmoil and oppression of the minorities, Bulgaria has been considered to have made significant political, legal and economic progress since the 1990s (Akçay,2018). In that sense, the first official

relation between European communities and Bulgaria began when the two parties signed the Declaration on mutual recognition between the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the European Economic Community in 1988. Later, in 1993, Bulgaria signed the European Union Association Agreement which took force in 1995. And in 1999, Bulgaria was invited to Helsinki European Council to start the negotiation process for full membership and since 1 January 2007 it became a full member of the European Union (Marin & Dimitrov, 2017, pg.210-211).

Bulgaria's full membership to the EU in 2007 is important for the border between Turkey and Bulgaria as this border makes Turkey a border neighbour of both Bulgaria and the European Union. The internal borders of the European Union are quite flexible thanks to Schengen Area, which named after 1985 Schengen Agreement and 1990 Schengen convention comprising twenty-seven European countries which abolished passports requirements and border controls at their borders (Schengen Area, 2024). However, its external borders are of high importance. The external borders, whether land or sea, impose responsibilities on both member states and non-member states. Member states claim that as a result of terrorist attacks on European soil, such as in France and Austria in 2020, and illegal migrations to the member states from different third world countries, the protection of external borders has gained prominence (Buzmaniuk, 2021, pg.1). The FRONTEX, in that sense, which is European Border and Coast Guard Agency, was founded in 26 October 2004 (Bayrak, 2022, pg.30). FRONTEX protects the EU's external borders in partnership with the armed forces of member states and has also concluded cooperation agreements with non-member states for border security. However, the fact that the employees of this agency are armed like the military forces of the states providing border security is a matter of debate. The FRONTEX has been widely criticized for some human rights violations while protecting the EU's external borders (Buzmaniuk, 2021, pg.1-2). Protecting borders includes all the criminal activities that are intertwined there. In other words, not only illegal migration but also migrant smugglers, who are actors in these migrations, are being fought against at these borders. There is also a fight against smugglers of drugs, weapons, medical equipment and even child kidnapping. However, while FRONTEX supports the security forces in the EU member states, it only imposes responsibilities on countries outside the EU. They also 'push back' immigrants and smugglers at the borders of the EU and push them out of the EU

(Buzmaniuk, 2021). This causes migrant crises to become a more serious problem in countries like Turkey, which is used as a transit country by illegal and irregular immigrants.

The EU has made deals with neighbouring countries on its external borders, such as Libya, Morocco and Turkey, to control the flow of migrants trying to cross into the EU in exchange for certain payments. The issue of border protection has therefore at times become a bargaining chip between the EU and its neighbours. Moreover, the presence of an organization like FRONTEX to protect the EU's external borders becomes a show of force against the EU's neighbours. While normally each state is obliged to protect its own borders for its own security, a non-EU state on the EU's borders is supposed to do so also for the security of the EU's lands. Otherwise, the non-EU states confront a bigger trouble of dealing with pushed-back illegal immigrants and hence a bigger humanitarian crisis.

As for Turkey's being a candidate for membership of the EU, while Bulgaria rapidly completed its negotiations for full membership to the EU, unfortunately, Turkey has failed to meet the EU criteria in terms of human rights, equality, and justice, as well as problems such as Cyprus and its relations with Greece. Since 1959 when Turkey firstly applied for associate membership, the two sides, that's, Turkey, and the EU have not been able to reach a full agreement on each other's aspirations in the bilateral negotiations and agreements with the EU. Turkey's full membership of the EU has been opposed by countries such as France, Germany and Austria due to Turkey's predominantly Muslim population (Akçay, 2018, pg. 61) Furthermore, the negotiations, which have generally proceeded in a straight line since the first application, have been completely derailed by the arrests after the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, and the prolonged state of emergency in the country in the ongoing process.

On the economic terrain, according to the IMF's GDP reports (2023), Turkey is the 17th largest economy in the world, while Bulgaria is the 68th largest. However, when we look at the border crossings between Turkey and Bulgaria, we cannot see that this economic priority has been reciprocated in the border crossings of Turkish citizens. However, due to the depreciation of the Turkish lira against the Bulgarian lev after Bulgaria accessed to the EU -though Bulgaria has not adopted Euro yet, the Bulgarian lev is pegged to the Euro at the rate of about 1.9-, the visa liberalization provided by Turkey for Bulgarians at border crossings and the passport-free crossings,

the border crossings between Turkey and Bulgaria have continued only one-way in the advantage of Bulgarian citizens. The repercussions of this one-way convenience and unilateral visa and passport free admission on the local population will be discussed in the following sections in terms of how it is related to Bulgaria's EU membership.

2.4.5. Cultural Ties Between Turkey and Bulgaria

Items that migrated, crossed the border and moved between these two bordering countries, that is, between Bulgaria and Turkey throughout history, were not just goods or people. Bulgaria and Turkey have never stopped cultural communication in spite of all the troublesome processes resulted from the political problems they confronted for centuries. It is indispensable that the Turks and Bulgarians have a shared history, as a result shared cultural and social ties between Bulgarians and Turks, which enhance their relationships. There is still a huge number of Turkish minorities living in Bulgaria, and the number of Bulgarian Turk immigrants is not to be underestimated. At the web page of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to see how the relationship between two countries is explained in official reports, I detect that it is stated that one of the most important elements of our relations with Bulgaria is our compatriots living in Bulgaria, the number of the national Turkish minority in Bulgaria is 588.318 according to official data (2011 census), which is about 8.8% of the total population. However, unfortunately, when it comes to explaining the cultural interaction and ties between the two countries, there is only one sentence on the same page of the ministry: "There is no Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center (*YETKM*) and Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (*TİKA)* office in Bulgaria." (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı, n.d.) From this point of view, once again I would like to refuse the idea that cultural interaction between two countries can only be understood by looking at the concrete buildings or centers. Since it is easy to see this interaction, the Balkan influence, in all areas and moments in the way of life of the local people, from traditional dishes to local folk songs. To set some examples, Kırklareli has a rich cuisine due to immigration from different regions of Thrace. *Kaçamak,* an immigrant dish, is among the popular delicacies of the city. This meal which immigrants brought to the Kırklareli cuisine is made with corn flour and butter and served with beet molasses. Another well-known Rumelia dish in Kırklareli is *Papara,* which is the most delicious form of stale bread. This dish, which is also made with broth, is served with curd cheese, meat or chicken pieces if desired. *Manca,* one

of the appetizers that are made frequently in Balkan villages, and *Kaymaçina*, a milky dessert, are also important dishes to see Balkan influence in the cuisine of region. In addition, the language spoken by Bulgarian Turk immigrants is like a mixture of Turkish and Balkan languages. Furthermore, there are some of the words and phrases that are constantly heard and become familiar in everyday language: For example, the Balkan immigrants use *aga* instead of *ağabey, abi* in Turkish, which means brother; they use *bakraç* instead of *kova*, which means a metal bucket; *dolaşmak* instead of *ziyaret etmek*, which means to visit; *kızan/kızçe* instead of *erkek çocuk/kız çocuk*, which means boy/girl; *patırdamak* instead of *söylenmek*, which means to grumble; *peçka* instead of *soba*, which means kitchen stove; *tete* instead of *teyze*, which means aunt. These are the most frequently used words, for sure, when we look at the detailed studies of folklorists on this subject, it is possible to come across hundreds or thousands of immigrant words and expressions still used among them in Turkey. It is also possible to encounter the influence of migration and their unique hybrid culture in local and folk songs. To set an example, the folk song of *Giderim Giderim Varna Görünmez*, as an anonymous song sung in Kırklareli villages, when we look at the words of the folk song (Kurtulmuş, 1993), it is understood that it was probably written during one of the migration periods mentioned above;

Giderim giderim	I go I go
Varna görünmez	Varna not seen
Dönerim arkama bakarım	I turn and look behind me
Kimseler gelmez	No one comes
Dönerim arkama bakarım	I turn and look behind me
Kimseler gelmez	No one comes
Babam da ihtiyar	My father is also old,
Ata binemez	Can't ride a horse
Nişanlım küçüktür ağ-beyler	My fiance is so young
Yolları bilmez.	Doesn't know the ways [5]

In addition, public events inspired by the thousands of years old traditions of the Balkans are still held every year in Kırklareli within the scope of festivities and festivals, for example, the one that is called the 9th of March *(Mart Dokuzu)* similar to

[5] Abreviated and translated by me.

the *Nevruz* celebration; the *hıdrellez*, which they call *ederlezi;* and *Koleda* the horror night, which is celebrated in a similar way to the Halloween. Apart from these memory sites, the cultural houses, which were organized like ethnography museums with a new generation exhibition understanding, have contributed greatly to the Yayla District in Kırklareli. In Yayla district, once Greeks and Jews inhabited and then it was left to Romans. Today it is gentrified to bring the history of the city back to the urban memory of Kırklareli after the district was registered as an "Urban Protected Area". For instance, Ali Rıza Efendi Culture House, which was an old Greek house, was renovated by the Kırklareli Municipality in 2017. The house has exhibits contributed by Turkey and three Balkan countries and it consists of four main rooms such as Turkey, Greece, Montenegro, and Bulgaria rooms, all of which touch the multicultural life of the peoples who lived in this ancient neighborhood on the axis of tolerance until the first quarter of the last century. In both Bulgaria and Turkey rooms, there are descriptions of the eating and drinking culture of neighboring countries, clothing samples belonging to people of different status and gender, rural life, and informative articles about them. It is possible to see many items, explanations and anecdotes reflecting the common historical and cultural characteristics of these countries in each room. As it is stated by Baud and Schendel (1997), "[t]he analysis of these cultures is a fascinating aspect of border studies and perhaps their principal justification" (pg.234). That's why, through this border study, with a fieldwork in Kırklareli, Turkey, it is important to make an ethnographic account of the meanings of these interactions along the Turkish-Bulgarian border with the participants who have different memories of a common memory site.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the procedures and methods used in this study and aims to state research objectives in relation to its design and data-gathering procedures during the fieldwork in Kırklareli, a city located at the border between Turkey and Bulgaria.

3.1. Research Area

3.1.1. The Geographical Aspects of the Landscape near the Turkish-Bulgarian Border

Kırklareli, which constitutes the area of this research, is located in the Marmara Region, within the Thrace lands in the northwest of Turkey. When Kırklareli is considered in terms of its geographical location, it is an important point, especially with the Dereköy border gate, which provides passage with Turkey and Bulgaria and therefore with Europe. Kırklareli is located in the Thrace Region of Turkey on the European continent. It lies between 41°44' - 42°00' North Latitudes and 26°53' - 41°44' East Longitudes. It has a land area of 6.555 km^2. With a border length of 159 km with Bulgaria from the north and 58 km with the Black Sea from the east, the city is surrounded by the provinces of Edirne from the west, İstanbul from the southeast and Tekirdağ from the south. 48% of its land is mountainous, 35% is rugged terrain, and 17% is plain (T.C. Kırklareli İl Özel İdaresi, n.d.). Its territory is surrounded by Rezve (or *Rezovo*, also known as *Mutludere* in Turkish; see: *figure 3*) Stream valley, which forms the border of Bulgaria from the north and by the Black Sea from the east, the main valley of the Ergene river from the south, and the ridges that are the water section line of the Teke Stream, which joins the Ergene River from the west.

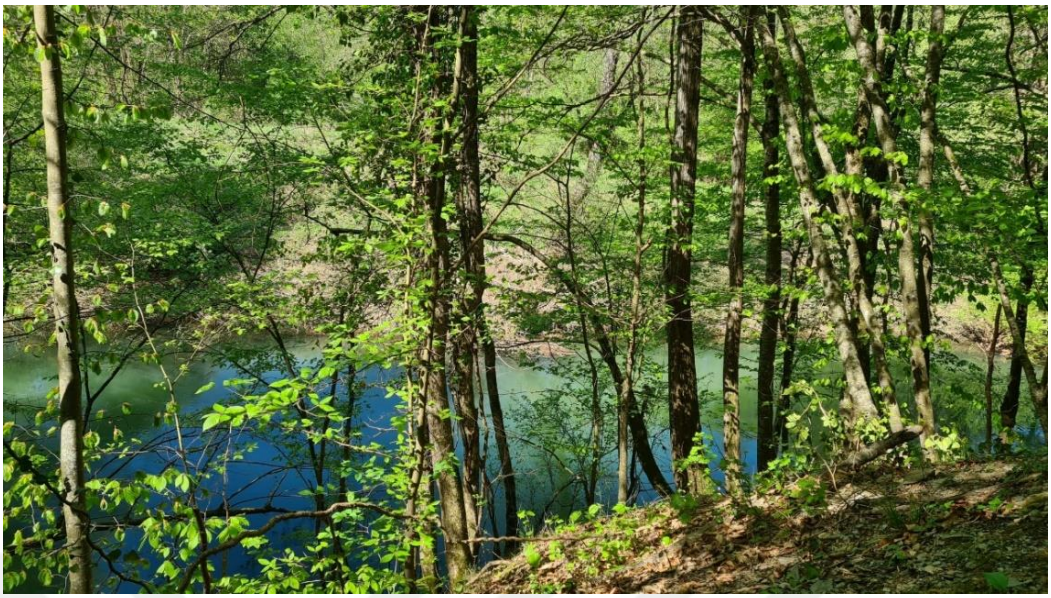
Figure 3: Rezve (Rezovo) as a natural frontier between Turkey and Bulgaria.



Source: *Avenza Maps, n.d.*

The region reflects various structures in terms of landforms. The Yıldız Mountains (*Istrancalar*) extending in the North and Northeast direction form a kind of natural wall in the north of Kırklareli. Yıldız Mountains or Istranca Mountains (Strandzha, Strandja in Bulgarian) consist of a mountain chain with a length of approximately 150 km, parallel to the Black Sea coast of Thrace, from Bulgaria to İstanbul (see *figure 4).* Its part in Turkey covers an area of 197.000 hectares. The highest point of this mountain range is the 1031-meter Mahya Hill in Kırklareli province. The plateaus, that is, Limanköy Plateau and Demirköy Plateau are located in the north of Kırklareli, and constitute various heights between Yıldız Mountains and the Black Sea coastline. The Limanköy Plateau is the northern part of the sloping areas to the Black Sea. It is divided into two by the Rezve Stream, which forms the Turkish-Bulgarian border partially in the northeast (See: *figure 4-5*). It is poured into the Black Sea (See: *figure 5*).

Figure 4: Rezve (Mutludere) from Turkish side (photo taken by me)



The border at the mouth of Rezve (*Rezovo or Mutludere*) led to a territorial dispute between Bulgaria and Turkey before, but the situation was resolved by an agreement between the two countries prepared on 6 May 1992 (which Bulgaria signed in 1998), a few kilometers of land from the Bulgarian Gulf of Rezve were ceded to Turkey, and water from Turkey's continental shelf given Bulgaria (see: *figure 5*).

Figure 5: Rezovo, Bulgaria - border with Turkey



Source: *Pudelek (Martin Szala), 2013.*

Figure 6: Map of Strandzha (Istrancalar in Turkish)



Source: *Ikonact, 2013.*

In addition, İğneada Longoz forests, which are considered the most important natural and geographical wealth of the region, are located on the Black Sea coastline

close to the Bulgarian border and cover an area of 3155 hectares in Turkey side and continues in Bulgaria. As a result of the decision of the Council of Ministers, the area was registered as the 39th National Park of Turkey, published in the Official Gazette on 13 November 2007. The town of İğneada, where the National Park is located, is 27 km from Demirkoy, 97 km from Kırklareli city center, and 237 km from İstanbul. Longoz (*subasar*) type forest area in İğneada, which is accepted to be found only in three places in the world, is a forested area that is mostly covered with water in the spring-winter season when the amount of precipitation is high (T.C. Kırklareli Valiliği, n.d.).

3.1.2. Border Gates

The Turkish-Bulgarian border is 269 kilometers length and is Turkey's third longest border. The border is the land border starting from the point where Rezve Stream (Rezovo or Mutludere) flows into the Black Sea and ending at the place where Meriç River enters into Turkey. The borders of the two countries took their present form with the Treaty of İstanbul (1913).

There are three border gates between Turkey and Bulgaria that provide passage. Of these, the Kapıkule and Hamzabeyli border gates are located in Edirne, while the Dereköy Border Gate is in Kırklareli. Kapıkule, which was first established as a border post in 1930, received the status of border gate with the decision of the Council of Ministers in 1953. Kapıkule Border Gate is Turkey's gateway to Bulgaria and thus to all of Europe, and it is the world's second busiest and Europe's busiest border gate. It is also Turkey's busiest customs gate due to imports and exports to Europe. Dereköy Border Gate, which is approximately 40 km far from Kırklareli city center was opened in 1969 and is a preferred gate, especially for the transition to Bulgaria and the countries in the eastern Europe. This border gate is 5 km away from the city of Malko Tırnova (*Tirnovacik*) of Burgas Province, Bulgaria. In addition, in Beğendik village, which is very close to the Bulgarian border and separated by the Rezve Stream (see *figure. 4 above*), a border gate is planned to be opened and used for crossing into Bulgaria. On April 19, 2019, a meeting was held with a delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Turkey Muhterem İnce, Governor of Kırklareli Osman Bilgin and Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Bulgaria and the Bulgarian delegation for the planned border gate to be opened between the villages of

Kırklareli Beğendik of Turkey and Burgas Rezovo of Bulgaria. At the meeting, it was noted that technical and legal studies are ready to open a border gate by constructing a bridge over the river between Turkey and Bulgaria (Edirne Televizyonu, 2019). However, there is no constructional work yet in this regard in the region.

On the other hand, the passage of trucks between those countries is provided only through Kapıkule and Hamzabeyli border gates. Dereköy border gate is not a gate that commercial trucks can pass through. Therefore, there is a complaint that the other two border gates are not enough to meet the export traffic of Turkey, that there occur kilometers of queues at the two border gates, but it is said that the Bulgarian side does not allow Dereköy border gate to be opened for export. The truck queues at the Hamzabeyli border gate sometimes reach to about 40 km, and this situation creates big economic concerns for exported goods and logistics companies ("Hamzabeyli Sınır Kapısı'nda TIR kuyruğu 40 kilometreyi buldu", 2022). The length of the queue for kilometers is attributed to the inadequacy of the border gates and the slow work on the Bulgarian side. Although the Dereköy border gate has recently been modernized and given a new look, according to Ertuğrul Ziya Çetintaş, chairman of the Kırklareli Chamber of Commerce and Industry, it is still a problem to be solved, he explains "buses and automobiles enter and exit at this gate. Our aim here is to open it to truck traffic. Unfortunately, it cannot be opened without Bulgarian side's permission." He adds, "with the efforts of our Governor, a physical structure has been created at the door that the trucks can pass. We bring this issue to the agenda in our various meetings. Now only Bulgaria has to be convinced. Negotiations are ongoing by the Bulgaria Burgas Governorate and Chamber of Commerce ("Dereköy Sınır Kapısı'nın Tır Trafiği'ne açılması için Bulgaristan ikna edilmeli", 2016).

3.1.3. Kırklareli as a Border Town

Kırklareli, which I have mentioned in detail in terms of its geographical, historical and political features in the previous sections, is one of the least populated provinces of Turkey, and it is also the closest city to the Bulgarian border. Throughout history, as a border city, it has been ideally situated for defense lines of the country and border crossings of various kinds of migrants. From the Ottoman-Russian war of 1877-1878 to the Treaty of İstanbul (1913), the border was redrawn with the wars and treaties between the two sides. In the earlier times of the Republican periods, the border

was stressed due to minority problems and population exchanges. In the ongoing years, until the last period of the 1980s, this same border again confronted an intense influx of Bulgarian Turkish citizens because of the oppressive regime of the Bulgarian government over Muslim and Turkic minorities.

Kırklareli, as a border city, has a significant location with the Dereköy border gate which is one of the three border gates between Turkey and Europe (Greece and Bulgaria). Dereköy border gate is used both by Turks living in Europe, and by touristic tours or private vehicles especially coming from Eastern Europe.

Since 2022, this border between Bulgaria and Turkey has been covered by the media due to the intensity of daily Bulgarian visits to Kırklareli ("Bulgarların yeni adresi Kırklareli oldu", 2022). Besides, Kırklareli, as a border town, has made the headlines on national media not only because of Bulgarian daily visitors, but also on the wide range of news coverage on the transit immigrants from the Middle East and various African countries, caught in border villages while illegally trying to escape to Europe ("Kırklareli'nde bir haftada 439 düzensiz göçmen yakalandı.", 2022). In this study, Kırklareli becomes a distinctive research area to investigate the possible causes and consequences of the dynamism of being a border city from past to present.

Although Kırklareli is a small city that cannot offer various business opportunities, it experiences a high cost of living, especially in terms of housing, food, and other commercial goods. Until recently, it has had a relatively closed economy in the Thracian region and local people did not welcome immigrants in general. However, for the last few years, the city has gone a radical change. All the developments around the border and in the city-center have in various ways changed the way people live in the city and the socio-economic structure of the city overall. To designate the issues, as a resident and researcher in Kırklareli, I have focused on 'lived experiences' of locals, border crossers or immigrants and the way in which they interact with the border and with each other. Therefore, the scope of the study lies within the questions of the conditions under which they experience living or staying in a border town, and also this study examines how each person ascribes meaning to the border and how the border has been shaped by all these confrontations. The research also allows to compare the past and present condition of the border, so as to delineate what changes are more visible to each person having a relationship with the border.

3.2. An Introduction to Qualitative Research: Document Analysis, and Archival Document Analysis, Observation, Interviewing

Qualitative research has a long and vibrant history in social sciences especially in fields such as health sciences and humanities which are directly related to the examination of human beings and their behaviours. As a research method, it first appeared in ethnographic studies during the 17th century, by which the ethnographers were observing the customs, practices, and behaviours of "primitive" societies, to understand "the other" better. Especially with the effect of geographical discoveries, as more lands were discovered, qualitative research methods made it possible for the ethnographers to observe or analyse the new data obtained. Between the 17th and the 19th century, it basically emerged in colonial ethnography. During this period, ethnographic descriptions and analyses, written by Western explorers, missionaries, and colonial administrators, were compiled in church archives or local and national archives. From the late 19th to the early 20th century, American ethnographers focused on American Indians, who were still regarded as primitive and as representing a specific 'other'. The Chicago School in the USA started to prove the validity of that method by using it in various study fields between 1920s-1930s. From the mid-1980s onwards the method was influenced by post-structuralism and postmodernism. Therefore, assumptions regarding the role of the observer and the observed that underpinned many of the qualitative approaches during the older periods were challenged after this date. Especially with an incredulity towards the objectivity, neutrality and reliability of the colonialist studies and their representation of the East and 'other' in paintings, travel writing, books, or stories, the so-called crisis of representation occurred. As a result, new research trends emerged, which have reconstructed the assumptions that had previously underpinned qualitative research (Saukko, 2003; Gray, 2003).

From its first usages to nowadays, almost all the sub-disciplines of social sciences, health sciences, and humanities, as well as cultural anthropology, feminist studies and cultural studies have played significant roles in the continued development of qualitative research. All the disciplines mentioned above make use of qualitative research with their own theoretical leanings, the conception of reality, and methodological preferences. "It is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific

information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations" (Guazzo, 2007, pg. 110).

Qualitative research involves a variety of methods, including observation, interviewing, document analysis and analysis of archival documents. Observation allows the researcher to observe participants in their natural social environment, paying particular attention to the behaviour and actions of the subjects. Participant observation allows the researcher to participate in the activities being observed and to familiarise themselves with the subjects' experiences. Researchers can be fully involved in the observed activities, or they can observe activities in which they themselves are involved. (Guazzo, 2007, pg. 110)

The other two related methods used in qualitative research are document analysis and archival document analysis. Document analysis is heavily used in social sciences, and comprises the study of photographs, diaries, newspapers, government documents, books, memorandums, and other written documents. Archival document analysis also involves the study of historical documents, including historical examples of those listed above. As Guazzo (2007) states;

> While this method allows access to difficult study subjects such as historical figures or societal elites, the study of documents does not allow the investigator to speak to the individual who has created the document. This may lead the investigator to theorize the meanings of the documents and the motivations underlying their creation. These types of studies require the researcher to hypothesize the relationship of the document to the social environment of the time (pg. 111).

Therefore, for this border study, the document gathering, and analysis processes are to be fortified by the usage of 'oral history', by which it has been possible to obtain first-hand accounts. The analysis of data obtained by those methods require making use of supportive methods, such as narrative analysis, and the grounded theory. Narrative analysis emerged as a discipline of qualitative research in the early 20th century. It uses specific texts of a field, such as stories, autobiographies, journals, field notes, letters, conversations, interviews, family stories, photos etc. In this border study, through narrative analysis, as a researcher, I have had the chance to understand the meaning attached to the border experiences of early Bulgarian Turk immigrants and to analyse the specific enunciations used for those experiences.

Furthermore, grounded theory methodology is one of the most widely used approaches to collect and analyse data within qualitative research. “The data are coded as they are collected and as categories begin to emerge. With these categories, theories begin to develop related to the data. These then guide further data collection” (Guazzo, 2007, pg. 111). As the data was collected in this study’s field work, in each of the interviews, with the help of the notion of grounded theory, I began to develop new categories. Or I started to categorize the existent typologies in context to their relation to the border, that’s, I grounded the theory in line with the findings.

Interviewing as a method, on the other hand, is applied through direct interaction between the researcher and the participant. The questions related to the subject of study are directly asked. By using appliances such as audiotapes, videotapes, or note-taking, interviews can be recorded which gives the researcher a chance to save the data and process them later. In this study, rather than using structured interviewing which includes well-prepared questions beforehand, semi-structured interviewing was used in order not to limit the responses of interviewees and to give them a little room for variation among answers. Questions were partially prepared to construct the interview around a topic according to the typologies of subject beings. The main reason for that was to leave for the participant a bigger room to express himself/ herself better and more freely and to allow the researcher to expand the questions in need during the interviews.

3.3. Research Aims and Structure

This study aims to reveal the meanings and experiences of the sometimes permeable, sometimes quite rigid border between Turkey and Bulgaria with empirical data gathered at the town of Kırklareli. Qualitative research methods have been the primary tool of analysis, since they offer the possibility of document analysis, participant observation and in-depth interviews put together. I preferred to use semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions during the one-to-one communications that took place with the participants. Given the accounts of the participants, the Turkish-Bulgarian border in Kırklareli in this study is presented as an example case of border-phenomenon, categorizing border people within typologies that interact within the border zone, similarly to an approach taken by other studies (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Gray, 2003; Saukko, 2003; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007;

Guazzo, 2007). Forty subjects between the ages of 18-80, from among early Bulgarian Turk immigrants, the border landers, the border villagers, border crossers, shopkeepers, and Bulgarian citizens coming to shop in town, were interviewed via voice recording, or sometimes by note-taking, and for all subjects, and for each interviewee, a substitute name was used. In some cases, some of the interviews were done in a group talk, especially the ones in border villages.

In the first part of this study, before moving on to the interviewing part, to understand the meanings attributed to the border, this study aimed to understand its physical structure, i.e. how it appears as a border given by nature in addition to the border wires and fences drawn by the states. To this end, geographical surveys were carried out along the Rezve stream, in the Istranca Mountains and in the border villages, and notes and photographs were taken in the field. Then a study in the form of data collection and analysis was conducted to understand the change of the Turkish-Bulgarian border in the historical process. While doing the historiographic analysis of the study, historical sources, treaties, books, photographs, maps, and news were searched in databases and libraries, and the migration and population changes and minority problems affecting the border regime all were explained through data collection and document analysis. In addition to this analytical study, document analyzes were supported by conducting one-to-one interviews with people who in one way were involved in these events or listened to the stories of those who witnessed them. In other words, the next step after finishing historical research and historical data collection was to conduct interviews with the living witnesses or their descendants on those historically significant events. While doing so, I made use of the methodology of 'oral history' and aimed to disclose the important matters and hidden angles of the memories of interviewees. After being well-informed on the historical processes, such as population exchanges and migrations that took place on the Turkish-Bulgarian border, to understand how they affected the border and were affected by the transformations on this border, I aimed to record the narrations of real people who experienced these events. To contribute to the current problem of the study, these subjects were also asked questions about how they see the current state of the border and how they interpret it.

In this multifaceted study, as a researcher to see the different typologies in their social environment, I spent an extended time in different parts of the city to see all the

interactions and outcomes the border bestows people. After interviewing early Bulgarian Turk immigrants, I started to conduct observations in marketplaces and in the mall in Kırklareli to observe the shopping trends of Bulgarian daily visitors, the opportunities the local merchants offer them, the problems they confront and their interactions (if any) with locals. Secondly, I have been to border villages and forestlands near the border to observe the villagers' and borderlanders' reactions to transit and irregular migrants across the land and their interactions with those immigrants. The observational research was conducted from January to September 2022 during which I also made use of media tools appearing on social media and news sites. Analysis of archival and media documents as well as participant observation was very helpful in forming the general framework of this border study. After September 2022 till December 2023, to carry out a meaningful and conceptual analysis of the study, in-depth semi-structured interviews took place in those places where observation conducted.

3.4. Research Validity, Reliability, and Ethics

Analysing the changes in meaning and representation of borders requires to adopt ethnography as a research method which is defined as "an interdisciplinary phenomenon" which is "a practice of writing about, against and among cultures by focusing on meaning systems, disputed traditions and cultural artifacts" (Clifford & Marcus, 1986, pg.3). To achieve my objectives for this study, I tried to avoid doing a traditional ethnographic research since, in traditional methodological practices, the aim of research was to attain a 'universal', 'objective' 'truth' in the light of 'realities' over there. That mentality, therefore, particularly in social sciences resulted in problems in the production of knowledge. The method that a researcher adopted was supposed to provide conclusions similar to scientific experiments of positive sciences. In a way, a social researcher like a positivist scientist was assuming the absolute and unchanging truth. New ethnography, on the other hand, argues that there are multiple levels of validity in doing social research and ethnography.

To be able to make the study in accordance with ethical rules, with high reliability and validity, I adopted Hammersley and Atkinson's notions on reflexivity in their *Ethnography: Principles in practice* (2007) where they emphasize the significance of the researcher's participation in the daily lives of people for an

extended period of time in data collection. According to them, in collecting the data in a natural setting through negotiation with people in the field, social research also has to be respectful and tolerant toward other social environments. Hamersley and Atkinson (2007) explain the changing features in social research and state that since the 1980s, the neutrality and objectivity of researchers have been questioned and that is simply because of the fact that in that postmodern world politicization of social research is inevitable. The authors also insist on the reflexive character of social research. So according to them, a researcher by undermining naïve forms of realism is an active participant rather than a distant observer. As the authors call it, "he or she is the research instrument *par excellence"* (2007, pg.17). In conjunction with this, participant observation, as another qualitative method, has been applied in this study, through which the data enhanced with visual materials has been observed, collected in the daily environments of participants, and analysed by the content analysis method to see all the particular signs and discourses within the larger context.

In addition, in the light of propositions and recommendations of Paula Saukko in her article "Doing Research in Cultural Studies: An Introduction to Classical and New Methodological Approaches" (2003), rather than to achieve an all-known truth, I made use of three different versions of validity techniques to achieve better and more valid research. To clarify, the first of them is 'dialogic validity' which comes from the philosophy of hermeneutics and phenomenology. To access that type of validity, it is required to reach out to 'lived experiences' of subjective elements and understand them through some interpreting techniques -as in Weber's '*verstehen'* or Clifford Geertz's concept of 'thick description'. Besides, the 'lived experiences' of all voices, that's, polyvocality in social research, become very significant to achieve valid arguments. The second one asserted by Saukko is 'textual validity' which is a post-structuralist way of deconstruction of social discourses. Hence, the concepts of this study such as border and mobility disclose more than one reality. In a way, all the discourses and texts everywhere around this border city give clues to the researcher for a better understanding of the concepts and meanings constructed around the border.

As the third version of validity techniques, Saukko proposes 'contextual validity', which helps me as a researcher in cultural studies to compile the subjective perspectives of each participant under the macro processes of border regimes, sunject construction, cultural flows, and political economy. In short, this technique gives the

chance of grasping under which larger context the subjective perspective of each participant has been generated. However, it shouldn't be taken as a deterministic style in which the patches of micro explain the macro. The aim is still to look at particular, individual perspectives, and narratives meticulously. So to speak, I tried to do triangulation that's gathering narratives, grasping immediate personal statements, and looking at macro systems to support the data in order to succeed in all three validities mentioned above in the literal sense.

Relatedly, as Saukko (2003) also asserts, during data gathering and processing the data, it is important to adopt a 'contingent approach' in which the researcher arrives at multiple possibilities. In other words, the validity of research is to be achieved only when all the alternative contingencies are found out and framed within the main context. Therefore, in this study, the border represents the in-betweenness and contingency of space, where the local and the global overlap, where one self is intertwined with the other. As a result, all these techniques and tactics allow me as a researcher to come to an analytical conclusion rather than a descriptive analysis.

As a widely accepted primary source, Ann Gray's *Research Practice for Cultural Studies: Ethnographic Methods and Lived Cultures* (2003) has been a guidebook for my study as qualitative research. In her text, her first proposition for researchers is to be involved with the fieldwork as a researcher and self-reflexively include themselves in it. The other way is to identify themselves with the problem they want to investigate in the fieldwork. According to her, the self-reflexivity issue is twofold, one is being involved in the research field, second is identifying yourself with the problem. Actually, both were inevitable for me during the fieldwork. As a resident in Kırklareli for more than ten years for academic and occupational reasons, I eye-witnessed the recent happenings and changes around this border town. In a way, as Gray (2003) suggests, it was inevitable to feel myself as a subject of issue while conducting research and communicating with other subject beings. However, she also cautions researchers about avoiding traditional emotive self-reflexivity, for her, the important point in avoiding that is to embrace an 'analytical reflexivity'. While I feel myself to be part of the problem, I have also tried to analyse all the data carefully and analytically enough to understand all the subject positions of the different typologies in relation to the larger context. Moreover, it has become easier to proceed analytically by first applying textual research, i.e. the historical research on the history of border

processes in Turkey on a macro level, then examining the changes on the border between Turkey and Bulgaria, and finally accessing personal narratives related to it. In short, it was important to have both a theoretical position and an appropriate methodological framework.

3.5. Research Limitations

In the literature review part, although I studied on theories on border issues in general and many studies on other borders of Turkey, the number of border studies on borders in Thrace, i.e., the border between Greece and Turkey or the border between Bulgaria and Turkey in particular, was quite limited. Although this made this border study a more original and previously unexamined thesis, it limited the researcher's ability to compare this border study with other examples of research on the same border.

One of the first limitations of this study is that, like many other border studies, it could only be conducted on one side of the border. The relative lack of cross-border ethnographic studies portraying people and communities on both sides in harmony is due in part to the challenges of obtaining funding, permits and local contacts necessary to make such research possible, much of which is conducted in areas considered by governments to be particularly vulnerable to political and economic instability (Wilson, 2023, pg.37). We can say that the main obstacle in conducting the research bilaterally on this border between Bulgaria and Turkey has already constituted the main argument of this study. As a Turkish researcher, my crossing to the other side of the border requires me to overcome many bureaucratic and economic obstacles, even though the same would not be the case for a Bulgarian researcher. A Bulgarian researcher can conduct ethnographic research on the Turkish side of the border as if traveling from one city to another within his/her own country, i.e., without the need for a visa or passport. But as a researcher on the other side of the border, I would need a passport and a visa to cross the border, and the difference in the currency values of the two countries would have imposed a serious financial burden on me. However, what enabled me to overcome this problem to a large extent was also the fact that this border could be easily crossed by Bulgarians, which enabled me to interview many Bulgarians in the research area in general, especially in the city centre and shopping

areas, which also enabled me to compare how the border is seen and perceived from both sides.

During the fieldwork, both the tradesmen in the city and visitors from Bulgaria coming to shop daily were interviewed on the permeability of the border, which has become a significant economic tool for all. The narratives obtained from the in-depth interviews with the tradesmen are compared to the interviews with Bulgarian shoppers coming on daily basis. However, discussions with the Bulgarian shoppers took a longer time, and was more challenging than interviewing local people working in various sectors in Kırklareli. As Bulgarians came mostly on day trips or for short-stays to shop, eat, drink, and spend leisure-time, they were less willing to spare time to contribute. In their words, they "don't have time for research" and were highly focused on their shopping activity. They often rejected corresponding by stating "you see; we are in a hurry because we are shopping right now". Another obstacle was the language barrier. Most of the Bulgarians could speak neither Turkish nor English, hence, they stated "we can't help you because we speak very little Turkish". Nevertheless, Turks living in Bulgaria but coming to the Turkish side for their shopping were more willing to talk, and young Bulgarians who spoke English fluently have contributed as well.

Naturally, this study remains quite limited in terms of interviews with irregular immigrants who are trying to cross the border 'illegally'. As it is asserted by İçduygu and Sert (2015), it was challenging to gather data, especially on the issues like irregular migration "due to its clandestine nature" (pg.146). As Aras (2020) also asserts in his study on smugglers on the eastern border of Turkey, that limitedness was because of the fact that both smugglers and irregular migrants tend to "cross the border during the dark nights", which "reinforce(s) ontological ambiguity and hiddenness" (pg.142). They, in a way, become or try to become invisible because of illegality of their operations and fear of being apprehended and sent to the removal centre immediately after they are pushed back at the border by Bulgarian forces. In addition, the tight control of the gendarmerie in the region greatly reduced my opportunity to talk to and interview with these subjects. For these reasons, I came across only one singular case of an irregular immigrant, a Turkmen woman, Gülnaz who had been in the Pehlivanköy Removal Centre for a short duration. In the interview, she told how she was apprehended and sent to the removal center, and what she experienced there. The information provided by Gülnaz was significant, in the sense that, it raised questions

on the arbitrariness of border management and the legal status of immigrants in the country. Also, the accounts of those living in border villages on encountering the trespassers of the border and the interviews with the employees of the Kırklareli Migration Administration were very informative on illegal migrants.

4. BORDER-CROSSINGS: EARLY IMMIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND DAILY-SHOPPERS

4.1. Selective Permeability of the Border

Depending on what human beings have experienced in a borderland from the past till the present, the border gains new conceptions, reflections, and positionalities. As for the Turkish-Bulgarian border in the town of Kırklareli, locals have confronted various types of relationships with the border for many years. To start with, the border has become a place of memory and identity construction for the Bulgarian Turk immigrants for years. Then, especially after 2020, the Turkish-Bulgarian border is also considered as a means of financial flow for the local merchants and as a huge full-line discount store for the shoppers coming from Bulgaria every day. On the other hand, the border in Kırklareli has emerged as a barrier for irregular and transit immigrants seeking shelter in Europe, which also creates a disturbing 'border effect' for the surrounding villagers. In that sense, firstly, I want to state the multiple meanings that the border has with the help of a poster. *(See Figure 7).* I want to start with that poster since it is a very good sign for understanding particularly the last two border effects mentioned above which can clearly be seen from the two billboard-advertisements at the entrance of the market square in the city center.

In fact, the posters in these two billboard advertisements side by side are two posters that very well explain the effect of the border in the city or the meanings created around the border. On the first billboard, we see a poster prepared by Kırklareli Municipality, for a high-end flea market[6] to be set up every Sunday, opening on the 27th of November, 2022, targeting the Bulgarian cross-border shoppers, interestingly promoted in Bulgarian.

[6] '*Sosyete pazarı' in Turkish which can be defined as a marketplace where counterfeits of many expensive brands are sold at affordable prices.*

Figure 7: Two billboard advertisements in the marketplace of Kırklareli (photo taken by me on 22nd November 2022).



The second poster next to it, on the other hand, prepared by *CHP*, the main opposition party in Turkey emphasizes the disturbing effect of illegal immigrants who are frequently caught on Turkey's borders. We see the party's chairman of that time, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and his political discourse on the border, promising that "We will withdraw all the refugee treaties imposed to Turkey by EU and we will take back control of our borders" and in the headline of the banner, he says, "We will say good-bye to all asylum seekers in two years".

To be more precise, on the one hand, the first poster gives the message that the border is so flexible that you can shop here by crossing the border on a Sunday just for shopping at a marketplace. On the other hand, the billboard next to it says that the same border will be tightened so much that no one can slip over them. Even this photograph alone proves that the border can appear in different meanings and representations simultaneously, especially in political and economic discourses, in different ways. The border is apparently selective in terms of its permeability. Furthermore, it is not important whether the border is tight enough, it is important who crosses it. As Paasi and Ferdoush (2023) argue in their study on new borders of the global age;

> For example, economic actors often aim to encourage cross-border activities, whereas politicians and the military struggle to preserve the state, its devices of

violence and narratives of "the nation under threat" in operation, as well as to control mobilities (pg.56).

Borders are not a one-dimensional issue, rather they are a complex set of social institutions constructed on various spatial scales. Therefore, this study focuses on how the borders and border regions that are geographically located at the peripheries of nation-states have been transforming with alterations in their permeability. As Van Houtum and Van Naerssen (2002) stated, in this post-modern era, others as border crossers are sometimes welcomed, and some others are not welcomed at all. Therefore, the bordering and othering procedures towards are accordingly different (pg.129).

As clearly demonstrated in *Figure 7*, some certain borders are quite permeable for the citizens of one state, while they are no-passing zones for the citizens of other states. That's why, for this particular border between Turkey and Bulgaria, the modes of bordering are becoming diverse and thus selective, hence the residents indispensably categorize the border crossers in a hierarchy of othering, from the most welcomed 'other' to the most uninvited ones. As a result, in the following chapters of this study, I will elaborate on the different typologies of the border, which represent 'us', 'them', and 'others', all of which attribute a different meaning to the concept of border. Therefore, to hear the 'lived experiences' of all the different portraits represented, with the help of participant observation and semi-structured interviews, I aim to evaluate the Turkish-Bulgarian border in Kırklareli by detecting border people typologies that interact within the border zone.

4.2. Process of Othering Along the Border

Othering may appear in various forms of dichotomies in every different field. From ancient times to the 20th century, in the Western epistemology and philosophy of science, the idea of organizing knowledge and discourse drove from the definite categories of binary oppositions such as universal vs. particular, body vs. knowledge, object vs. subject, male vs. female. Just like Hegel's dialectic or Saussure's example of the concept of "night" and "day", meaning emerges from the comparison of opposite sides. Likewise, the 'self', through which human beings define the essence of their identity, exists as a result of its confrontation with sometimes marginalized or excluded 'other'. The binary oppositions of female/male, black/white, orient/occident, colonized/colonizer, savage/ civilized, slave/master, westerner/easterner, etc. as such

are diverse versions of othering as we notice in gender studies or feminist and post-colonial critics. For instance, Edward Said, in his *Orientalism* (1978), criticizes Eurocentric universalism through which the 'West' identify the 'East' and asserts how the Westerners as the ones who hold the power of colonizing the 'other', and they use knowledge and discourses to dominate the 'other'. Likewise, Homi K. Bhabba (1994), with the influence of Franz Fanon, asserts that the power of politics that shapes and emphasizes hegemonic constructions of power has to be undone. Furthermore, according to Bhabba (1994) in that sense, the identity constructs itself by enunciating its cultural position in engagement with politics. That's to say, one always needs to 'the other' to understand what 'the self' is. Other than the discourses upon identity creation as 'self /other' or 'us/them', according to political geographers, there is also the dichotomy of space that appear as 'ours' and 'theirs'. Those spaces are not areas that are separated by certain measurements, but they are rather blurred, which Said clarifies as;

> this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is "ours" and an unfamiliar space beyond "ours" which is "theirs" is a way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary. I use the word "arbitrary" here because the imaginative geography of the "our land-barbarian land" variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction (Said, 2003, p.54-55).

As it is already mentioned in the literature review part of this study, spaces are not always fixed, and territorial states are also imaginary geographies but have their own historical or cultural background. Unlike the notion of a nation, as an 'imagined community', which is assumed to be in unity, a national subject is a subject existing by dynamic subjection and differentiation. Furthermore, the exclusivist tendency of the nation-states and national or local identities toward outside identities is a mundane aspect of politics. This, hence, deconstructs the nation's claim of unity and cohesion and leads to ambiguities of 'identity'. In other words, although the idea of unity seems more possible in a national idea, it is quite impossible in local space. As Ayşegül Baykan states; "there is a complex relationship between spatialities and identities. Identities are produced and experienced in space which becomes real and metaphorical at the same time" (1997, pg.66).

The border of a nation-state is undeniably a decisive factor for its ordering and othering processes. The confrontation of the nation-state and national identity with the concept of the border has created some binary categories which have become inseparable concepts from that of the "border". According to Van Houtum and Van Naerssen, bordering, ordering and othering have become so intertwined concepts that "this paradoxical character of bordering processes" reinvents "new or latently existing differences in space and identity", though trying to remove "territorial ambiguity and ambivalent identities in order to shape a unique and cohesive order" (2002, pg.126). Furthermore, as Gupta and Ferguson assert:

> The borderlands make up just such a place of incommensurable contradictions. The term does not indicate a fixed topographical site between two other fixed locales (nations, societies, cultures) but an interstitial zone of displacement and deterritorialization that shapes the identity of the hybridized subject. (1997, pg.48)

That's why, in this study, it is necessary to analyse the fragmentary identities of border regions that embody their 'self' by confrontation with an ever-shifting identity of 'other' in contrast to the assumed stable spatiality of the nation-state.

It should not be forgotten that some need the idea of a border that marks the differences between here and there or us and them. Furthermore, the idea of different landscapes, different languages, and cultures can even be appealing. In addtion, despite the often-liked idea of globalization, borders are not withering away. They exist and they function according to certain features of crossers. That is, while the border can be appealing for some, it can be functioning as a barrier for others depending on where those people are from and where they were born. Therefore, there is not a globalized world full of global citizens in it as it is idealized by the supporters of the idea of globalization and a borderless world. There are just some global citizens who are generally from wealthy countries or so-called first-world countries and more 'welcomed' than those others who are 'uninvited' and are generally from poorer countries or so-called third-world countries. In this sense, the Turkish-Bulgarian border in Kırklareli offers an excellent case to see the obvious mobility inequalities, the different enforcement of visa requirements and border patrols, and to detect different categorisations of crossers as 'others', such as early Bulgarian Turkish migrants or Bulgarian daily shoppers or illegal migrants. In this simultaneous existence of border as a space of inclusion and exclusions, it functions firstly, as a space of both

belonging and marginalization for the Bulgarian Turk immigrants. Secondly, it represents a space of freedom for Bulgarian daily shoppers who fall into the category of the global citizen, while it is a space of exclusion for the irregular transit and illegal migrants. In the ongoing subsections, I aim to show how borderlanders of the Turkish-Bulgarian border located in Kırklareli recreate their 'self' by relocating their constantly changing 'other' emerging in different typologies. The interviews conducted for this study with the border residents within different locations of the city and its villages show that, from their first confrontation with the 'outsiders', notable efforts are made to distinguish themselves from those 'others'. To be more precise;

> Occupied by various groups of people, it is necessary that these groups interact, and their relationships become mediated as they operate simultaneously through these grids and layers. Social beings invest social power in places and constitute a grounding place for identity (Baykan, 1997, pg. 66)

Therefore, they recreate their 'self' by creating a distinction between their 'self' and the 'other'. Firstly, one of these constructions is that of Bulgarian Turks as 'the others' whom they call as '*muhajir'*, which is a term that refers to those who came during the population exchanges starting during the days of the Ottoman empire, and continuing until the end of the 1980s. Secondly, the border residents around the city make a distinction between their 'self' and the 'other' by referring to Bulgarian citizens coming to the city every day as shoppers or as daily visitors, whom they sometimes refer to as '*komşu*' (neighbour) but generally as '*Bulgarlar*' or '*onlar*' (them). Last but not the least, they mark the illegal crossers or immigrants coming from third countries, whom they generally call *'mülteciler'* (refugees) as the 'uninvited other'. Therefore, there occurs a hierarchy of othering, which appears sometimes separately but sometimes simultaneously in that border. While Bulgarian Turks are seen as 'national kin', the Bulgarian shoppers as daily visitors can be categorized as welcomed ones since they are considered to create an economically 'positive border effect'. The illegal migrants and so-called refugees crossing this border to flee to Europe, on the other hand, are totally seen as *persona non grata.* All these confrontations with different 'others' redefine the distinction between 'us' and 'them', resulting in regenerating the 'self' of border residents.

4.2.1. Hybridized Identities of Bulgarian Turks: "We became Turks in Bulgaria, we became Bulgarians in Turkey"

As Thomas M. Wilson and Hasting Donnan (1998) clearly state the borders of a state have three elements each of which has been formed from a different perspective. Firstly, it is the territorial space where the state justifies its sovereignty, second, it is the legal existence of borders through which the state is to be known and differentiated from the other states. Thirdly, as the main concern of this anthropological study, a border is the place where people enunciate their identities through negotiations and exchanges of meanings of their behaviours in relation to lived space. So, the lived experiences of border people are about how they relate or differ within the webs of society and which of those relations appear more significant to them. As Thomas H. Eriksen (2001) states 'society, if we think of it as an integrated whole, may also be divided analytically into various systems'. Eriksen (2001) also asserts that small communities, unlike large-scale societies, have denser networks, and this notion is embodied in the border people of this study since the border as a space of a small community indicates denser transnational cultural practices of individuals and collective actors.

Borders become effective not by how they are constructed, but by the way people perceive and give meaning to them. According to Paasi (1996), the mental borders that we create in our minds can position the imaginative 'there' much further from 'here', though it is physically proximate. Unlike the state's borders physically constructed which represent 'the top-down separation of the 'self' and the 'other', the perception, experiences, and narratives of the borders represent 'the bottom-up'. In bottom-up bordering, it is significant to "listen to their personal and group narratives" (Newman, 2006, pg.12). The group narratives and discourses of small communities of borderlands reveal their perceptions of identity. "Borders determine the nature of group belonging, affiliation, and membership, and the way in which the processes of inclusion and exclusion are institutionalized" (Newman, 2006, pg.5). People who grow up in the shadow of borders, whose daily lives are directly affected by it, tend to establish their own identity as borderlanders who belong to a certain nation and its territory by classifying others who are to be excluded. Besides, all the symbols we see on the borders of the states such as the gate itself, the flags, or signs in the native

language are the markers of nationhood. Therefore, the borderlands are strong indicators of national ideals and heritage.

The border between Turkey and Bulgaria is a border that has been associated with migrations and population exchanges since Ottoman times. The last movement in this sense on this border was in the year of 1989 when more than 350,000 Turkish compatriots escaped from Bulgarian oppression and migrated to Turkey. Of that period discussed in the literature review part, I had the opportunity to meet six people from immigrant families in Turkey, one from Kırklareli's residents. As it is expressed in literature review part of this study, dealing with the issue of borders requires an investigation into the identities of those whose lives have been shaped around the borders. To achieve a better analysis of migrants' border experiences, it became a must to interview them on borders as reflected in their memory and on the ways in which borders changed their lives while constructing their 'homes' and their 'hybrid identities'.

To start with, for Bulgarian Turks immigrants, before migration to Turkey, there was no 'a nostalgia of homeland', yet there was 'the idealization of their native land' where they had never been before. In fact, they captured the notion of 'home' through memory. As it was mentioned in detail in section 2.2.4, the Bulgarian Turks just followed the 'roots' of their cultural identity which they nourished with the help of "prosthetic memory" throughout their lives (Landsberg,1995). Although the border between Bulgaria and Turkey makes a distinction between outside and inside, or homeland and foreign land, it could not limit the Bulgarian Turks' experience of native culture. In other words, they experienced the homeland irrespective of being in the national territories. In spite of the spatial distance to the native land, they had a sense of belonging to the collective culture of Turkishness. For instance, in one of the interviews with a Turkish immigrant from Bulgaria who migrated through the end of the 1980s, Bilge stated that "*…we and our elders are always lovers of Turkey.*[7] *We were longing for Turkey because we grew up with a burning desire for Turkey"*[8]. I suppose this expression clearly demonstrates how the Bulgarian Turks feel themselves belong to the Turkish nation and they were grown up with the memories and desires

[7] "Türkiye sevdalısıyız."
[8] "Türkiye'ye hasret kalmışız, yanarak tutuşarak hep Türkiye özlemiyle yetiştiğimiz için."

of living the joy of being in their native land. While Bilge continued to talk about the 'roots' of their culture, he explained their reason for migration as the obstructive manners of the Bulgarian government to prevent them to live their culture and religion as Muslim Turks in Bulgarian land;

> Firstly, speaking Turkish was banned… During the period of assimilation, they (Bulgarians) did not allow Muslims to enter the mosque, they locked the kids in schools so that they would not collect candy during the *bayrams*, and it was said that women would not wear baggy trousers (*şalvar*). Muslim clothes were not allowed to be worn. Sacrificing (*kurban kesmek*) was forbidden.

The Bulgarian Turk immigrants I interviewed, in general, told me that during the repression of Bulgarians, they had understood it was not possible to speak their languages and live their cultures and religion freely in the land they were born, that's, in Bulgaria, anymore. Thus, in the trace of their national identity, crossing the border and arriving to homeland became a necessity for protecting their native identity and handing it to future generations. The same or similar statements were heard from the other interlocutors during the interviews. Not surprisingly, even those who were not live witnesses of such oppressions, i.e. those who were not born in Bulgaria, those who were born after their families migrated to Turkey, or those who were still babies in arms at the time, were narrating the oppression of Bulgarian regime as if they had lived them. For instance, another interlocutor Ergün, who is Bilge's son, in his thirties, tells his 'constructed' memory of that time as such;

> It was forbidden not only to speak Turkish but also to live Turkish traditions, for example, it was forbidden to hold a Turkish wedding. The events proceeded like this, they (the Bulgarian army) thought and implemented new ways to harass and assimilate Turks. Then their last step was to change Turkish names. They (Bulgarian officers and soldiers) came to the villages with Bulgarian name lists and their rifles, and they put the rifle to your head and said, 'if you don't choose a Bulgarian name, we will shoot you'.

Even if whatever happened at that time is not his own memories, Ergün and the other younger generations of immigrants that grew up with these memories conveyed them in the first person in this way, so that this collective memory forms the basis on which they build their national identities.

The older generation of immigrants, while telling the migration period, they indispensably touched upon some nationalist discourses and their feeling of belonging to Turkey. For instance, in another interview with a 64-year-old Bulgarian Turk immigrant woman, Esma, she summarized the time of migration as such;

> I was born in 1958, we migrated to Turkey in 1992. We were harvesting tobacco there, and I was working as a cleaner in the village school in Bulgaria. We used to go to other villages for tobacco in the summer. Then "*Türkiyecilik*"[9] started, but we couldn't come to Turkey then, "*Türkiyecilik*" was closed, then we went to Sweden, we stayed there like refugees for two years, then they made us turn back to Bulgaria because the democracy was established in Bulgaria. We came to Bulgaria, we worked to harvest tobacco again, and I worked as a cook. We planted onions, we did everything, but we couldn't get much money. Then, we decided to come to Turkey. We entered Turkey with a visa in 1992. We are a family of five, the kids and I and my husband came to Turkey with a 3-month visa, we came as tourists but after crossing that border, we did not return back again.

Although during my research on the topic, I hadn't heard the word '*Türkiyecilik'* that Esma used to summarize the migration of Turks at that time, she made me realize that one word refers to the desire for immigration of Bulgarian Turks to Turkey, to the nation-state, and it was their basic motivation to cross that physical and mental border. The phenomenon of '*Türkiyecilik'* as it is explained by Kader Özlem (2018) actually means emigration to the motherland, Turkey which is the unchanging agenda of the Balkan Turks over the centuries. '*Türkiyecilik'* or 'Turkeyism', which was explained by Vildane Dinç and Artum Dinç (2018) in their study of the construction of images in the memory of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, "was engendered as a resistance towards socialist repressions aimed at them" (pg.16). The authors also state that the image of *Türkiyecilik* is the result of their idea that "there were no opportunities for a good life, or a chance of survival in Bulgaria, but only in Turkey." (2018, pg.16). In fact, Esma introduced me with a single concept what Balkan migrants tried to explain with discourses such as 'longing for homeland', 'belonging to Turkish culture' and 'obtaining cultural identity' in all interviews.

[9] The woman used this word of "Türkiyecilik" by which she means the period that the Turkish-Bulgarian border opened in 1989.

Another aspect that makes Esma's situation different from other interlocutors is the fact that she was an immigrant who came to Turkey post-1990. Unlike my other interviewees, Esma and her family tried to migrate to Turkey after 1989, not when the borders were open, but when the borders were closed. Parla (2015) expresses the differences in the practice at that time as follows; "Throughout the 1990s and up until 2001, Bulgarian nationals wishing to come to Turkey needed to obtain a tourist visa to leave Bulgaria" (pg.108). From this point of view, I would like to summarize the situations faced by those who migrated from Bulgaria in the 1990s and after, different from those who migrated in 1989 when the borders were open. It is possible to say that the opening of the borders in 1989 and the migration of Bulgarian citizens of the same ethnic origin to Turkey were the last 'legal' migrations from Bulgaria to Turkey. Parla (2015) summarizes those times as such; "[g]iven the increasing difficulty of getting tourist visas, people began to seek illegal routes to reach Turkey, either in search of jobs or to unite with a partner who had already migrated" (pg.108). In other words, we can say that 1989 was the last period when the borders were open and the attitude became lastly welcoming towards our racial kin since the first Republican period (İçduygu & Sert, 2015, pg. 101). The period after that, that's, the period from the 1990s to the present, is defined as the period "with less importance of ethnic kin, more significance of economic conditions, more two-way flows, and indifference on the part of the authorities towards the situation of irregular labor migrants" (İçduygu & Sert, 2015, pg.101). Therefore, it is understood that Esma and her family migrated to Turkey with a tourist visa and settled in Turkey as illegal immigrants for a while, which was dismissed by the authorities as those immigrants contributed to labour force at that time. In addition, Bilge also stated that about the same subject matter;

> 330.000 Turks came to Turkey at that time. Of course, there were also those who returned to Bulgaria after the regime -we call socialism- collapsed, and democracy was established because conditions in Turkey were harsh. There we had left all our properties, it was difficult to find a job here and pay the rent, etc. There were also those who crossed the border between Turkey and Bulgaria illegally after 1990s. Therefore, maybe the number of border crossers reached 500.000, I don't know.

Bilge meant that those who wanted to go to Bulgaria and returned to Turkey after the three-month period in 1989, when the borders were open, became illegals. He

also added that with these illegal entries, the number of Bulgarian Turks who emigrated during this period is almost double the number of official records.

In another interview with a woman in her forties, who migrated with her family in 1989, Şengül, told about her primary school years in Bulgaria when the Bulgarian government forced them to 'erase' all their memories and traces of their Turkish identities;

> I was in the first grade of primary school, we had our Turkish names in the first semester, later they gave us Bulgarian names in the second semester. We (all the Turkish students) wrote our Bulgarian names on our books and erased all our old Turkish names written before. We erased all the things written in Turkish. In 1985, it was forbidden to speak Turkish, we were punished for speaking Turkish and for wearing baggy pants (*şalvar*). We could no longer speak Turkish outside the houses. They wanted everything in Bulgarian. Our neighborhood was a Turkish neighborhood, but before the second semester ended, we started to speak in Bulgarian with my brother even inside the house. Because of the prohibitions, we completely started to speak in Bulgarian.

Şengül also talked about how her Turkish name was changed to a Bulgarian name at the beginning of Bulgaria's repressive regime at that time, how she is still struggling to get her Turkish name back, and how the Bulgarian name 'Sonya', which appears on her identity card, disturbs her sense of national identity;

> My name is still Sonya on the passport. We wanted to change it later, but the court would take too long. We can't stay in Bulgaria for that long when we go there, so we couldn't have changed it yet. They did not change my Turkish name with a court decision when they first changed it, they just changed it directly. They changed it very easily, and now we want to be able to get my Turkish name back so easily, but we can't. They create trouble. *Inshallah*, we will change it this year, I hope I will get my Turkish name back this year.

While Şengül was telling about the bans on their native language, and Turkish culture, her daughter Gülcan, who was listening to her mother's memories beside her during the interview, told me that they still sometimes go to Bulgaria because of her grandfather's job there, and she added: *"Even today, whenever we cross the border and arrive in Turkish lands, I want to lean and kiss the land".*

The daughter, Gülcan who is only 19, was born and grew up in Turkey with these memories of her family, and she was apparently feeling as if she had experienced all. Again, as I discussed in section 2.2.4, Gülcan was clearly under the effect of 'collective memory' or 'cultural memory' which holds the body of knowledge through which a group perceives its unity and uniqueness. Indeed, it is like a proof that the objective representation of cultural memory is determined by a kind of identification with a positive meaning ("we are that") or a negative meaning ("this is our opposite")" (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995, pg. 130).

However, memory is quite prone to transformation. As Hall (1996) argues that the identity generates itself in 'routes', that's, the identity is in a constant process of becoming. After crossing the border and reaching to the homeland, in terms of Bulgarian Turks, the reconstruction process of identity occurs as soon as they confront with the native Turks living on the other side of border for a longer time. Bilge explained that confrontation after migration as such;

> For most people, the process was full of painful memories. Although we were Turkish, we were outsiders. We felt excluded. There are still those who cannot call us as Turks or Bulgarian Turks, they just call us Bulgarians. We became Turks in Bulgaria, we became Bulgarians in Turkey. The place where we first settled was Altındağ in İzmir, a neighborhood where people who had immigrated after 1950 lived. However, in the places where there were more native Turks, there were also some who saw us as Bulgarians. But we have got used to that by now.

Relatedly, one of the interviewees, a local resident in Kırklareli, Hikmet, told me that those Bulgarian Turk migrants of those time desired to be accepted in Turkey since they believed that they and Turks in Turkey all had tight connections, like relatives:

> When I met the people who came at that time, I would ask them where they were from in Bulgaria, because I have relatives there too. They all said we are from there, we are relatives, they all wanted to be related to me (laughing), they obviously wanted to be adopted here.

However, Bilge's statements above show how they were excluded by Turks in Turkey. They came here to live their national identity, but the marginalizing attitude, being called Bulgarians, became a memory they described as "painful". On the other

hand, that's the way Turks in Turkey construct their border identities as a result of their encountering an 'other'. They, the Bulgarian Turks are not a national, racial, ethnic or cultural 'others' for native Turks, they're 'others' in the sense of becoming outsiders, being out of both mental and physical border, or being from 'other' land. As Bilge stated they accepted that marginalization, they in a way overcome that othering by acceptance, but that is not an acceptance as they feel belong to neither to Bulgaria nor Turkey. On the contrary, they "have got used to that" as they have constructed their hybrid identities upon being in-between, as they have pulled out their identities from both "roots" and within "routes". Bilge's son Ergün also stated that the conditions for Bulgarian Turks in the homeland were very challenging;

> For instance, my father had gotten a high school diploma in cookery in Bulgaria, but when he came here, he worked as a builder, you know, it was a struggle in life, he worked in many different jobs, and it was not like we had a choice.

This expression, which describes the difficulties they face in the public sphere, shows that they could not find a place for themselves both at the local level and at the bureaucratic level, though they were supposed to have such fundamental human rights. Through those narrations, it is also seen that no memory is fixed or stable, and remains in the past, it reconstructs itself within the frame of space and history, or it always depends on a specialized practice, of "cultivation." (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995, pg. 131). We can say that the Bulgarian Turk immigrants have formed a hybrid identity through the variability of all these interactions and identity perceptions. In addition to their hybrid identity in their 'self', they embody their hybridity with the official IDs of their dual citizenship. Today, most of those who migrated after the 1980s have dual citizenship and have commercial or family ties as well as political ties with Bulgaria. Take Ergün's statements, for instance;

> When I was a child, my mother, sister and I used to go to Bulgaria every summer to visit our grandparents. Now my grandparents are retired, and my mother is taking care of my grandmother in Bulgaria for three years. I have settled here in Kırklareli because I work here. My father has been living with my mother in Bulgaria for 2 years and they come to visit me here from time to time. I am a dual citizen. When the ballot boxes were opened for the Bulgarian elections this year, I voted, for example.

In the same way, Bilge meant that he acquired dual citizenship thanks to Bulgaria's full membership to the EU. Because his Turkish ID did not represent him alone and that he also acquired Bulgarian citizenship to reclaim his childhood, youth, and past;

> Only with the pressure of the European Union, Bulgaria accepted us into citizenship again. Because the European Union forced Bulgaria to give our citizenship rights back as it behaved unjustly toward so many Bulgarian Turks at that time, the EU said to Bulgaria 'You should cover your shame'. At that time, Bulgaria also brought flexibility and said that we can come and get their citizenship again. Then, we received citizenship again thanks to Bulgaria's membership to the European Union. Before that, we couldn't cross the border easily, even if you went to Bulgaria, you couldn't return.

As İçduygu and Sert (2015) state in their study on migration from the Balkans to Turkey; "Following Bulgaria's recent accession to the EU, an increasing number of these Turks of Bulgarian origin have again applied for Bulgarian citizenship so as to obtain the right to travel to Bulgaria and to other EU countries without a visa" (pg.110). The influence of Bulgaria's accession to the European Union on these processes and on their decision to get dual citizenship is undeniable. While these hybrid identities were connected to their roots and preserved their cultural identities that exist in their collective memories after crossing the border and settling in Turkey, they also grasped the importance of having a global citizenship in addition to their legalized national identities. However, they were also aware that this hybrid identity that they achieved in their own selves is still not fully accepted by both nation-states and their power practices. Ergün stated that, despite their having dual citizenship, they are marginalized even today and are subjected to an 'othering' discourse or implication on both sides of border;

> Racism never really ends, though. For example, when I was crossing the border recently, the police asked me something and I tried to answer with my broken Bulgarian. Then he tauntingly said to me 'You have Bulgarian citizenship, but you can't speak Bulgarian'.

On the other hand, Şengül also said "Now we sometimes go to Bulgaria as my father-in-law still has a business there. However, we don't feel any tie to there", that's,

they still travel back and forth to Bulgaria, but for economic reasons or to visit family, and that they do not feel a belonging to the place. Moreover, in the narratives of Bulgarian Turks, Turkishness was told in the light of the identification of national and cultural identity no matter where those people reside in. On the other hand, we see that both countries make use of the in-betweenness of those immigrant subjects as a tool for extending and proving their sovereignty. Bilge and Ali, who are older than the other interlocutors, said that during the talks at that time between the two countries as well, their condition turned into a bargaining chip;

> Bilge: The Turks were keeping Bulgaria alive, their economy collapsed after we left. Özal said to Bulgaria then; '*I will not take your land; I will take your economy*'.
>
> Ali: In the 1980s, they (the Bulgarian government) wanted to make everyone Bulgarian, there were people among Turks who refused that, but some people chose the Bulgarian names with fear. At that time, a dialogue took place between Kenan Evren and the President of Bulgaria. Bulgarian president said, '*We have socialism, we govern the country as how our people want, no one will come to your country, even if you open the border'*, and Kenan Evren said, "*Open the borders, we will see who will come, who won't.*" They opened the border gates in 1989, and 350.000 people came to Turkey.

As explained in the 'Population Exchanges Between Turkey and Bulgaria in Early Twentieth Century' chapter in detail, immigrants from Bulgaria are generally welcomed by Turkish governments till the end of the 1980s. As I have already quoted from Ayhan Aktar (2001), since the beginning of the twentieth century in Thrace and throughout Anatolia, non-Muslims and other ethnic minorities were considered as 'other' of the country and were eliminated, as in the Thrace Events of 1934.Whatever the motivation for sending these minorities away was at the time, we can say that the motivation for accepting Bulgarian Turks as 'us' in all these processes was the same. Namely, the settlement laws applied to those immigrants helped them to find permanent residence in the country. However, the main objective of that kind of laws was not just to embrace our 'racial kin' but to distribute the Bulgarian Turks immigrant population equally along Anatolia, by which it was aimed to strengthen the Turkish culture as those immigrants are loyal to Turkish identity and culture, and also the Turkish government wanted to operate the Anatolian lands effectively by Bulgarian Turks' workforce and to increase the homogeneity of the state where minorities have

been a problem all the time. One of my interlocutors Ali, who is in his seventies told me about how they were settled when they first crossed the border;

> On the Turkish side, the officers were asking whether there is anybody who waits for us in Turkey. If you don't know anybody, the officers sent you to the camps around the border, in Edirne and Kırklareli. There was a camp in Kavaklı, Kırklareli. We stayed in the camp for just a very short time, because if anyone wanted to leave the camp and move elsewhere, the state covered their rent for six months or a year …I was a farmer in Bulgaria, and we were harvesting tobacco, I had a certificate in farming when I was in Bulgaria, that's why, the Turkish state wanted to send me to Tokat to do the same job there.

In one of the interviews conducted with the locals in terms of how they confronted the Bulgarian Turk immigrants came at the last years of 1980s. Hikmet stated;

> We took care of them very much at first[10]. Of course, their situation was not good. The first migrants in 1989 stayed in a high school dormitory here. Then, as their numbers increased, a camp was established in Kavaklı and they stayed there. The conditions there were not very good, that's what they said. But our state gave them permission to go to their relatives in Turkey if they had relatives in any city. Houses were built for those who stayed in Kırklareli, we call them migrant houses. Some of them rented houses and found jobs in the city with their own means. Then there were those who saved money, worked in construction and built their own houses. For example, one of them was working as a janitor in my apartment building. The man had a 3-story building and a business in Bulgaria before migration but he left it and came to Kırklareli to work as a janitor. Of course, it was not easy for them. There were also some who returned when conditions in Bulgaria improved.

Consequently, Danış and Parla (2009) argue the solidarity based on 'kinship' towards Bulgarian Turks in the late 80s and early 90s has been the last example of the hospitable policy of Turkey in the acceptance of migrants and refugees. In other words, after that date, border crossers, whether migrants or refugees, were no longer welcomed with such hospitality. Besides, although those Bulgarian Turks were

[10] "İlk başta onlara çok sahip çıktık."

welcomed by the Turkish government at that time, they were in a way marginalized in public places. In fact, as Danış and Parla (2009) claim, those Bulgarian Turks were persecuted in Bulgaria as they were Turks, and they were also marginalized in Turkey as they were Bulgarian immigrants. After crossing the Turkish-Bulgarian border, their encounters with Turks in Turkey, their cultural ties with both Turkey and Bulgaria, but feeling closer to Turkey nationally, led to a hybridization of their identities both culturally and nationally.

4.2.2. Daily Cross-Border Shoppers from Bulgaria

In this section, I will try to explain the reasons and the characteristics of the border that have led to the emergence of a new category of other, that's, Bulgarian shoppers - different from Bulgarian Turks - on the Turkish-Bulgarian border. In doing so, I will discuss concepts such as border trade, cross-border shopping, the border city as a tourist destination, and how this new category of 'other' reveals in the local community in the distinction between 'us' and 'them', which is different from the distinction of 'us' from early Bulgarian Turk immigrants as 'others'.

4.2.2.1. Border Trade and Cross-Border Shopping at the Border between Turkey and Bulgaria

Border trade, cross-border trade, or international trade at the border means the exchange of goods and services between two neighboring countries sharing the same border. It has a crucial role in terms of economic growth and social ties between two countries.

Turkey is an important trade partner of Bulgaria. After EU membership of Bulgaria in 2007, it has further strengthened its position as Turkey's gateway to Europe. A large part of Turkey's trade with European countries is transported by road using the Bulgarian route. It is also very close to Turkey's production centers such as İstanbul, Kocaeli, and Bursa. Since 2007, Bulgaria's EU membership and its inclusion in the customs union between Turkey and the EU, with zeroing of customs duties in bilateral trade, and the decrease in corporate and income tax rates in Bulgaria to ten percent, make Bulgaria more attractive for Turkish investors. While the import rate of Bulgaria from Turkey was 4.8% in 2011, this rate has increased to 7.0% according to 2020 data (Türkiye İhracatçılar Meclisi, 2021). Furthermore, considering the export

rates to Europe via Bulgaria-Turkey highways, it is understood that the border traffic between the two countries is very intense.

Like cross-border trade, cross-border shopping is also motivated by a combination of factors. These factors range from lower prices, lucrative currency exchanges, and broad product selection, to being familiar and within a proximate distance, and/or to feel a sense of excitement due to having the chance to spend leisure time in the authenticity of the other side (Prokkola, 2010; Gelbman & Schweitzer, 2023; Makkonen, 2023). Hence, the direction of shopping tourism between two neighboring countries that use different currencies might well be explained by which country's currency is more valuable. Border crossers tend to behave rationally and buy goods that are at lower prices than in their home country. They are well aware that, their savings outweigh the actual costs of their travel expenditures even if they purchase common consumer goods (Makkonen, 2023, pg. 272). Nevertheless, the profit from this situation is not one-sided. This is because cross-border shoppers, who are more mobile, buy goods at cheaper prices and leave a large amount of foreign currency to the destination country. Although border regions are accepted as the periphery of a state and politicians and decision-makers do not invest as much in these places. Turkey offers citizens of neighboring countries - especially those on its EU borders - amenities such as the use of high-tech equipment at border crossings and exemption from visa requirements for entry and exit, which ensures the inflow of foreign currency, regardless of whether the situation is equal and reciprocal for its own citizens.

4.2.2.2. Rationales for Cross-Border Shopping

Based on media reports about Bulgarian shoppers in the town, it can be said that cross-border shopping is a 'shopping tourism' on the Turkish side of the border, in Kırklareli. Unlike the idea of 'tourist shopping' which connotes shopping as a secondary travel activity that is often decided on after being in a destination for other primary reasons, 'shopping tourism' implies retail as the main reason for travel and choice of destination. (Makkonen, 2023, pg.270) That kind of shopping-oriented tourism has inevitably led the way to transformation of the city's important business centers such as stores, supermarkets, restaurants, cafes, hotels, and bakeries, and in the one and only mall that has undergone a major change and transformation. Kırklareli,

until 2022, was one of a few cities in Turkey that does not have a mall or shopping center. However, starting the construction project in 2020, the biggest supermarket (Migros) located at the entrance of the city from the İstanbul side has been transformed into a mall. The mall, called 'Mini Mall', has been built in the place of the biggest supermarket in the city. The supermarket has turned into a smaller but compact shopping place inside the mall where a lot of new restaurants, cafés and clothing, furnishing, and other household goods stores such as Tavuk Dünyası, KFC, Köfteci Yusuf, Starbucks, Mavi Jeans, Madame Coco, and Koçtaş have opened.

When we specifically examined the ways in which Bulgarian customers cross the border to shop in Kırklareli, we see that those trips are made by automobiles or tour buses. Elements of familiarity, similarity and proximity that exist between Turkey and Bulgaria have contributed historically for the resulting cross-border movements. However, the economic advantages have always been the main motivation that facilitates the frequent shopping tourism of people between the two countries. Economic factors also determine which side of the border these mobilities move towards. Cross-border movement of people and tourism activities are apparently accelerated by economic factors for one side of border while it may create barriers for the other side. Namely, because of differences in purchasing power parity, the shopping or leisure tourists move from wealthier countries towards poorer destinations (Hannonen & Prokkola, 2023, pg. 114).

In other words, the economic differences between two neighboring countries are the main determiners of border openness. According to Boehmer and Peña (2012); "The larger the income gap between neighboring states, the less open the wealthier states will be to the people of the poorer neighbor, but the more open the poorer state will be to people from the richer nation" (pg.279). That's why, this direction of mobility between two neighboring countries, Turkey and Bulgaria, which use different currencies might well be explained by which country's currency is more valuable. For instance, before 2010, one could buy a BGL (Bulgarian leva) for less than one TRY (Turkish Lira), but after 2010, the BGL started to gain value. When I started to do the fieldwork for this study in the last months of 2022, one BGL corresponded to about ten TRY. On 1 December 2023, just about one year later, one BGL equals to about sixteen TRY (Google Finans, copied on 1 December 2023). Therefore, there was a reverse cross-border shopping over the years. However, as the value of the Bulgarian

leva began to increase, Bulgarian are attracted to Turkey, especially to the border provinces like Edirne and Kırklareli for economic and recreational purposes, and the number of departures increases dramatically, especially from the end of 2021 to these days. Therefore, the residents and tradesmen in Kırklareli are gaining familiarity with Bulgarian shoppers who cross the border by cars or tour buses to shop across the city, in local markets, corner stores, jewellery stores, greengrocers and malls. The interviews conducted among residents and shopkeepers (*esnaf*) pointed to similar observations regarding this process. As Meltem, the administrative manager of the mall asserted;

> Because the product they buy is very cheap for them…Due to the exchange rate, their arrivals have increased a lot, even the pandemic (Covid-19) did not prevent these visits, and the recent visa exemption has made it very convenient for them.

In another interview, Özlem, the store manager of a clothing brand, stated;

> The depreciation of the Turkish currency has greatly affected our business. We worked only for Bulgarians during the pandemic… There are the sales targets given to us by the firm, thanks to the Bulgarians, we reach these targets, the local people complain, but we are very satisfied. We even think of opening an extra store for the home section of our clothing store, they have been coming a lot, especially during the pandemic and recently.

In all border studies, it is possible to see discussions about situations such as war, attack, and epidemics that would create a shock effect on the physical and psychological permeability of the border. But how such shock factors affect each border can also vary. From Meltem and Özlem's statements on the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on border crossings, it might be detected that even such a serious pandemic did not affect the border crossings of Bulgarians. In fact, the year 2020, when this study began, coincides with the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, a very serious flu pandemic worldwide. For the next year and a half or so, to prevent the spread of the pandemic rapidly, all states closed their borders. Therefore, until the last months of 2021, the border crossings between the two neighbouring countries were quite static. Nevertheless, during November 2021 due to the Christmas holiday of Bulgarians, there was a phenomenally rapid and steady increase in the number of Bulgarian cross-shoppers, all of which were frequently published in different national newspapers and

broadcast on TV. The rapid increase of that time continued in the Spring months because the impact of the pandemic was diminishing. However, there were some ruptures in January 2022 because the Bulgarian Ministry of Health included Turkey among the red zone countries due to the increasing Covid-19 cases, that is, a global infectious disease outbreak with nearly 550,000 cases and around 25,000 deaths worldwide. Due to the low vaccination rate in their country, Bulgaria has required those who entered Bulgaria after January 20, 2022, to undergo a mandatory PCR test together with the vaccination certificate. Therefore, the flow of cross-border buyers from Bulgaria to Kırklareli was stopped for a while because the Bulgarian side demanded a PCR test for 600 TRY for the crossing from Turkey to Bulgaria. According to the shopkeepers of Kırklareli, the number of Bulgarian tourists has decreased by one third, especially on weekends. The shopkeepers said that they hoarded goods for the expected Bulgarian buyers and that the products remained unsold and even spoiled. Fortunately, after April 13, 2022, it is no longer necessary to present a Covid-19 vaccination certificate, test or other document proving that the disease has been overcome when travelling from Turkey to Bulgaria.

By the way, the high number of Bulgarian shoppers in Kırklareli cannot be explained only by the depreciation of TRY against BLG. Because, apart from this economic factor, one of the main factors enabling this intensity is the visa and passport exemption applied to Bulgarians. Cross-border shopping tourism develops and thrives if borders are sufficiently permeable both physically and psychologically. Besides, legal regulations applied at the customs gates and for visa and passport requirements are also effective in facilitating shopping tourism between the borders. In this context, the Turkish side of the border has taken a step that significantly affects both the physical, psychological, and paperwork permeability of the border for Bulgarians. On July 27, 2022, by the rule that came into force by the dictate of the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Bulgarian citizens gained the right to enter Turkey even without a passport, but only with their IDs. Within the scope of this decision, it is understood that Bulgarian citizens will be able to enter Turkey with an identity card provided that it is limited to 90 days in every 180 days. The exemption has certainly created a positive physical and psychological effect for Bulgarians and a financial effect for the merchants in the city in general. The shop assistant of a furniture store, Hülya also asserted the positive affect of visa exemption for their business by saying;

“Since May 2022, the potential of Bulgarian customers has increased a lot and continued to increase with visa exemption later”. Likewise, in another interview I did at the store of a jeans brand in the shopping mall, the young shop assistant, Esra said; “This shopping tendency has increased so much for one and a half year, and it has increased even more with the visa exemption”. Furthermore, the owner of a curtain store in the city center, Murat remarked; “Now, due to their visa-free or passport-free entry and the good condition of our highways, they (Bulgarians) get their needs much cheaper here or sometimes from İstanbul”.

In addition to all the advantages of visa-exemption, currency rates, and getting rid of Covid-19 obligations, being familiar with the region and aware of the product range in Turkey and being able to buy those high-quality products cheaply is the most important pull factors for Bulgarians (Makkonen, 2023, pg.271). They purchase very different kinds of goods like food, including fruit, vegetables, dairy products, bread, dry foods, canned goods, jam, and pickles, as well as special Turkish desserts such as *baklava* (a Turkish dessert), *pişmaniye* (Turkish fairy floss) and *lokum* (Turkish delight) or clothes, and cleaning products. In an interview, the owner of a famous *baklava* brand store in Kırklareli, since *baklava* is one of the most preferred foodstuffs by Bulgarians who come for shopping, Mustafa started his speech by expressing his satisfaction about the number of Bulgarian shoppers and continued with the effect of the spatial and cultural proximity, that is, shopping here for Bulgarians is advantageous in every aspect;

> In fact, 70-80 percent of our customers are Bulgarian…Since cultures are very close, most of them know what we eat, and what we drink…They come here for shopping because it is a big advantage for them. Actually the calculation is simple. The tank of a car can be filled for 200 leva in Bulgaria, a tank can be filled for 100 leva here, and the remaining 100 leva of the Bulgarian is 1000 liras in Turkey. And with that money he can buy everything from kitchen shopping to clothes shopping here. Then when he goes home, everything he eats, and drinks here is free. I don't know whether a Bulgarian buys a tank of petrol once a month or every two weeks, but I know that every time a Bulgarian comes to Turkey he makes at least 100 leva profit, which equals to 1000 lira. That is also a very good money for kitchen shopping, or to spend in the market here... They come to spend money, but they also earn money (He laughs).

As understood from the comments of Mustafa, one of the most frequently discussed reasons for cross-border shopping is differences in prices. Therefore, border shoppers tend to behave rationally and buy goods at lower prices than in their home country. They are well aware that their savings outweigh the actual costs of their travel expenditures even if they purchase common consumer goods (Makkonen, 2023). In the interviews, shoppers who came from Bulgaria pointed to the fact that the reason they crossed the border for shopping was because there was a larger variety of products in Kırklareli, and they were cheaper for them, they wanted to buy local products that they were not be able to find in Bulgaria, and they just wanted to spend their leisure-time doing shopping. Besides, they stated that they were pleased by the service of shopkeepers and stores, they might have the chance of getting active promotions in malls and bigger stores, and they had a chance to have a nice and cheap dinner with their family and friends. For instance, in the words of Rositsa, a Bulgarian shopper who came to the mall with her husband and daughter;

> Crossing the border is so easy and it is an advantage. We do not have any problems crossing the border, we can cross with ID… To Kırklareli we usually come for shopping, we buy food, cheese, vegetables, fruit, dairy products, baklava, etc. When we eat dinner and dessert for the three of us here, it costs only fifty Leva, which is very advantageous for us.

The family was also aware of the advantages of improvements in both visa regulations and cross-border infrastructure such as roads, and gates. The husband Svetoslav agreed with his wife Rositsa and said;

> There is a very big change in the border. Previously, the border was too strong, and the documents, the people, no one could speak English. Now it is easy, they speak English and help us… Kırklareli is small, but the small cities in Turkey are even bigger than our big cities in Bulgaria. You know, in Sofia, the capital city, the population is only 3 million. Burgas, which is the nearest to the Turkey border, is also a small city. We come to shop here in Kırklareli mostly for food and cleaning products. Prices here are lower than in Bulgaria.

Like this family, my other interlocutors from Bulgaria also stated the significance of the proximity of the border and the money and time they spend to cross

the border. For instance, a Turkish couple from Burgas, Bulgaria, Hasan and Fatma stated;

> We live in Burgas district in Bulgaria, close to the border. We come here as the prices are reasonable…we passed from the border gates directly with our passports. Visa exemption actually didn't change anything. We already use our passports in every pass… In Kırklareli, we generally go to the mall, and to the city center. We buy cleaning products and detergents.

Apart from the effect of lower prices of a variety of products, cross-border shopping also satisfies their need for relaxation, spending their leisure time in the authenticity of the place. Another man, a Bulgarian Turk, Şahin from Varna emphasized that as such;

> I prefer Kırklareli for shopping because Edirne is very crowded. We came two days ago and stayed in a hotel with my wife, a very nice place in the city center. We walked around the city, we went to dinner, and we went to a cafe. This is our second visit to Kırklareli.

Similarly, I had the chance of interviewing a Bulgarian tour guide, Dimitır in the mall in Kırklareli, he also emphasized the proximity of Kırklareli to Bulgaria and how they took the advantage of it at the end of each tour to Turkey;

> Kırklareli is like the last stop for us before going to Bulgaria. There are tours we organize to various parts of Turkey, places such as Antep, Urfa, Göbeklitepe, Hatay, and Kapadokya, and on the way back, the tour buses stop in Kırklareli, where tourists eat, there are very good meatball restaurants here, the tourists eat here, and they do the last shopping. It's a small place, but it's cheap and good.

The statements by Dimitır above justifies that; "The relationship between tourism and international borders is a fundamental one: travel almost always involves crossing some political or other border, and borderlands are often the first or last areas of a state that travellers see" (Prokkola, 2010, pg, 221). The factors beyond the economic and structural advantage of border towns can be exemplified as the warm atmospheres of restaurants or other facilities in Kırklareli, as well as being very close to Bulgaria. For instance, Zehra, a Bulgarian Turk woman, whose family lives in İstanbul, expresses the reasons why they stopped by Kırklareli as such:

I often go to İstanbul because my family lives there. My parents moved to İstanbul a few years ago because my father started a business there. In Bulgaria, we live in Varna. We use Dereköy border gate generally while we are going to İstanbul, and like today we stop by Kırklareli for shopping and eating, since it is cheap and nice. We eat here in a restaurant before we leave the country.

In conclusion, cross-border shopping, in general as well as in our study area of Kırklareli, is motivated by a combination of factors. Additionally, legal regulations of the passport and visa requirements and physical improvements of road conditions and customs gates make cross-border shopping convenient and accessible to Bulgarian customers. On the other hand, it is necessary to consider the potential impacts of this one-way cross-border shopping on the locals in Kırklareli in particular. That's why, in the following section, I aim to discuss the issue through the lens of local merchants, customers and residents who feel disadvantaged and as outsiders of their own place, or even inferior in some cases, and how they position their 'self' in comparison to the Bulgarian 'others' coming from the European side of the border.

4.2.2.3. Reactions of the Locals to the European 'Other': "We don't want to be the A101[11] of Europe"

Although the financial advantage of the increase of cross-border shopping in a place is clear as I stated above, rises in the amount of cross-border shopping may result in outrageous overpriced retail goods in the destination area, which substantially cause worry among the local consumers. Therefore, they may complain about the constant increase in prices or the congestion in shopping centres. It is possible to see negative effects and reactions towards cross-border shopping in many border regions like at the borders between Canada and the US, the US and Mexico, or Hong Kong and Macau (Timothy&Butler, 1995; Makkonen, 2023). As in the examples above, at the border between Turkey and Bulgaria, the influx of Bulgarian shopping tourists has brought about a renewal process, especially in shopping places, hotels, other accommodation centers, restaurants, and cafes in Kırklareli, and it satisfies the merchants, yet it is understood that local people are not very happy with the situation. The main factor that

11 A101 is a discount retailer market that provides cost-effective consumables at affordable prices throughout Turkey.

disturbs local customers is the density of shopping places because of Bulgarian shoppers *(see Figure 8).*

Figure 8: Random photos by Kırklareli residents complaining about the density of Bulgarian shoppers in the Migros supermarket and about feeling alienated in Kırklareli, 2021-2022



Source: Instagram posts of Kırklarelians taken with permission, provided that the user names is not used (2021-2022).

Apparently, the local people object to that for two reasons: first, they lose a lot of time buying any product in the marketplaces and supermarkets. Since shopping for the locals is not a leisure activity, unlike Bulgarians, it becomes time-consuming. Second, the products are usually sold at high prices and even if there is a discount, the discounted products are sold out very quickly. In other words, the capitalist economy works to the disadvantage of the locals more due to the high demand from outsiders. This was something I heard in many meetings I had with shopkeepers in Kırklareli about the reactions and complaints of local people. Take the ones who are shop assistants and managers in different stores around the city;

> Meltem: I saw one of the Bulgarian customers bought pistachio from Migros, and it cost 800 liras, which captured the attention of our Turkish customers, especially the one who could only buy a kg of potatoes… Being in a border city has a commercial advantage, but we can say it's a disadvantage for the public because prices never drop. Market prices continue to rise as they (the Bulgarians) shop. The

shopkeepers are not even interested in their own citizens. You become like a foreigner in your own country.

Özlem: There are the sales targets given to us by the firm, thanks to the Bulgarians, we reach these targets, the local people complain, but we are very satisfied…The local people react very much to us, they claim that we give priority to the Bulgarians while shopping, or that we take care of Bulgarian customers more.

Mustafa: Local people who see the prices (of *baklava*) say only Bulgarians can buy this.

Hülya: Local customers blame us as we take care of Bulgarian customers more, but honestly instead of dealing with Turkish customers who are just looking, we prefer to help the customer (Bulgarians) who will definitely buy something.

Yasemin: As the country's economy has been turned upside down during the pandemic for the last 2-3 years, we are literally being looted (by Bulgarian shoppers). While the gates were open, during the pandemic, they flooded to our shopping places. I couldn't find tea in the supermarket next to my house, I couldn't find pasta, I must confess that I thought that famine was coming… And there is no respect for the local customers, some shopkeepers think that their income will be permanent only with people coming from abroad. I am sad, it makes me very sad that the local shopkeepers dismiss their own people so much and care so much about our guests coming from abroad.

Additionally, when we look upon the other side of the coin, I mean, from the perspectives of shopkeepers and traders on the Bulgarian side, it creates what Makkonen calls the "substitution effect" (2023, pg.274). This effect, according to Makkonen, is caused by the fact the customers' cross-border purchases are higher than their purchases in their home country, which has a negative impact on local producers and traders. In my interviews, people who come from Bulgaria and shop in Kırklareli did not mention about that, which is probably because they are consumers not producers and traders in Bulgaria, but some of the Kırklarelian shopkeepers who have connections with Bulgaria stated that the Bulgarian shopkeepers complain a lot about this situation. For instance, the owner of famous *baklava* brand store, Mustafa stated;

Our people were going there (Bulgaria) before, all Kırklareli was going there when the Leva was low. Now, they (Bulgarians) all come here for shopping. That's why,

the shopkeepers in Bulgaria are all uncomfortable with this, they say. As far as I hear from the customers coming here, the Bulgarians especially the tradesmen, hotel owners, etc. want us (Turks) to go to Bulgaria, too. Furthermore, they put pressure on the Bulgarian government to abolish the visa requirement for Turkey but the European Union will not allow such a permission for Turks, they say so.

Namely, this one-way movement, that's "unidirectional" cross-border shopping and unequal distribution of profits sparks off reactions from both local-residents in Kırklareli and the disadvantaged merchants in Bulgaria. Furthermore, as it is understood from Mustafa's statements that unequal distribution of profits leads to dissatisfaction and stimulates discussions and demands for laws and regulations, especially on the Bulgarian side (Makkonen, 2023). In addition, while the tradesmen in Kırklareli are economically quite satisfied with Bulgarian customers, it is clear that this one-sided mobility makes the distinction between 'our' poorer country and 'their' wealthier country and causes the feeling of inequality to be more visible between the communities. In my interview, Meltem, the administrative manager of the Mall stated;

We just can't go abroad comfortably; we can't buy anything there. In fact, this is not a complaint against them, I have not seen any rudeness or trouble from Bulgarians. They come with a focus on shopping, they do their shopping, they eat their meals and they go… Our perception of the border is purely shopping-oriented right now, but I myself am a Yugoslav immigrant, my father is from Yugoslavia, but I have never been to the other side of the border. If we want to go there, we are supposed to have a lot of things like passports and visas.

That's to say, like other cases across the world, Paasi reflects (Paasi et al. 2019), border is so penumbral that it seems invisible and soft for Bulgarians and yet it appears a barrier for the locals in Kırklareli. In another interview, Şeyma, the store manager of one of the biggest clothing stores in the city centre in Kırklareli, implied that the one-way mobility on this border was due to the economic and political differences between the two countries and that she felt like a foreigner in her own place;

In fact, they (Bulgarians) only come for shopping…but we never went there, because everything is expensive for us, they ask for a visa, passport, and stamp fee, I want to go there, but right now it is very difficult... Think about it, we live in

> Turkey, but we can neither dress well, eat good quality food nor do good quality social activity as they(Bulgarians) can do. When we think about it, it is bad. Soon they will be locals and we will be foreigners.

Interestingly, at the beginning of this study, I assumed that the locals and the shopkeepers would categorize the Bulgarians as the 'others', but in the course of this ethnographic study, I have observed that the locals' feelings are rather directed toward themselves and they construct themselves as the 'others' towards a better-off group. In other words, the conclusion can be drawn that, the locals do not actually exclude the Bulgarians as outsiders, foreigners or, as 'others', but rather feel themselves as excluded. In contrast to the exclusionary attitude by the local community towards other categories of foreigners such as early Bulgarian Turk immigrants or so-called refugees and illegal immigrants, it is possible to see the feeling of exclusion of the insiders due to the existence of a more advantageous European 'other' in their territory. As Paasi (1996) asserts in his article on inclusion, exclusion, and territorial identities, "even if boundaries are always more or less arbitrary lines between territorial entities, they may have deep symbolic and historical meanings for social communities, and they may also generate action" (pg.3). While this border in cross-border shopping is supposed to appear as a tool of economic development and to become the dynamic lines of integration where people, histories and economies meet, it has created a contrast between the two neighboring communities in terms of 'economic ability to travel' and 'right to travel'. For instance, in her interview, Yasemin, a store manager of a household store in the mall, stated;

> Being a border city and not being able to cross the border as we wish is a big disadvantage. Actually, being close to the border is an advantage if you have a visa and passport. However, they (Bulgarians) are much more advantageous, I'm jealous, frankly…Of course, imports and exports are good things, and the inflowing of money is a very good thing, but it should be on equal terms.

As Paasi (1996) explained with the concept of "mental maps", that's, the maps in the mind, there are different conceptions of the border by the individuals living on either side of it (pg.22). The other side of the border, though it is physically proximate, can be mentally distant. Hence, the meaning attributed to borders can differ from each other according to in which geography one stands. Likewise, in the interview, Murat, the owner of a curtain store in the city center of Kırklareli, asserted;

> I feel sad when I think of our own children. I mean, geography is destiny. You know, about a decade ago, we went to Bulgaria with our families, we ate and drank in good restaurants there, we did some shopping, we went to the most elegant restaurant close to us on the map, we ate whatever we wanted, and it only cost for 400 liras, but today the situation has been reversed.

Both Murat and Şeyma implied the same feeling of exclusion in their place with their statements such as, "geography is destiny" or "soon, they will be locals and we will be foreigners". Besides that, in the interview, Hülya in a furniture store, implied that the one-way mobility on this border was not acceptable and that she felt like a foreigner serving foreigners in Turkey;

> Excuse my French but, my country has turned into a 'yol geçen hanı'[12], and I am the one who gives service. It would be ridiculous to expect the opposite will happen, I mean, no one should hope that they (Bulgarians) will give us visa exemption as well. Fundamental changes are required here, and all take at least 20 years. I don't think that we have any ties other than shopping. They are making use of Turkey now and at least they thank us for the service.

Thus, it is easy to detect the feeling of being disadvantaged due to being on the poorer side of the border from those statements above. One can argue that the attitude towards Bulgarians here is a different kind of marginalization. The fact that Bulgarian shoppers are the advantaged group from the other side of the border make the locals aware of their alienation in their own community. Clearly seen, that apparent inequality in terms of mobility and shopping between two neighboring countries results in resentment and frustration on the one side. As Aynur added, the shop assistant in the furniture store, about inequalities between 'them' and 'us' by saying; "I've never been there, for example, but I would like to go while they're coming and going like this".

The main reason for this, according to the interviews of locals and Bulgarian shoppers, is Bulgaria's accession to the European Union. That is simply because of the fact that Bulgaria's EU membership has inevitably made this border also an EU border and this border has all the characteristics of a typical EU border. Likewise, that feeling

[12] A Turkish idiom which means a place where passengers frequently stop by.

of inferiority, or being marginalized as the 'other' of Europe appears in Filiz's statement, who is the manager of a supermarket in the mall. In her words;

> Beyond the economic gain that we get thanks to the Bulgarians, I would like to express my discomfort, not only as a supermarket manager but also as a citizen, we don't want to be the A101 of Europe.[13]

Cross-border shopping is an issue with its potential advantages and disadvantages from the viewpoint of benefiting one side of the border and the detriments of the other. However, the ultimate goal of cross-border shopping should be for the mutual- if not entirely equitable- benefit of both communities on each side of the border. All in all, the complaints or dissatisfactions of the locals are not towards the Bulgarian shoppers or the border itself. Rather, it is a complaint about the ways in which authorities manage the border and the power relations between countries. These unfair conditions pose intricate dilemmas for policymakers concerning the augmentation of cross-border fluidity while retaining state boundaries and creating policies that benefit some groups at the expense of others. In fact, the statements above clearly demonstrate the marginalization of those who fall outside of desirable categories. We see the exclusionary practices or borders and unequal power dynamics at the threshold of the border of EU countries. In short, we again foresee that the dream of a borderless world is a completely distant one. As Paasi et. al. claims "discriminatory practices of mobility regimes that still render many people immobile in a supposedly interconnected global village" (2019, pg.154).

For a considerable amount of time, the EU's primary aim has been to ensure the mobility of goods and individuals, albeit exclusively for a specific category of individuals. Consequently, immigrants are confronted with the inherent brutality and inequity of the external borders of the EU (Jones, 2012). Unfortunately, this has become somewhat of a common situation. However, in light of the data I obtained in this study, it is understood that the local people living on the non-European Turkish side of the border, in Kırklareli are confronted with the fact that they are also the 'other' at the border of Europe. In other words, local-residents in Kırklareli are being aware that they are not Europeanized after their confrontation with Bulgarian shoppers who come easily due to their economic power, and visa liberalization, all in all, as being

[13] Avrupa'nın A101'i olmak istemiyoruz.

from a member country of the EU. It is clear that while the border serves as an entry point for affluent tourists and shoppers, it persists as an increasingly impenetrable obstacle for migrants from third-world countries first and for Turks as non-Europeans second.

To be concluded, Bulgarian shoppers in Kırklareli clearly illustrate to the locals the distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’, that’s, in terms of ethnic, national, economic, and cultural differences. However, Bulgarians as foreigners in the local land never appear as marginalized or excluded others, but rather as the 'other' who reminds the locals who are the potential 'other' on the border of Europe. As stated before, free mobility and right to travel have been issued as rights to EU citizens especially since the 1993 Maastricht Treaty and the declaration of the Schengen common travel area in 1995. However, the exclusionary practices and unequal power dynamics found at the threshold between the EU and non-European countries are of special importance for Kırklareli which rests on the border between Turkey and Bulgaria, a member of the EU.

4.2.3. Europeanized Borders as Determiners of a ‘New Other’

There are many 'others' who try to cross the border, but they are defined in very different ways. That is, while the locals in their own country feel alienated by the presence of the better-off European 'others', the illegal migrants encountered at the border, most of whom are from Syria or Afghanistan, are on a completely different level in the hierarchy of otherness. To understand the legal rights of migrants apprehended at the Turkish-Bulgarian border, to remove the confusion that may arise from the fact that these 'others', who are labelled as refugees by the public, are referred to as irregular migrants or illegal migrants by official institutions and the media, and to understand the profiles of migrants apprehended at this border, I will begin this section with an interview with a migration expert from the Kırklareli Provincial Migration Office. After that, it would be best to present a more theoretical analysis through the help of social theorist Agamben’ ‘Bare Life’ to illustrate the deep-rooted social, political, and ethical complexity of the situation.

4.2.3.1. The Problematic Naming of Refugees and Illegal Immigrants in Kırklareli

The so-called ‘refugees’ in Turkey from different countries of Africa and the Middle East, in particular Syrian and Afghan immigrants, who make up a large proportion of irregular migrants in Turkey, want to use the Turkish-Bulgarian border for their transition to Europe. However, through this study, I noticed that there is confusion in the Turkish literature and political discourse on the concept of 'refugee' and how it is perceived by the public. I realized that I needed to conduct research on how we should define these people we encounter at the border, who are often called as refugees by the public and as illegal immigrants in the media. I arranged an appointment with an immigration expert at the Provincial Migration Office in Kırklareli. I asked how they define the immigrants caught at the border since there is conceptual confusion about naming these people, whether we should call them refugees, illegal migrants, or transit migrants. The expert explained;

> There are very mixed profiles, there is a group we call transit, for example, a Moroccan enters the country legally, and two days later he can be caught trying to exit illegally at the border. This is an example of using our country as a transit country. But if our country is actually a destination country, for example if a Syrian comes here for five years and at the end of the five years perhaps has a financial problem, or if he has a relative in Germany, or if it seems more attractive to go to Europe, he can also try to leave illegally. In fact, while our country is a target country for him and when he is in a settled position, he can suddenly put another country in the position of target and try to make an illegal exit and turn himself into an irregular immigrant. In other words, a Syrian, as I mentioned, or a Moroccan can be like this. Therefore, there are no single types of immigrants. An Afghan person, who can take an international protection status with risk of being killed by the Taliban in his country, can also attempt an illegal exit. It may be a Syrian under temporary protection, or it may be a foreigner who has never been registered at all. As I said, one can be under temporary protection, he can benefit from health facilities, can maintain himself somehow, he has a house, he has set in his way here in a way, but after a while, something may be insufficient for him or he may want better conditions, so he can attempt an illegal exit. That's why there isn't a single type, we can encounter irregular migrants with many statuses at the border.

In fact, calling someone a refugee, legally and politically, indicates the responsibilities that the country in which they reside has to fulfill towards them. All these complex categories or prevention labeling them as 'refugees' is based on the agreements signed between Turkey and the United Nations and European Union since the 1951 Geneva Convention, which I explained in detail in subchapter, 2.3.3.1. Legal Status of Refugees in Turkey to explicate the processes of the kind of refugee treaties signed by Turkey side and her obligation exposed by EU implications.

All in all, all migrants who are apprehended at Turkey's borders, regardless of whether they were previously under temporary protection or whether they are immigrants using Turkey as a transit country, if they are apprehended at the border to try the illegal border crossing, are classified as 'illegal immigrants' and taken to one of the removal centers established in Turkey. The illegal exit attempts of immigrants from the border is a situation that significantly changes their politic and legal status. It is the responsibility of the Migration Management offices to place them in a removal center where they can either be repatriated to their country of origin or determine their future legal status in Turkey. The migration expert that I interviewed in Kırklareli provincial migration management explained that process as such;

> After a person is caught by law enforcement, fingerprints are taken, and the interviews and body scans, etc. are all done. After all the procedures are completed, the assault and force report[14] is prepared and he/she is accompanied by police and the officers of our center to the removal center in Pehlivanköy. A deportation decision is made for there, and he/she is kept in that center under administrative detention until he/she is deported. I mean, after the police finish their work, they bring immigrants to us, after which the deportation process is managed by us.

She also stated that not all illegal immigrants are obliged to be sent to their country of origin, some may be released from the center in some cases and she asserted;

> For example, the deportation process of a person cannot be completed immediately. If we consider that the person is not in danger of absconding, we can terminate their administrative detention in accordance with Article 57/a of the law and release them

[14] "Darp-cebir raporu" in Turkish.

from the center with the approval of our Presidency in Ankara, but we subject the person to the signature requirement. We receive their addresses and biometric data and subject the person to a signature requirement once a week, every two weeks or monthly. These people come here in order to validate their fingerprints.

In the light of all this information, we can now say that it is clear that these immigrant typologies encountered at the borders of Turkey can not be legally categorized as refugees. Therefore, in this study, the terms such as refugee used by locals in general, asylum seekers in political discourse, or irregular, transit and illegal immigrants will be used interchangeably but basically in the sense of 'irregular/illegal migrants' encountered along the border between Turkey and Bulgaria.

4.2.3.2. Pehlivanköy Removal Centre

The EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement was signed on December 16, 2013 and thirty removal centers were established in Turkey. One of them is the Pehlivanköy Removal Center in Kırklareli, which was established to provide asylum or deportation to 'illegal migrants' apprehended in the border region and started operating on April 1, 2016. It is very difficult to conduct one-on-one interviews with illegal migrants as they are quickly apprehended and sent to removal centers immediately after they are pushed back at the border by Bulgarian border forces. Only residents of border villages have direct contact with them. Due to the significance of 'illegal immigrants' in this study, I wanted to apply to the Kırklareli Provincial Migration Management with a petition to be able to interview those immigrants placed in removal centers and to visit Pehlivanköy Removal Center as a researcher, but they directed me to Presidency of Migration Management in Ankara. However, I did not try to do that since during my informal contacts, the migration experts and some other officers working in Kırklareli Migration Management Office informed me that it is not so much possible to get permission, they even said; "the removal center is like a fortress, guarded like a state secret and access is so rare by permission if any". But luckily, I had the opportunity to meet someone who had been in the Removal Centre for a short time. A Turkmen woman, who had recently graduated from the Kırklareli University, was not someone who was apprehended while trying to cross the border, yet she was sent to the removal centre as she was caught working unregistered in a restaurant. However, her condition is significant in terms of raising questions about the arbitrariness of border

management and the legal status of immigrants in the country. The woman, Gülnaz, after graduation from a four year-department of the university, has applied to a 2-year department at the same university but she has not finished the paperwork yet. During that time, she started to work in a restaurant in the city center. But one day, the police made an inspection there and she was taken into custody and sent to Pehlivanköy Removal Centre on account of the fact that she was working there illicitly and becoming an illegal immigrant in the country as she has completed her education. Gülnaz and her three friends were caught like that, and she told me how they were sent to the removal center and what she experienced there as such;

> They sent me and three other friends to the removal center on the grounds that we were working here illegally because students here do not have work permits. After the SGK[15] inspection came, they called the police, who took us to the police headquarters, where we gave a statement. They confiscated our mobile phones and took us to the Pehlivanköy Removal Center. We didn't even know that there was such a center in Kırklareli. The police left us at the security in the entrance and left. At first, we were afraid of the police, but after the police left us, we got even more scared. The security guards put us in rooms. I and my female friend were placed in a room and our two male friends were placed in another. The next day we met the officers there. We went there on October 31st (2022), they informed us that our right to be a student was taken away and that they would send us back to our countries on November 9th. We got shocked. Then, a lawyer came. He said that in the past, workplaces like the restaurant I worked that employed illegal workers used to be fined, but now anyone who works illegally is deported.

Regarding the physical structure and living conditions of the removal center, Gülnaz said the following;

> There were Syrians and Afghans there, they put me and my female friend in the women's section. There were also husbands and wives with official marriages, families with little kids in the section where we stayed. They also call that section as the family section and they put men upstairs, but in fact all the people share the same space. We shared the same environment with very bad people. I was very

[15] "SGK" in Turkish, which means Social Security Institution.

scared as a student, the people, especially the men there came and tried to talk to us. There were people who crossed the border illegally, there were people who were caught with drugs. It was a prison-like place…There were bunkhouses, there was a mess hall and a grocery store...The food comes there in bulk, they give you plates, you take your food, and everyone eats in their own room. There is a bathroom and toilet in every room. Since we didn't have phones and money to buy telephone card, we didn't know how to call our families and friends. Then, there was an Uzbek woman who came and gave us her card. We said we didn't have any money, thank God, she said, "Don't worry, call whoever you want, and for whatever you need, you can come and ask me". We stayed there for three nights then they let us go, I don't know how. Maybe it is because we are students, but our trial is still in progress, and we have a lawyer who helps us.

What Gülnaz told me provided a lot of important information about the physical conditions of the Removal Center, the profile of the residents there and the functioning of the center. Accordingly, in the next section, I will discuss the confusion regarding the social status of immigrants in Turkey and the functioning of removal centers in relation to the rights and freedoms of individuals and the hierarchy of marginalization of those immigrants as the 'others' in the public sphere or as *"homo sacer"* in the political sphere with the help of Agamben's theory of 'Bare Life'.

4.2.3.3. The Bio-politics of the Border: 'New Other' as '*Homo Sacer*'

Kırklareli's border with Bulgaria is used by irregular immigrants who aim to flee to Europe. This escape is not a legal, safe, and hassle-free border crossing. So, in relation to the increasing number of Afghan, Syrian or Iraqi immigrants in the country, one can come across news on this topic every other day, especially about those who were pushed back by the Bulgarian border police when they tried to enter Bulgaria at this border or shortly after crossing it. The photograph (see *figure 9*) that appeared in the newspapers in the spring of 2022 reveal the treatment toward immigrants while they were caught and pushed back by the Bulgarian forces and reveal the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis on this border. While they try to flee to live in better conditions that they suppose Europe will enable them in terms of freedoms and human rights, they are confronting human rights violations at their very first stop in Europe.

Figure 9: Irregular migrants caught at Kırklareli border



Source: *Tiran, 2022.*

With the hope of fleeing to Europe, this border has been enforced by illegal immigrants since about 2015, and thus the escape tragedies of immigrants on this border have frequently been in the headlines of the news. At the border, the immigrants faced harsh intervention from the Bulgarian security forces. A first-hand account of coming across immigrants, was offered by Emine, a woman who lives in a border village;

> Among Bulgarian border security, there are not only Bulgarians, there are also other European soldiers. They catch the refugees at the border, take their money and belongings and 'throw' them back here. Nearly naked, groups of men pass here, and once we saw them covering their bodies with leaves and branches of trees. These things happen so often that we're tired of them. There are those who want food, or clothes, sometimes we can help them, and sometimes we can't.

The Bulgarian side of the border apparently hand in hand with European Union border guard forces, that is FRONTEX, has been working to strengthen the border which is also a EU border and to prevent illegal crossings. Speaking to the Guardian newspaper in 2015, Bulgarian Border Police Chief Ivan Stoyanov said that they worked to strengthen the Bulgarian border every other day, and that they would increase the barbed wire from two rows to three rows so that they would prevent Syrian, Afghan, Iraqi and North African refugees trying to cross the border illegally.

According to the report, infra-red motion-sensitive cameras are used to detect illegal immigrants, and the fence is monitored 24/7 by armed guards stationed at strategic points along its current 50-mile length, as well as watchtowers with binoculars ("How Bulgaria keeps migrants out - with 50 miles of razor wire: Fence along Turkish border that is 15ft tall and 5ft wide said to have kept out 500 people in a month", 2015). As a matter of fact, the border villagers in Kırklareli also state that now this border is more protected and monitored than before, and the European Union has certainly had an impact on it. Emine added;

> When the Syrian war first broke out, they (the immigrants) used to come a lot, but then it was like there was no border here, there were huge holes in the barbed wires. Almost everyone who tried to cross the border succeeded it. But now I don't think many of them can cross the border which is guarded by the European Union. They (Bulgarians and EU) have fortified all the barbed wires here. Even one single animal now cannot pass from here to there.

Clearly, the border region between Turkey and Bulgaria, which used to be quite open to mobility, that's, through which animals and people could pass, is now a buffer zone along Europe's eastern border which is increasingly becoming a place of detention and refuge. The Bulgarian side by tracing the readmission agreement of Turkey, pushes back incoming immigrants and confiscates most of their documents, even their money, and personal belongings. On the other hand, as Turkey signed a readmission agreement with the EU, she has to comply with the non-refoulment principle in the contract, as it was mentioned before, some apprehension steps are taken after the immigrants were pushed back by Bulgarian forces and apprehended on the Turkish side by the gendarmerie.

However, the key point here is a controversy about whether the authorities on both sides are to protect the rights of individuals, or they seem to protect these rights while working to increase their dominance over people. The philosophers of the modern age have already done many studies that reveal the gaps and deficiencies of political systems and modern nation-states in that sense. Sovereign power, juridical power, and bio-power concepts are some of them which are intermingled in the case of illegal immigrants apprehended along the border and sent to Pehlivanköy Removal centre. For instance, the immigrant expert clearly stated, among those illegal immigrants;

> There are those who are in very poor health. They stay in the hospital for a while until their treatment is completed before they come to us. After they are discharged from the hospital, they are taken to the center…There are two psychologists at the center, and we have a social worker. Apart from that, we can take foreigners who have higher psychological problems to psychiatry services accompanied by law enforcement.

The expert's statements above about the process of apprehending the immigrants, the treatment of the injured ones, and the way the removal centre functions show that the state is certainly regenerating its power, be it political, security or *biopower*, upon these illegal migrants. We know that in Michel Foucault's The History of Sexuality (1978), he argues that natural life has just begun to be included in the mechanisms of state power and politics in the modern era, and it has turned into *biopolitics*. However, Agamben finds out that Foucault's theory of *biopower* is incomplete as he never related his theory to the spaces like concentration camps or other structures of totalitarian states in the modern age, as in our example of removal centre.

From here on, based on the narratives, the photographs of illegal migrants half-naked in the media, and the process of their being pushed back from the Bulgarian side of the border, captured by the Turkish side and locked up in a removal centre, I will try to explain the condition of these illegal migrants with the concept of 'Bare Life' by Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (1998).

The concept of bare life, which I here equate with the life of illegal immigrants, in Agamben's text, is the life of *homo sacer* who is a sacred man but not in the meaning of appreciation, who also may be killed but not sacrificed. That is a concept that Agamben took from Roman law, in which the man is included in the juridical order but in the form of exclusion. That inclusive excluding bare life from politics, as a result, creates a "state of exception", as he explains "the bare life frees itself in the city and becomes both subject and object of conflicts of the political order, the one place for both organization of state power and emancipation from it" (1998, pg.6). For Agamben, being both an object and subject of political power is:

> modern democracy's aporia: it wants to put the freedom and happiness of men into play in the very place -- "bare life" that marked their subjection. Behind the long,

> strife-ridden process that leads to the recognition of rights and formal liberties stands once again the body of the sacred man with his double sovereign, his life that cannot be sacrificed yet may, nevertheless, be killed. (1998, pg.7)

According to Agamben the politics of today seems to put human life above everything else, yet he claims, with movements such as Nazism and fascism, that pseudo-overvaluation of human life by juridical and political power is what actually limits and destroys it. For him, it is already the sovereign power that decides "the state of exception". That's why, the bare life of living beings of our age, here I especially imply to the disadvantaged group of people such as refugees, asylum seekers, and irregular immigrants, "remains in politics in the forms of exception, that is as something that is included solely through exclusion" (1998, pg.7). Hence the result is the concentration camps, refugee camps, detention centres, which though not a prison but a space of enclavement.

For Agamben, that exception includes everything out of a regular case, but it doesn't have to be in chaos. He claims; "Through the state of exception, the sovereign creates and guarantees the situation that the law needs for its own validity" (1998, pg.10). In other words, the state of exception is for the one who can be taken outside but not simply excluded, on the contrary, it is 'inclusively excluded', which is like being at a threshold between two, 'in-between' outside and inside, normal and chaotic. Therefore, the "unlocalizable zone of exception" becomes, especially in our case, a permanent and visible place, as Gülnaz says, "a prison-like place" for our *'homo sacer'* as illegal immigrants who are sent to the removal centre, like the *'homo sacer'* in Roman times who were sent out of the *polis*. As a result, the illegal crossers as beings nothing else than being in the ban of being, cannot experience '*bio',* a qualified life. However, they have to stay in the level of '*zoē*' which does not free them, on the contrary, which makes them '*homo sacers'* who are not sacrificed but may be killed. That's, those immigrants are pushed back by Bulgarian border guards and found half-naked about to freeze or even injured/dead in Kırklareli's forested lands near the border, plus they are not freed but not imprisoned as well yet still locked up in a prison-like place. Thus, as the killable *homo sacers,* the illegal immigrants apprehended along this border are in a 'state of exception', 'in-between', at the threshold of outside and inside, at the margins in terms of having a qualified life but at the centre of juridical power. (Agamben,1998, pg.33).

Relatedly, in an interview Belgin, a 49-year-old woman in a border village, states that she had seen these people (illegal immigrants) for years, some of whom were found by a villager when they were about to freeze in the forest, and some were found dead in the forest. Once again, Agamben's notion of '*homo sacer'* comes to mind, for they are the ones who are sent away from the *'polis'* and are allowed to die (1998, pg.71). When asked whether they had a security concern about confronting those immigrants around their villages, Belgin answered;

> No, we have no fear of them. Since they are miserable as it is, they don't have anything with them to hurt us. Sometimes, villagers find one in the forest when he is about to freeze or sometimes they find another who is about to die. They even find some who were dead. One day, my husband brought a refugee manto our home, he was not in good condition, so we gave him food and tea. He thanked me and prayed for me.

The immigrants apprehended on the Turkish side by the gendarmerie in such conditions are seen as living beings with no legal and political rights or identities. - Just as Agamben states, they can be neither liberated nor sacrificed (Agamben, 1998, pg.9). - They are kept in this center where their life needs are met at a basic level, where they live a 'Bare Life', but are not deemed worthy of a *bio,* 'a qualified life'. The fact that they are left for dead, half-naked in a forested land where the temperature drops to minus degrees at midnight also reveals the fact that they can be killed and this is not a murder or as in Agamben, not a homicide. Once the Turkish Gendarmerie Forces find those people, they can neither imprison them nor set them free, because, like Agamben's *homo sacer*, they are at the threshold between the outside and the inside, neither free nor imprisoned, they are in-between. Therefore, they are taken to the Removal center which is prepared for them and established by political powers. They are kept in this center where their life needs are met at a basic level, they live a 'bare life', but they are not deemed worthy of a 'qualified life', as Gülnaz said; "There is a shelter, a bed, and enough food but nothing else".

Agamben argues that there is a clear distinction between law and life in relation to sovereign power. From this point of view, it is possible to see the readmission agreement between the EU and Turkey as a policy that develops the idea of generalized biopolitics of borders of sovereign states. For Agamben, sovereignty essentially depends on the ability to determine whether a particular form of life is worth living.

As Agamben makes clear, 'bare life' is created by domination for domination. Therefore, such centers as refugee camps, detention or removal centers set up for so-called protection and care are all places where people are deprived of their freedom and their lives are dominated by keeping them in a closed space, even though they cannot be legally imprisoned. Therefore, it is concluded that the illegal immigrants apprehended at the border represent a group that has no right to a decent life, that is more disadvantaged than the disadvantaged non-European natives and that is therefore lower down in the ranking of 'otherness'.

Furthermore, obviously, the irregular migrants along the border do not want to be taken to the removal centers, after their try of illegal crossing. Even though they are pushed to Turkish side of the border, they want to avoid being locked up. Besides, they don't want to be repatriated since they have already fled from the insecure and war environment. Therefore, those irregular immigrants are not just coincided with in remote forest areas near the border. From time to time, it is possible to see them wandering all over the city. The group of irregular immigrants is seen when walking from Kofçaz and Dereköy roads towards the city center (*Figure 10*). In fact, especially throughout April 2022, they were seen while they were walking on the side of the road to the city center (see *figure 11)*. Consequently, they don't want to be caught and sent to the Removal Center, which is confinement to their right to live. In fact, this in-between positioning of immigrants in the functioning of power also appears in various dimensions and interpretations in public encounters. Therefore, in the next section, I will discuss the attitudes of local people who encounter and interact with those illegal immigrants and where they position them in the hierarchy of otherness.

Figure 10: A photo of the irregular immigrants walking on the roadside taken by me, 13 April 2022



Figure 11: An Instagram post, in the subtitle the author wrote: “Today the roadside is full of people, for sure they are not students and walking to Kırklareli centre."



Source: *An Instagram post by a Kırklarelian, taken by permission, provided that the user name is not used, 2022, March 3.*

4.2.3.4. Empathy for the 'New Other': 'What If It Happens to Us One Day?'

The border between Turkey and Bulgaria has certainly become more Europeanized due to Bulgaria's accession to the European Union and Turkey's agreements on immigrants. As one of the Emine said, this border, where ten years ago people and animals could easily cross, is now guarded by European Union soldiers on the Bulgarian side. In other words, the EU accession process of Bulgaria has substantially changed the meaning and functioning of this border and resulted in a constant confrontation of illegal migrants with border residents, particularly on the Turkish side. Through interviews in border villages and the city center, in this section, I will shed light on how these encounters are interpreted by the local population on the Turkish side of the border, especially by border villagers, and how they define and categorize illegal migrants as 'others' as opposed to their selves. To start with, locals living in the villages closest to the border generally describe those encounters with 'pity'. For instance, Musa from one of the border villages told me about the general condition of border villages;

> A lot of people come and go, I can communicate with them because I know Arabic. They are not only Syrians and Afghans but there are Moorish[16], for example, the ones from Morocco or African countries. If we have the opportunity, we meet their needs, me and the village headman, and we give them things like food and clothes.

Similary, about the conditions of immigrant, Emine said;

> There are petty thefts, for example, the fruits on our trees. We wake up one morning and see that none of the fruits are there. Some of the immigrants broke into my neighbor's house over there once. Although they didn't take many things; they took his sack of walnuts.

In the encounters with those illegal immigrants, it is easy to hear a note of pity in the villagers' discourses. This feeling of pity mixed with empathy makes it possible to see that the illegal migrants emerging at this border have created a new category of

[16] 'Mağribiler'.

'them' who are different from 'us'. Take the young man, Fatih, who runs coffeehouse in one of the border-villages;

> For sure, most of the immigrants can't cross the border, they come back after they have a beat up by Bulgarian police, they don't come back without a beat. They go well from here, on the way back, they come back without their shoes, pants, and shirts on. They come and ask for help, we are trying to help as much as we can, because what if it happens to us one day?

However, that feeling of pity dominating the statements above is not found in all the borderlanders. On the contrary, an older villager man, Ahmet, with a more nationalist attitude, reminded me of the times when Bulgarian Turks migrated to Turkish land and settled in the camps in Kavaklı neighborhood in Kırklareli in 1989, and he implied that taking those illegal immigrants to a camp and taking care of them is a burden to us as a nation and to our state;

> You may know these 'Naim' times in the 1980s around this border, there was a temporary care center in Kavaklı for Turks coming from Bulgaria then, the state took care of them, and gave houses to some. Even many of them later returned to Bulgaria again. But they were at least our 'kin'. It is not like these refugees, whom we put in the temporary care centers, but to what extent our state will look after them and feed them?

Apparently, it was ever thus there have been different 'others' trying to cross this border, but they all aren't identified as the same. Ahmet clearly means that 'they' (Bulgarian Turks) also came here, stayed in camps, some settled here, and some went back to Bulgaria. But illegal immigrants we encounter today, most of whom are Syrians or Afghans, are positioned at a different stage in the hierarchy of otherness. Simply, the comparison between Bulgarian Turks as other and illegal migrants as other by Ahmet shows who is more other so well that, we can say, in this way, the same border here is a barrier for those 'others' while it was an open door for our racial kin. Interestingly, it is not only Ahmet, who sees the illegal immigrants as a burden, but also Bulgarians who live on the other side of the Turkish-Bulgarian border think that the existence of those illegal immigrants in Turkey is a big disadvantage for the country. In one of my interviews about the general condition of the border between

Turkey and Bulgaria, a Bulgarian woman, Rositsa, implied that it is very hard for Turkey to be accepted in the European Union, as it has those unwelcomed others:

> Perhaps in a few years' time, when Turkey joins the European Union, the Turks will simply be able to come to Bulgaria. However, Europe is very strict about the participation of the countries in the Union, it is hard I know. Because of irregular immigrants and refugees around the Turkish borders, though Turkey stops them, the European community would not accept her in that way.

To summarize, we can see how this group of migrants, which is called refugees in public discourse and illegal immigrants in official discourse, is positioned as a threat to sovereignty and security by the state and as poor helpless people by many of border villagers, with whom the immigrants have one-on-one encounters. However, those immigrants, who are the *'homo-sacers'* of the state and the 'miserable others' of many of the border villagers, represent the most ‘unwelcomed others’ for some people live on either side of the border.

Like Ahmet, the border villager in Turkish side, and Rositsa from the Bulgarian side, some of the city center residents I interviewed - most of whom are shopkeepers and traders - although they have no direct contact with the illegal immigrants, are most troubled by the existence of these foreign ‘others’. Since these people have no contact with the immigrants, they have chosen not to empathize. During my interviews, I noticed that they compare those ‘others’ to the Bulgarian shoppers, with whom they feel more culturally connected, and categorize the the illegal immigrants as completely ‘others'. Even though they do not directly refer to the illegal immigrants who are apprehended at the border, they show their discomfort with the existence of Middle Eastern immigrants, especially those who have money to buy houses and land in the city, with a nationalistic tendency and xenophobia. In my interview, Yasemin, a middle-aged store manager in a household goods store in the shopping center, said, "If it happens this someone comes from Egypt or Syria and gets a residence permit in Turkey without any problems, then these people (Bulgarians) will also come here and shop". In another interview, Murat, who is the owner of a curtain store in the city center and whose wife is a recent Bulgarian immigrant, stated;

> There are rumors that Bulgarians buy houses from Kırklareli. Apart from the Turkish-origin Bulgarians, I don’t think they have any concerns about buying a

house here or getting citizenship. Because they are already European citizens. Even if they do so, it is not a problem for me. Because I am a Balkan Turk; so is my all family. However, my fear is that a Syrian or an Afghan will come and buy a house in Kırklareli, and someone who is not one of us will come and join us.

Apparently, some locals see the migrants from third-world countries with different ethnic backgrounds, particularly Syrians, Afghans, and Egyptians who have a residence permit and reside in Kırklareli, and who have acquired property and land, as the most undesirable class. The statements of local residents above on the possibility of having residences of Bulgarians or Middle Easterners in Kırklareli clearly demonstrate that they would not object if Bulgarians get residence and settle but they would 'fear' if the most unwelcomed 'others' have a refuge here.

In conclusion, the concept of refugees or illegal immigrants as '*homo sacer'* or 'outsider' of society, who comprises of new 'other' in the town of Kırklareli, once again demonstrates the failure of the ideal of globalization and the dream of a borderless world for all, the possibility of open borders or no borders (Paasi et. al., 2019). Even people who live safely in a border town encounter the illegal migrants with an exclusion that is evident in their comparison with all the 'others' in the town. The border as a space determines what is 'ours' and what is 'theirs'. All of these things are about how we define 'otherness' and who we label as 'other'. The space of otherness and the notion of otherness in the realm of politics and culture are the 'master narratives' of border dwellers, constructed as a result of ideologies imposed by the authorities. The illegal immigrants are positioned in a hierarchy of otherness that is obviously more marginalized and undesirable compared to the perceived otherness that the residents of the town of Kırklareli feel for their 'self' or towards Bulgarian everyday shoppers.

5. THE LAYERS OF ILLEGALITY ALONG THE BORDER IN KIRKLARELİ: MIGRANT SMUGGLING, SMALL-SCALE SMUGGLING AND PETTY SUITCASE-TRADE

The status of being 'legal' or 'illegal' is quite precarious if not arbitrary at borders in general and at the Turkish- Bulgarian border in particular. For instance, in Ayşe Parla's (2015) study, where she states that those who migrated from Bulgaria to Turkey until September 1989 were the last legal migrants, she also says that those who migrated in the 1990s and afterward could only come to Turkey with a three-month tourist visa, and that tourist visas were very difficult to obtain. Those migrants who wanted to work in Turkey and to stay for more than three months became illegal migrants whereas Turkey had opened her borders and welcomed the Bulgarian Turk migrants with hospitality just a few months before 1990. According to information obtained from the migration expert working in Provincial Migration Management Office in Kırklareli, on the differences between refugees, transit immigrants, and illegal immigrants, it is noticed that one immigrant can be included in any of those categories, that's from legality to illlegality, depending on the way and time of crossing the border and they are generally named as 'irregular immigrants' in official documents. Relatedly, people or commercial goods can move away from legality and into the cluster of illegality at the threshold of any borders. By that, it is easy to notice how fluid and transient the concept of 'legality' and 'illegality' in the operations of border regimes is. I have observed this transition on this particular border between Turkey and Bulgaria, i.e. from a refugee/transit migrant to an illegal or irregular immigrant, from an ordinary villager to a migrant smuggler, and in terms of the actions of shoppers, from cross-border shopping to suitcase trade or informal petty trade, and from border tourism to small-scale smuggling, that's, from legal to illegal in a constant way. As van Schendel and Abraham elucidate in their study of the concept of border; "borderlands provide an excellent site to study the *intermingling and overlapping of various legal and illegal flows*", be it object-oriented or human-oriented. (2005, pg.48). In the following sections, I will explain, through a series of interviews, how

the actions of locals and migrants, as well as daily shoppers from Bulgaria who have a relationship with the border, either intentionally or unintentionally shift from legality to illegality. They sometimes do not frame their actions as 'illegal' because the boundary between the two is unclear. The general conclusion I have reached from the interviews clearly shows that the perception of the actors about legality and illegality of their actions does not fit the legal regulations imposed by the state. As van Schendel and Abraham argue;

> We need to approach flows of goods and people as visible manifestations of power configurations that weave in and out of legality, in and out of states, and in and out of individuals' lives, as socially embedded, sometimes long-term processes of production, exchange, consumption, and representation (2005, pg. 9).

Where there is a border, there is inevitably a lot of smuggling activity. This can involve drugs, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes or the smuggling of migrants. All these examples can of course also be found on the Turkish-Bulgarian border. In this chapter, I will focus on some of the small-scale activities that are sometimes obviously illegal or illicit and sometimes not, and that affect the social fabric or that have become a part of the lives of locals on the Turkish side of this border, rather than mafia-type activities such as drug and arms smuggling, which is attempted to be extremely clandestine and in large quantities.

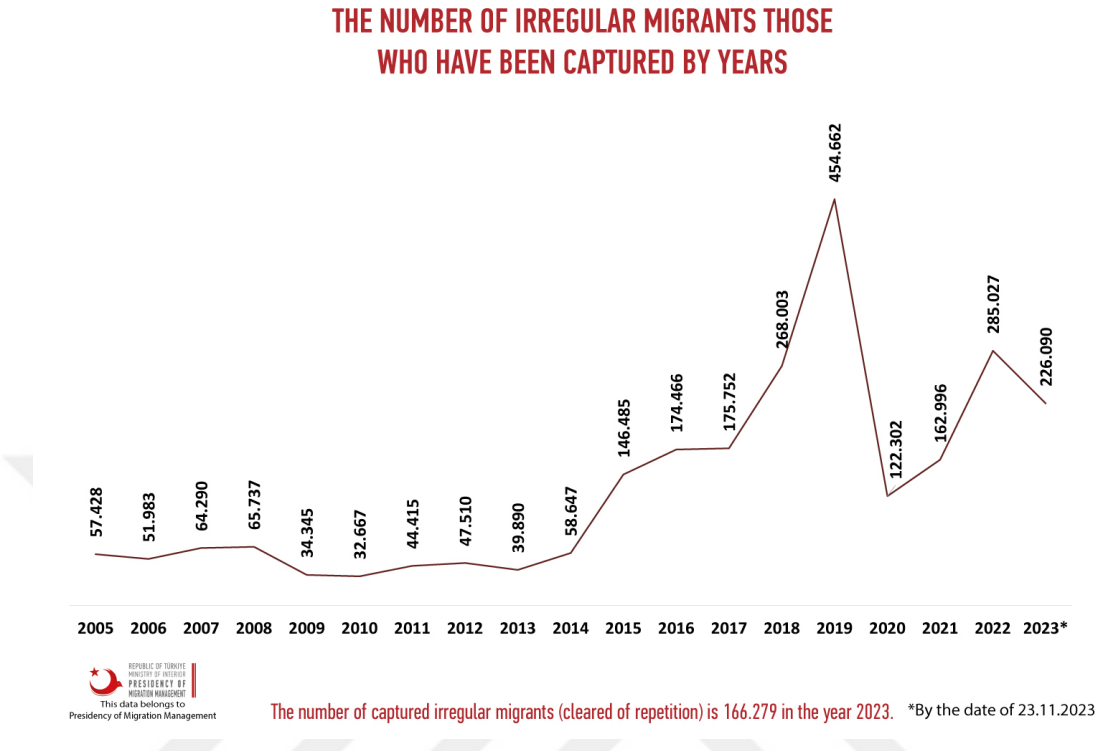
5.1. Migrant Smuggling on the Local Level

Bulgaria has always been a place of refuge for people fleeing Turkey. Towards the end of the 1940s, due to the repressive environment in Turkey, it became a refuge for those we usually refer to as 'thought criminals', for example supporters of communism who were associated with or held a position in the Communist Party of Turkey, such as Sabahattin Ali, Tuğrul Deliorman, Fatma Yalçın and Savaş Üstüngel. To put it in another example, criminals such as Abuzer Uğurlu, a well-known figure in the Turkish underworld, M. Ali Ağca, known for the attempted assassination of the Pope, and Abdullah Öcalan, the terrorist leader of the PKK, are among those who illegally fled or were smuggled from Turkey to Bulgaria at various times. In addition, Süleyman Köksal (2021), who prepared a study on the "dark route" between Bulgaria and Turkey, emphasizes that Bulgaria was one of the main transit points for drug and arms trafficking during the communist era. This situation persisted even after the fall

of the communist regime in Bulgaria, but Bulgaria's accession to NATO in 2003 and to the EU in 2007, as well as the anti-mafia propaganda in the country in the ongoing process, have led to important steps being taken both by the security forces and by law to eliminate these and similar connections with Turkey and other countries. Nevertheless, some criminals that are 'wanted' for terrorist crimes and affiliated with organizations such as the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization (FETO) and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), still see Bulgaria as a country of escape. The border between Turkey and Bulgaria has always been associated with criminal networks. Despite the fortification of border fences by Turkey and Bulgaria, the increase shown in the statistics reminds Baud and van Schendel's statement on the issue; "No matter how clearly borders are drawn on official maps, how many customs officials are appointed, or how many watchtowers are built, people will ignore borders whenever it suits them" (1997, pg.211). Especially after 2000s, with the effect of three new political events near to Turkey's eastern borders, such as the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Arab Spring in 2011 and the civil war in Syria since 2011, the Western Balkan Route of Turkey became the route of illegal migrants and migrant smugglers seeking to smuggle migrants from Turkey to the European Union (İçduygu, 2021). Edirne and Kırklareli provinces are the main departure points to Europe used by illegal immigrants along the land borders in Turkey. It is a well-known fact that thousands of people try to cross Turkey's land and sea borders to the European Union through migrant smugglers and their networks. When compared to the Turkish-Greek border, the Turkish-Bulgarian border is seen as less common for migrant smuggling (Karaçay, 2017). Therefore, in this section, based on the narratives of local people on the border in Kırklareli, I will describe how the migrant smuggling business, which has local, national and international networks, emerges in Kırklareli and at what level the local people are involved in these smuggling activities.

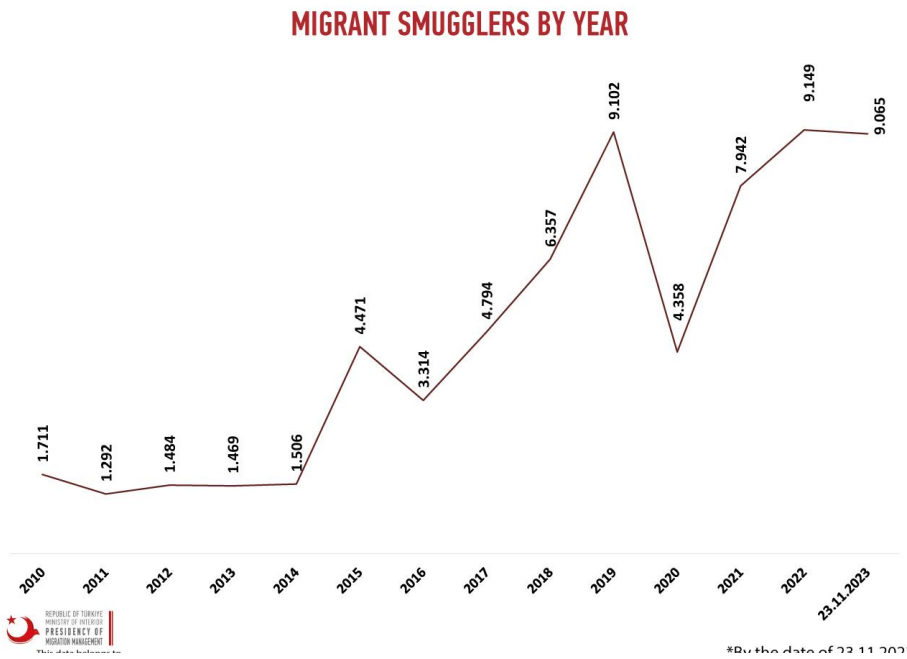
Evidently, there is a parallelism between the number of illegal migrants and the number of people involved in migrant smuggling. As a result, this parallelism brings with its threats to the moral, social, and natural structures of border regions. Despite border security, local laws, and international conventions, the scale of this traffic is growing and the activities of smugglers are increasing rapidly at the border. Below, the statistics of the Presidency of Migration Management of Turkey show the parallelism and the significance of the issue:

Figure 12: The number of irregular migrants captured by years



Source: *Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Interior Presidency of Migration Management, 2023a*

Figure 13: Migrant smugglers by year



Source: *Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Interior Presidency of Migration Management, 2023b*

These statistics not only show this parallelism but also prove that these activities reached their peak in 2022 when this study started to be conducted. Till the last months of 2023, activities continued in a high rate. Although the statistical data covers all borders of Turkey, this is also the case for the Turkish-Bulgarian border in Kırklareli, as described by the migration expert at the Migration Management Center and it is seen on the media and local reaction. As the migration expert stated in Migration Management Centre in Kırklareli;

> Unfortunately, the border is very active here (in Kırklareli). There are cases of pushback etc. It is very active, people come with such a motivation that, for example, from Afghanistan, and Pakistan, their families spend their wealth and effort so that their children can save their lives. They come with such a motivation that they try to cross this border and go to Europe. Thus, migrant smuggling is also very common, the number of our arrests has increased considerably after October and November 2022.

As mentioned before, one category of illegal immigrants in Turkey for İçduygu and Köşer Akçapar (2016), is "transit migrants who enter the country usually from South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East with the intention of using Turkey as a springboard to migrate to another country in the West mostly in Europe" (pg.137). In fact, the boundaries between the concepts such as refugee, transit migrants and illegal migrants are so blurred that all the immigrants who belong to one of those categories can suddenly become under the category of illegal immigrants in their any kind of relations with migrant smugglers to cross the border illegally.

At this point, I should explain how the two different forms of human trafficking and migrant smuggling mentioned in İçduygu and Köşer Akçapar's article (2016) also appear at the border between Kırklareli and Bulgaria. According to the idea that İçduygu and Köşer Akçapar drove from International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD);

> Accordingly, in Turkish context, two different categories fall under field of smuggling: (a) migrant smuggling and (b) human trafficking. These two notions are considered different crimes, since migrant smuggling is considered a crime against the Nation-state, whereas human trafficking is a crime against an individual (2016, pg.138)

Therefore, in addition to being illegal and illicit in terms of their actions, the smuggling profiles we encounter at this border fit more into the "(a) migrant smuggling" group described by İçduygu and Köşer Akçapar. That's why, in this study I would rather use the concept of 'migrant smugglers' who commit a crime against the state, since they aim to have a trust relationship between themselves and migrants as they accompany the immigrants across the border. İçduygu and Köşer Akçapar also define the human trafficking and smuggling activities in Turkey as "very mobile and spontaneous, and yet exploitative" (2016, pg. 138). Border villagers who constantly encounter those migrants in miserable conditions around the border tend to believe that those migrants are being exploited by migrant smugglers. First of all, according to the data I obtained during the interviews conducted in Kırklareli, especially in the border villages, border villagers generally claim that those illegal migrants who are brought to the areas near the border, mostly from İstanbul, are left there and are expected to cross the border fences with their own means. According to villagers, the migrant smugglers do not guarantee these illegal migrants that they will cross the border. The villagers presume that there is a business in smuggling migrants so that their journey within the country is guaranteed. As such, during my interviews in Şükrüpaşa village, I came across border villagers witnessing that continuous increase they saw in the village when these illegal immigrants constantly failed to cross the border or were pushed back, and relatedly continuous migrant smuggling. Firstly, Musa said;

> A lot of people come and go… They are not only Syrian, and Afghans, but there are Moorish, for example, the ones from Morocco and other African countries… we inform the gendarmerie. Or there are those who transport these people.

He added what he meant by 'those who transport them';

> Think of it as a kind of migrant smuggling. They make a lot of money from this business, there are those who say that they earn 24 thousand TL in a day, by transporting them from and to İstanbul or other places in Turkey. In fact, some people bring a group of refugees from İstanbul and leave them here, saying that here is Bulgaria.

Those people Musa mentioned, that is, the migrant smugglers from İstanbul are seen as "unscrupulous criminals, out to exploit defenseless migrants or asylum

seekers by charging them extortionate fees for non-existent jobs" by villagers (Castles & Miller, 1998, pg.97). Another old man in the village, Ahmet, by reminding me the famous Turkish movie actor Şener Şen's movie in which he took people from Anatolia who were trying to flee to Europe illegally as workers and left them in an empty field near İstanbul and tricked them that this was Europe, said;

> There was a movie by Şener Şen, you may know, in the movie, he was supposedly transporting our Turks from the east to Europe, he was deceiving people, he was taking them with a truck and leaving them somewhere near İstanbul saying here is Europe. These people (migrant smugglers) are the same, they leave those immigrants here and they go. Some of them (the immigrants) go to the border and try their luck, but when they can't pass, they look for someone to take them back to İstanbul, as Musa said, and they (the smugglers or local transporters) find them and transport them to İstanbul or wherever they want.

This is also confirmed by many villagers in the border villages. Hüseyin explained that the smugglers all come from the nearby cities;

> Most of the cars coming from İstanbul have the city code 34 on their license plates, there are 34(İstanbul), 59(Tekirdağ) and 39(Kırklareli) coded license plates everywhere in our village.

And Şaban meant that they are very “mobile and spontaneous” by saying;

> The people who bring them from İstanbul are not the same as those who took them back.

With a similar statement, Yusuf explained;

> When the gendarmerie sees them (illegal migrants), they take them to Pehlivanköy. The refugees who come here usually come from Esenyurt in İstanbul. The people (migrant smugglers) who bring them here are generally people who live in İstanbul and have migrated to İstanbul from the East. They charge 100 dollars per person when they bring them, and 100 dollars per person when they take them away.

There is a chain of smugglers with different duties in those smuggling operations. It is not a whole transnational network, there are some small-scale groups who make money in this smuggling business. Another significant point is that both the routes and financial costs for migrants diversify in terms of smuggling operations.

Hence, the money paid to these smugglers varies depending on the distance traveled and whether the route is risky or relatively easy (İçduygu & Köşer Akçapar,2016, pg.145). Likewise, from Musa's words, it is clear that the migrants are aware of this variability in prices and therefore they have a large amount of money with them since they do not know what or whom they will encounter;

> It is interesting that there are also migrants who have a lot of money with them, probably they have converted all their possessions into money so that they think they can go to Europe in a way, so they may offer 1000 dollars to the taxis that will take them back to İstanbul.

In spite of the statistical data and the villagers' statement about the increase in the number of illegal immigrants apprehended at the border, one of the villagers, Levent, indicated that the state and security forces do their jobs properly to prevent the illegality prevailing in the region;

> It has decreased a lot in the last couple of days, our gendarmerie has started to go down hard, a temporary campsite has been set up in Dereköy, near the Dereköy border gate, and they take them there. A few people who were involved in migrant smuggling were also caught and arrested.

Likewise, another interlocutor, Şaban, said the condition that has partially changed;

> These days, many gendarmeries are already walking around the border to put an end to this migrant smuggling. We have heard that those traffickers have been fined. There are even those who have been sentenced to 3 years. But, it wasn't controlled by the state before, they (migrant smugglers) were doing this freely.

In fact, while Levent and Şaban claimed that the state was becoming serious about securing the border, the villagers in a coffeehouse in the neighboring village, Armutveren, stated that the surveillance and caption or the state power was symbolic and did not previously bring about a real and effective decrease;

> We can't sleep here because of the noise of the cars, until the morning, cars come and go all night towards the border. The refugees who can't cross the border are looking for someone to take them back to İstanbul.

Relatedly, in one of the interviews, when I went to Dereköy (a district in Kırklareli, which is close to border) in the spring of 2022, a villager woman, Belgin stated that she had seen these people (illegal immigrants whom she called refugees) on this border for years, and about one of the illegal immigrants found in the forested land when he was about to freeze, she said;

> I don't know where he went, whether gendarmerie found him or he went back to İstanbul. Because they always want men of village to take them to İstanbul, they offer us money, 1000, 1500 or 2000 dollars per person, to take them to İstanbul. (She goes a little bit silent and said) Sometimes my husband takes some of them. He (my husband) is actually retired from forestry, he has an old car, he picks two or three of them and takes them to İstanbul. When they arrive in İstanbul, sometimes he can get the money, sometimes he can't.

When I talked to her husband, Osman said; "Yes, I do this job, it covers my alcohol expenditures" (He laughs). The couple stated that they have two children. The woman stated; "My son who is 27 is angry with his father for he is included in this job. Because, in case the gendarme catches him, he warns his father that it's migrant smuggling, but my husband still does that job". The man explained that his pension is not enough for their expenses and many people are doing this job here; "Most of the time, the gendarmerie turns a blind eye to this, even they bring a couple of Afghans or Syrians and want us to take them away. We take them to the Kırklareli city center and sometimes to İstanbul".

According to İçduygu (2021), the mainstream idea depicts migrant smuggling as a criminal activity to be controlled and punished by state authorities, but the more recent alternative belief frames it as a local and cultural practice resulting from global border and migration management and regimes of control. Apparently, people who carry migrants or things inside state's borders may or may not agree with the state's classification of their actions as crimes. Osman even provides a further contradiction in terms of what constitutes (il)legality if they believe their actions are legal. He raises the question of whether it is more legal and legitimate to let these people (illegal migrants) freeze to death in the forest or to do something that saves them from death or arrest. From that point, it is essential to say studies on borderlands have also demonstrated how crucial it is to compare state and non-state conceptions of (il)licitness to comprehend how border managements are established, managed, and

maintained (van Schendel& Abraham, 2005, pg. 25) And also Osman, by saying; “Most of the time, the gendarmerie turns a blind eye to this”, basically meant that boundaries of (il)legality between his action and gendarmerie’s act as the state-authority perplex as they are frequently a part of the same spectrum (van Schendel & Abraham, 2005, pg. 9).

I received the most detailed information on this topic from Emre, who lives in Kırklareli and is in a way included in this smuggling business and arrested. Emre is a single man in his 30s and works in a public institution as a servant. However, he got involved in migrant smuggling – according to him, to save his brother from this business- and got caught. He was imprisoned for about 2 months, but he was later released due to lack of evidence and as he resumed his work in the public sector. I had the opportunity to meet and interview him with the help of a friend who works in the same public instituiton. Emre was more relaxed than I expected during our interview at his workplace, and he did not have any problem with me taking audio recordings. Emre explained to me in detail how the 'migrant smuggling' business works and where locals in Kırklareli stand in this business. When I asked him that I study on the Turkish-Bulgarian border in Kırklareli and how migrant smuggling is done there, he said "I am an expert in that field" with a laugh. And he explained all the details as follows:

> There is one big boss in İstanbul. I don’t know him personally but this person is probably from Van. Because most of these migrants come to İstanbul from Van by trucks. When the migrants come to the boss, they give him all their documents, money and belongings. The immigrants say they have left their belongings in ‘safety’[17]. And they call the boss's place as *‘mektep’*[18]. The boss sends Syrians, Afghans, Moroccans and people of different ethnic groups from İstanbul to Kırklareli with his own vehicles, sometimes with a minibus, sometimes with a private car, sometimes with a lorry, and puts a migrant with an ID card with them, he becomes their "guide" who knows the roads and paths to cross the border. The transporters leave the migrants somewhere 5 kilometres from the border and drive back to İstanbul. If the guide manages to make the immigrants to cross the border, he goes back to İstanbul, and receives 500 TL per person from the boss. If he can’t

[17] “Eşyalarımızı ‘emanete’ bıraktık diyorlar.”
[18] ‘Mektep’ means “school” in Turkish and as those migrants are taught there about the tricks of illegal crossing the border.

get through, they all go back to İstanbul, then the guide can't get money. Sometimes the immigrants themselves try to cross the border on their own means - by pushing through the fences or putting a ladder. Those who manage to do so without being caught are taught in İstanbul, in 'mektep' that there are numerous Bulgarian highways close to the border, such as the 64th, 79th or 85th roads etc. The boss tells them where to wait, that's, on which of these roads, after they succeed to cross to Bulgaria. In Bulgaria, there is a 'password' between the immigrants and smugglers there waiting for therem, when they say it, they know that this group has come to get them. The smugglers there pick up these migrants and takes them to Serbia, and if they succeed, the person doing the transport in Bulgaria calls the boss, who immediately sends him the money.

It is clear that there is a big network running the business in Turkey. The head of this network whom Emre called 'big boss' also has connections both in İstanbul and abroad. When I asked Emre what happens when migrants are caught at the border or pushed back after crossing into Bulgaria, he said;

If they are caught here, the gendarmerie or the police will take them to the Pehlivanköy Removal Center where they are interrogated, and their documents and status are tried to be detected through the system. The ones who have a valid document like an ID, those are the 'guides' in general are released. Others have to wait there to be sent to their countries. If the Bulgarians catch them, they beat them, take off their clothes, throw them back to Turkish side over the fences, but from a place where Turkey will not see. Because Bulgarians don't normally have the right to push them back like this. There are also those who are caught in the same way and taken to Pehlivanköy after being pushed back. There are also those who try to go back to İstanbul, to "mektep" without being caught.

It is clear that "migrant smuggling emerges as a socially embedded collective practice" (İçduygu, 2021, pg. 3303). Contrary to what the border villagers I interviewed earlier assumed, "the relationship between migrants and smugglers might occur in a setting of 'solidarity and reciprocity and grounded in local notions of morality'" (İçduygu, 2021, pg. 3304). The smuggled migrants who are brought to border regions in Kırklareli from İstanbul or Tekirdağ and who try to cross the border but fail to do so or are pushed back by the Bulgarian border guards after crossing, look for ways to return to İstanbul without being caught by the gendarmerie in the villages.

At this point, the locals of Kırklareli find themselves involved in this illegal migrant transport business, rather than a migrant smuggling.

According to Demir, Sever and Kahya (2017) in their study on migrant smugglers in Turkey, migrant smugglers generally represent a group of individuals who work with local, national and international connections and have a professional division of labour. Demir et. al. also find that local actors are most active when border crossing is relatively easy and less risky. The points at which smugglers help migrants cross the border also determine the service they offer and the fee they charge. In other words: Where the smugglers are located in the smuggling network varies the scope and risk of their work as well as the money they earn from this work, if they are successful (Demir et. al, 2017, pg. 374).

In our case, it is very difficult to talk about a systematic migrant smuggling activity performed by locals in Kırklareli. It would be more accurate to speak of a system that ensures migrants to cross the border illegally by groups of people from İstanbul, rather than a group of local migrant smugglers who accompany the migrants to the other side of the border. In other words, the 'guides' working for the 'boss' in İstanbul help and accompany these migrants until they cross the border. However, when they fail to cross the border or are pushed back by the Bulgarian border forces, they want to return them back to the *'mektep'* of the 'boss' whom they trusted and to whom they left all their belongings 'in safe custody'. In this case, it is the locals of Kırklareli who immediately deliver them to the drivers and transporters who are waiting for them in nearby İstanbul, again working for the 'boss'. Then I asked Emre how the locals of Kırklareli involved in this network, for example, how he was arrested and how he knew such a network between the smugglers and immigrants from Turkey to Serbia and he stated;

> Before crossing the border, the immigrants bury their mobile phones under a tree or a stone to find in case they are pushed back Bulgarians. Because they know that they will take their phone if they are caught on the Bulgarian side. They call the numbers saved in their phones to take them back to İstanbul immediately. They have the numbers of the locals, for instance a man, let's say Ahmet, who can transport them. My brother is one of them who transport the immigrants. The smugglers in Kırklareli pick them up, but they must be very fast, otherwise they may be caught and arrested and the immigrant wil be sent to Pehlivanköy. They

immediately transport them either to Lüleburgaz, Çorlu or Çerkezköy, not to İstanbul. Because a vehicle with 39 license plates attracts a lot of attention in İstanbul, it might be stopped as it comes from a border town. That's why, they deliver these migrants to commercial taxis or the vehicles waiting for them with İstanbul license plates there. They get $ 100 or $200 for each immigrant and sometimes they don't get their money. When they cannot get money, they might have a fight with the immigrants or the group coming from İstanbul to take the immigrants. I was already caught when my brother got into a fight and I went to rescue him, we were at a gas station, 5 to 10 people, I had myself caught so that they wouldn't take my brother, because I knew that if he was caught, he could never have rescued. And then I proved to the prosecutor that I had no connection to the incident. I already work all day in this institution, I said the prosecutor that he would see that I was at work on that day and on the other days, if they looked at the cameras. it took me 2 months to get a detention trial, and then I was released.

Van Liempt (2007) categorizes migrant smugglers into three groups, occasional smugglers, small-scale and large-scale smugglers. The locals in Kırklareli who transport 'illegal' immigrants from Kırklareli to İstanbul back fall under the category of occasional smugglers as they do not have any transnational network and do not do that job systematically, they are at work just in case, if they are needed and called by anyone to carry the immigrants, as Emre told in detail. Therefore, the amount of money they get from this business is also occasional and the least. The 'big boss' in İstanbul mentioned by Emre, has apparently had transnational networks, from the east of Turkey to Serbia. Demir et. al. (2017) defines "planners" as the organizers of smuggling actions, they usually in a metropolitan city, especially in İstanbul, as in our case, and they are the ones who have the capital as well as the transnational connection across countries, though they do not show up in the field personally, as Emre called 'big boss' (pg.383). According to Demir et. al., there are also "executers" who physically accompany immigrants in the process of crossing border illegally, as Emre called them 'guides' (2017, pg. 383) The 'executers' have the highest risk of apprehending and in our case, to lower their risk 'big boss' employ some 'legal' migrants who have an ID from the same ethnicity with illegal migrants for this work, because in case of apprehension they may be freed in a short time. Among the category of "transporters", according to Demir et. al., there are "guides", "escorts", "drivers",

“mountaineers” (2017, pg. 384-385). In Kırklareli, local people who are definitely transporting the immigrants on an intrastate level, only provide a safe journey from Kırklareli to İstanbul and they fall under the category of “drivers”. As Demir et. al. also stated, “[a]mong all the actors involved, drivers and escorts conduct the most risky work in this business” (2017, pg. 386), and [t]hose who execute lower roles and functions are not aware of the full picture; they play their small roles and get paid accordingly (2017, pg. 388). As Emre stated;

> If you are in this business, you should not like your life and your car at all, because they are transporting these migrants by passing at a speed of 130 140 km per hour on roads that humans and animals cannot pass. Do not think that they go by normal highways, they always go by footpaths through fields. I'm worried that something will happen to my brother one day.

Additionally, it is also common for migrant smugglers to have “public officials” as “useful partners”, who might work in public institutions such as law enforcement, consulates, or customs (Demir et. al., 2017, pg. 384). And Emre stated;

> After these illegal immigrants were captured and sent to Pehlivanköy, there are also cases where smugglers rescued them by using their contacts inside the police or the migration administration. We know this too.

Furthermore, in Kırklareli, those “useful partners” of migrant smugglers are not just from security forces, there are many more who work in different public institutions. For instance, in the first week of 2024, the media reported that an ambulance traveling from İstanbul to Kırklareli was found to be carrying illegal immigrants (Kırklareli'nde ambulansla göçmen kaçakçılığına karışan sağlık çalışanına 4 yıl 2 ay hapis cezası”, 2024). In the same week, at a press conference organized by the governorship of Kırklareli, Bilal Ekici, the governor of Kırklareli, stated that 26,373 irregular migrants were caught in 2023;

> We caught a person who was smuggling migrants with a patient transport ambulance. We caught a person who was smuggling migrants with public vehicles. We saw and caught migrant smuggling with vehicles that are rented from the public sector and have labels and signs of the public service they serve. We caught a vehicle using a flashing light system. We even caught a VIP motorcycle. We caught

a motorcycle rider taking a migrant to the border on a motorcycle ("Kırklareli'nde geçen yıl 26 bin 373 düzensiz göçmen yakalandı", 2024)

To be concluded, as İçduygu (2021) argues, "migrant smuggling is a part of the everyday life of people in the regions of economic and political crises and the related borderlands" (pg.3303). Furthermore, the range of awareness of the participants in the interviews appears to be wide. That is, their perception of outlawed and licit actions is based on their humanitarian perspective. At this point, these events on the Kırklareli side of the Turkish-Bulgarian border show policy makers, civil society and researchers that when addressing this issue, it is important to take into account how the problem looks in lived experiences beyond the state authority. As İçduygu (2021) states; "It is not hard to see that migrant smuggling is not the cause of irregularities observed in the migratory system or regimes but rather a result" and "by 2016 EU-Turkey statement, 'combating smuggling' is repeatedly mentioned as a central element to realising these policy aims" (2021, pg.3299). However, it is obvious that beyond the border security measures and bilateral agreements between countries, it is necessary to address the migration crisis with more awareness, support and egalitarianism.

5.2. From Cross-Border Shopping to Informal/Petty Suitcase Trade of Bulgarian Daily Shoppers

Shopping tourism, as I explained in the Border and Tourism chapter, has played a unique role in both conventional and non-conventional border tourism because of the cheaper pricing and taxes, the variety of product options, and the perceived greater quality of items provided in retail stores. However, the peculiar circumstances of border areas also result in informal and unofficial trade. In other words, cross-border shopping, detailed before in this study, is a kind of formal trade which appears as a result of economic disparities between two neighbouring country and is formed in the direction from the wealthier to the poorer states, such as from the US to Mexican border, or to Canadian border or from the Finnish to Russian border (Makkonen, 2023). However, inside such economic activities, it is important to detect the 'informal economy', which refers to those aspects of the economy that cannot easily be identified, measured and governed, ranging from smuggling to shuttle trade and suitcase trade or petty trade.

Unlike smuggling of the goods, according to Deniz Yükseker (2003), the informal economy is defined as legal economic activities that are not supervised and/or regulated by the state and are carried out to earn income in cash or in kind differentiated (pg.52). However, pointing out that there is both large-scale organized informal trade and small-scale informal trade between Turkey and the Soviet Union, Yükseker also argues that the dynamism of this transnational informal market generally stems from small-scale trade.

Relatedly, during my research and interviews with local merchants and shopkeepers about cross-border shopping in Kırklareli, some of them made me aware of a non-conventional version of cross-border shopping of Bulgarians. To do the ethnographic study better, therefore, here I focus on the versions of the cross- border shopping with their "processes of change as they are expressed locally, taking as our point of departure aspects of local life" (Eriksen, 2001, pg. 205). To start with, Meltem, the administrative manager of the mall, stated;

> While shopping in the market section, I saw they (Bulgarian shoppers) printed new prices in Bulgarian on the products, they stuck a different kind of yellow labels on each product that they bought, and they took them to their country and probably sold them there. They bought the same products in series to sell there.

Even though it is not clear and visible so much, some of my interlocutors said, the amount of the buying of Bulgarians is clearly beyond their personal needs. For instance, take Özlem's statements, the manager of a clothing store;

> They bought the clothes in series, put them in the suitcase and took them away. Do you know that there are also stores of our brand in Bulgaria, too? But the prices there are higher, with the money that they can buy one piece there, they can buy five pieces here.

But the question that comes to mind here is that whether it can be considered as a situation that harms Turkey's exports if the products of the same brand are not purchased from the store in Bulgaria, but the Bulgarians come and buy them from the store in Turkey. The fact that they buy them in batches, put them in suitcases and take them back to their countries, which Özlem mentioned, has a very important place in the informal trade as suitcase trade. The article of "The Position of Suitcase Trading in Turkey's Foreign Trade and Growth-Suitcase Trading Connection", by Sinem Yapar

Saçık (2013), shows with the statistical data that this form of trade, namely suitcase trade, which is important for Turkey's exports, is of great importance in Turkey's total foreign trade, though not official. In addition, the study concludes that suitcase trade is an important variable in Turkey's foreign exchange earnings and in closing Turkey's external deficit, as this informal trade has a large place beyond the registered data.

Suitcase-trade actually emerged in Turkey after the 1980s and then increased until the late 1990s. There are studies showing that this unconventional cross-border shopping in Turkey was most common in the Laleli district of İstanbul, where large quantities of textile products were transported to Russia in suitcases and placed on the Russian market. Furthermore, Hungarians, Yugoslavs, Czechs and Poles all started the 'shopping tourism' as early as the 1970s. Making use of the discrepancies between the official and market exchange rates, these traders started with various barters in the Grand Bazaar. Algerians, Libyans and North Africans were also lured into İstanbul in the 1980s largely to circumvent their own highly protected domestic markets (Eder & Öz, 2008, pg.8). According to Eder and Öz, the district of Laleli, with the effect of transnational shuttle trade between Turkey and the Soviet Union, began to be known as the 'little Russia' of İstanbul. In the 1980s the trade liberalization in Turkey, and financial liberalization in the 1990s resulted in an intensive deregulation in the economy as well as an informalization. As suitcase traders enter into Turkey as tourists and declare the goods they bought as personal belongings, they became exempt from tax and customs liability. As a way of informal trade, suitcase trade reached its peak in 1995, with an estimated 10 billion dollars, though it has dropped to nearly an annual 3 billion dollars since then (Eder & Öz, 2008).

Furthermore, Yükseker define suitcase trade as such; so called suitcase trade, *bavul ticareti* in Turkish, are usually unrecorded and they escape legal regulation, evading taxation in both Turkey and Russia (2007, pg.61). In general, the studies on the shuttle trade in Turkey focused on the case of Laleli (e.g., Yükseker, 2002, 2003, 2007; e.g., Eder & Öz, 2008, 2010; Aydın, Öztığ & İdil, 2016), because it is arguably the most prominent example of suitcase trade in Turkey. In Laleli, suitcase trade is a type of trade in which merchants from Russia, mostly women, work on an order basis with the manufacturers in Laleli and take large quantities of leather and fabric materials back to their countries in suitcases. The goods produced in this trade are manufactured as products that will be exported abroad through the suitcase trade, and

at the end of the 1990s, when the amount of this trade increased, they became products carried by cargo companies.

All in all, while cross border shopping means the act of traveling to another country to buy personal consumer goods, often for the advantage of lower prices and quality of goods, suitcase or shuttle trade, on the other hand, refers to a kind of export of goods often carried in suitcases or personal luggage. However, cross-border retail trading might be a high-risk business. Traders should carefully consider which commodities they bring across which borders, in what quantities and when.

To be more precise, suitcase trade or shuttle trade by individuals or small businesses mainly refer to the buying some consumer goods in the destination country and selling them in the home country without paying taxes or custom duties. On the other hand, suitcase trade on a smaller scale is referred to as petty trade in the literature (Timothy & Gelbman, 2023). Namely, the form of trade encountered in Kırklareli is not in huge amounts as in the suitcase trade seen in Laleli, rather, it is an example of informal/petty suitcase trade, where retail sellers from Bulgaria buy products in batches or parcels and take them back to their country, usually in the trunk of their private vehicles, without registering them, without paying taxes at the border, and sell them retail there. As two of the shopkeepers in a furniture store in Kırklareli stated, the Bulgarian shoppers buy some products in bunches and do not have any trouble while crossing the border;

> Hülya: By the way, don't think that they (Bulgarians) just shop for their personal needs, I also think that they sell products in Bulgaria, because a Bulgarian customer can come and buy 6 or 7 of the same quilt cover sets, or a dozen of the same pairs of socks, bars of soap, etc., for example, once a Bulgarian customer bought forty-one bars of soap, probably he took the products there to sell.
>
> Aynur: No one (in the custom gates) is looking at what they (Bulgarians) fill to their trunks now, they are not having trouble at the border gate, and the customs officers pretend not to see. Besides, what if they have a problem, they come with their IDs, they can leave the things on the roadside, and 5 minutes later, they get back, enter and exit through the gates once again.

Petty trade, in general is an unofficial economic activity that occurs at numerous international boundaries and is frequently referred to as the "shadow

economy". (Michalkó, Tömöri & Ilyés, 2023, pg.327). Numerous unregistered operations that are technically invisible to the government and its taxing and regulating bodies are included in the informal sector. Informal cross-border petty trade is "a kind of arbitrage", participants attempt to profit by taking advantage of price differences between states by buying goods in low-cost regions and selling them across the border where higher costs are more prevalent (Michalkó et al., 2023, pg. 328). Hence, those from the more affluent side of border are more likely to take advantage of the advantages of cross-border trade than those who are less affluent. As Yasemin, the manager of a household store in Kırklareli, stated;

> Once I couldn't find tea in the supermarket next to my house, I couldn't find pasta, I must confess that I thought that famine is coming. However, I was also afraid to stock up, if I stocked up as a citizen, I was concerned about what other people would eat. But unfortunately, they (Bulgarians) did not think about it, and they commercialized it. Just the other day, I saw a man (Bulgarian) bought 30 bottles of one-liter coke and 40 bottles of 2.5-liter coke, but I know no one would buy so many for his house, and no one would die without coke. This is trade, it manifests itself [19], they certainly sell these products in their country. When you exchange 1000 leva, it equals more than 10 000 liras which is a lot more than my salary now… Ours is a construction market, we do not confront that many bulk purchases like in the supermarket. However, we also sell a '*vileda'* (a mop and bucket set), if I make a discount, I'm sure that they will come and buy a dozen to sell them in their country.

More overtly, Bulgarian shoppers in Kırklareli generally buy garments, textiles, and household goods, and they probably sell those consumer goods such as apparel and household items in moderate quantities in their countries. That kind of 'informal trade' inevitably has been detected by the shopkeepers and merchants of Kırklareli, who are the direct interlocutors and witnesses. Bulgarians, who until last year were only tourists, have recently been flocking to Kırklareli almost every day, but mostly on the days when the bazaars are set up, due to the huge depreciation of the Turkish lira against all currencies, including the euro, dollar, and the leva, and due to the abolition of the passport and visa requirement for Bulgarian citizens to enter Turkey. However, it is not possible to say that there is a welfare effect as there is no

[19] "Bu ticaret, bu bağırıyor".

contribution to local production and employment in response to the increased demand. In this respect, this one-way informal border trade in Kırklareli is an example of impoverishing growth. The flood of money flowing to shopkeepers is an example of income injustice. Consequently, even though such an informal trade stimulates and strengthens the local economy to some extent, it certainly shows the weakness of the national economy.

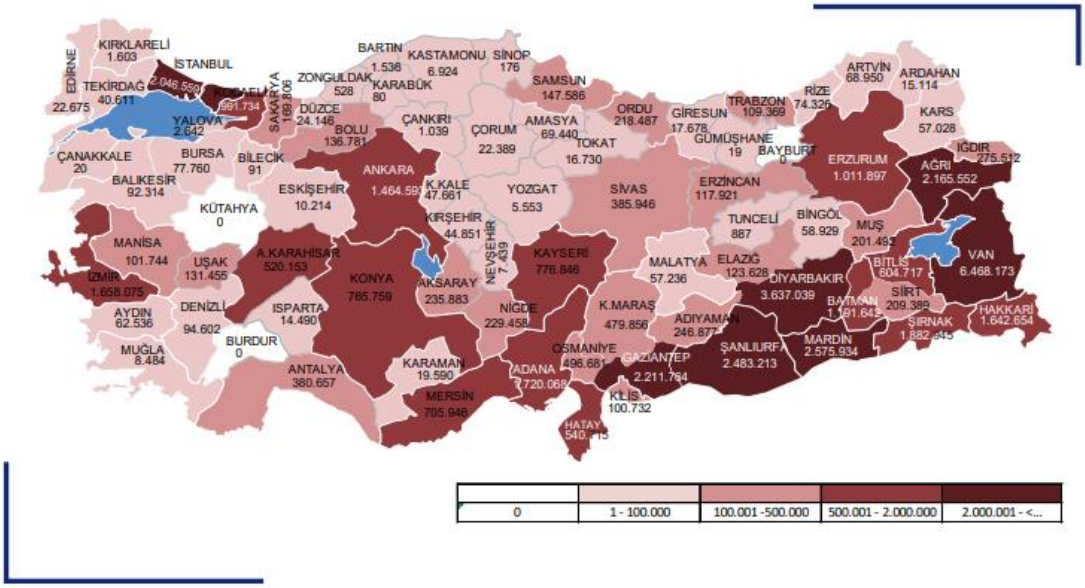
5.3. Small-Scale Smuggling of Alcoholic Beverages and Cigarettes

Some goods and services are by their very nature informal. In particular, criminal sectors such as corruption, arms trade and narcotics are prohibited in almost every country in the world, because they create an underground economy dominated by mafia and similar organizations. Some other alcoholic beverages and tobacco products, although legally free to be produced and traded, have become products traded informally and illegally for reasons such as tax avoidance in response to high taxes and similar obligations, and the desire of individuals and companies to further increase their income. Therefore, the emergence and development of informal international economic activities is common, especially in border or near-border regions. According to Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime 2017 Report of Turkey, alcoholic beverages without a banderol or with a counterfeit banderol are considered illegal under Turkey's Anti-Smuggling Law. As a result, there are two main ways in which this crime committed in Turkey. The first is to bring illegally imported alcoholic beverages into the country. The second is to sell beverages produced in illicit facilities or those produced unlawfully by legitimate companies in Turkey's beverage industry. In addition, there are two common methods for smuggling alcoholic beverages into Turkey: the first is to take advantage of the passenger exemption at customs gates using an ant method, and the second is to employ yachts and vessels from nations with nearby territorial seas (KOM Daire Başkanlığı, 2019).

In the same report, when the statistical data has been investigated, it is detected that there are many kinds of goods smuggled along the Turkey’s border, such as smuggling of drugs, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, electronic devices, meat, and cultural artifacts, etc. In the report, when the borders where such products are smuggled are compared, alcoholic beverages and cigarettes are detected as the two most important items in Kırklareli for which concrete and meaningful data were

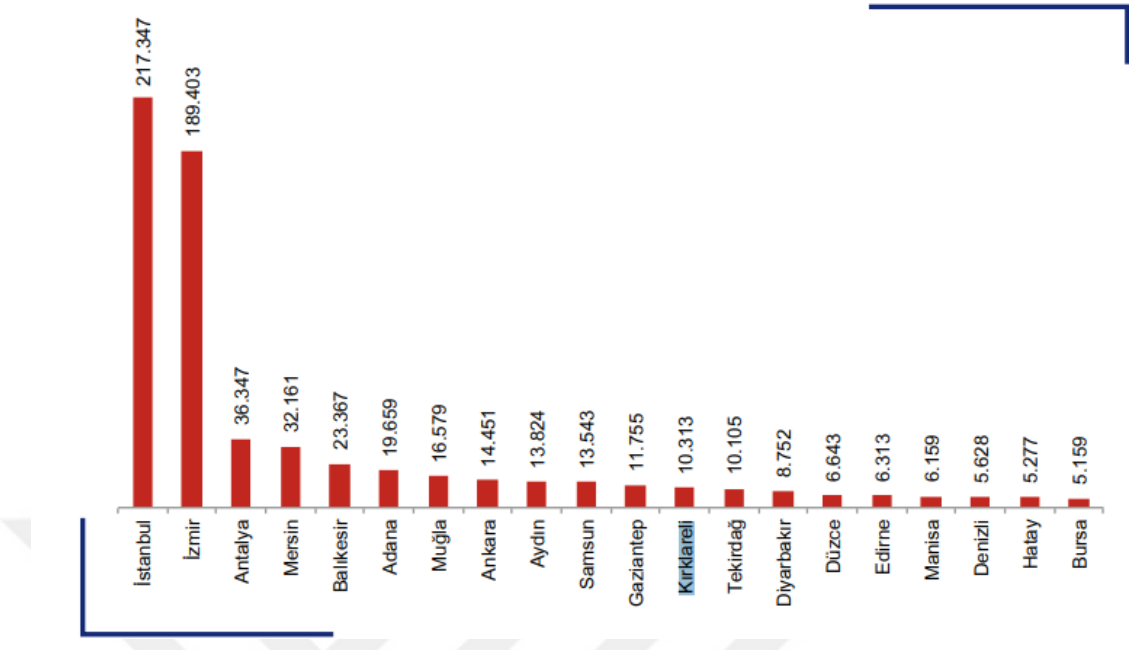
obtained. However, even for these products, while more than 2 million cigarettes are seized in provinces such as Gaziantep, Şanlurfa, Mardin and Van located on the South-eastern border of Turkey, this number can only reach around 1500 in Kırklareli. Moreover, even when evaluated in terms of the provinces in Thrace, the rate of smuggled cigarettes seized in Kırklareli is twenty times lesser than the neighbouring provinces of Edirne and Tekirdağ *(see Figure 14)*. On the other hand, in the category of smuggled alcoholic beverages seized, it is found that Kırklareli is ahead of the neighbouring provinces of Edirne and Tekirdağ *(see Figure 15)*. Another significant data for me in this report is that only İpsala, Pazarkule and Kapıkule border gates are mentioned as the border gates where smuggled goods seized in the Thrace region, all of which are located in Edirne province. The only border crossing in Kırklareli, Dereköy border gate, is not mentioned in that report. In my opinion, the main reason for this is that this border gate in Kırklareli is not open to freight transportation vehicles and truck traffic as I mentioned in the section called Border Gates in this study, hence it is not on the radar of anti-smuggling management.

Figure 14: Amounts (Packages) of Smuggled Cigarettes Confiscated in 2017 by Provinces



Source: *KOM Daire Başkanlığı, 2019.*

Figure 15: Top 20 Provinces in which Most Smuggled Alcohol was Confiscated (Bottles)



Source: *KOM Daire Başkanlığı, 2019.*

We can also say that smuggled goods brought to Kırklareli from Bulgaria are more in line with the category of smuggled goods hidden in compartments in personal vehicles as defined in the report. In other words, when both official reports and data are analysed, it is difficult to talk about alcohol or cigarette smuggling on the Kırklareli side of the border between Turkey and Bulgaria on a large scale that could be considered criminal. What is seen along this border is rather people travelling with their own vehicle from Kırklareli to Bulgaria and trying to return home with more alcoholic beverages and cigarettes than the permitted amounts. The amounts that travellers are allowed to bring when entering the country for tobacco products and alcoholic products, as stated on the website of the Ministry of Trade, correspond to 600 cigarettes, i.e., 3 cartons of cigarettes for cigarettes, 1 litre for alcohol and alcoholic beverages with an alcohol content of more than 22% and 2 litres with an alcohol content of not more than 22% (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2022).

The fact of the matter is that many of the dual citizens, long-term visa holders or people with green visas who live in Kırklareli and have the opportunity to travel to Bulgaria easily can pass through the customs gates by trying to hide a little more than the 'permitted' amounts of cigarettes and alcoholic beverages in their suitcases or in

various places in their cars. Yılmaz, who was caught bringing a few bottles more than the permitted amount into the country in the trunk of his car, said;

> I had nearly ten bottles of alcohol with me, a few bottles of *Mastika* (Bulgarian *raki*), a few bottles of whiskey and vodka. Because it is very cheap there, it is free compared to here (Türkiye). I put them in a bag. Normally they wouldn't want all of the bags in the trunk to be opened, but they did once. When they saw the bottles, they said "you can't take them, take them down". So I unloaded, but I opened it all and spilled it on the side of the road (he laughs).

Yılmaz was seeing the right of buying a few more alcoholic beverages with him than permitted amounts, since he stated that he bought them for himself and his family and friends not to sell them. He wanted to buy high quality alcoholic beverages more cheaply than Turkey, he stated that he would drink them until his next touristic travel to Bulgaria. When we look at the Special Consumption Tax (SCT- ÖTV in Turkish), according to the data announced by the Turkish Revenue Administration, the fixed and minimum fixed tax amounts to be applied on tobacco products and alcoholic beverages as of July 5, 2023, have been increased by 14.82% (Delloitte Türkiye, 2023). In other words, Yılmaz or those like him who bring alcoholic beverages for their own needs or to consume with their friends and family can buy a 'quality' drink from Bulgaria without Special Consumption Tax they would pay for a litre of alcoholic beverage in Turkey. In the Bulgarian shopping visitors section of the previous chapter, I explained that the exchange rate differences between the two countries are one of the most important motivations for Bulgarian shoppers in Turkey. However, most tourists going to Bulgaria from Kırklareli usually buy only some ordinary, utilitarian products including alcoholic beverages, tobacco and sometimes fuel. Because the cross-border price differences in these products are often caused by "taxation", that's, "lower value added taxes create lower product prices abroad" (Makkonen, 2023, pg. 272).

Apart from the cross-border shoppers like Yılmaz, I had the opportunity to interview three more people who brought smuggled alcoholic beverages and cigarettes from Bulgaria to Kırklareli. They all were dual citizens and did not require visas and passports when passing through customs gates and that they did this business with their personal vehicles and in moderate amounts. Apparently, the main reason for this moderation is that they have the chance to travel to and from Bulgaria frequently since they travel back and forth with their ID cards. These three alcoholic beverages and

cigarette smugglers that I interviewed separately did not accept me to take an audio recording, and they were quite reluctant to share their personal information. All these three people reside in Kırklareli and work as tradesmen, and they stated that they usually brought alcoholic beverages rather than cigarettes and sell them to a certain group of customers whom they trust. However, there was another person who is a restaurant owner in Kırklareli, Haşim, who don't have a dual citizenhip. In December, 2022, he accepted to be interviewed by taking voice recording and he stated that he used to do this job, that is, when the BGL were cheaper than TRY. Firstly, he stated that he brought alcoholic beverages from Bulgaria mostly for his personal needs or to give as gifts to his relatives. About the smuggling of alcoholic beverages and cigarettes, he complained about that nothing is the same anymore;

> Now it's not like it used to be, I used to get an annual visa and go to Bulgaria every week, with my family, to eat, to travel, to have fun or vacation. This year I applied for a visa, and they gave me a single exit visa for 25 days. I couldn't believe it. I must have been to Bulgaria 1000 times in total. I have been going for 20 years and this is the first time something like this has happened to me. My total visa cost is 2000 TL. I thought, were we a growing country?[20], Bulgaria is making fun of us now... I was able to enter and exit once with my 25-day visa. I went to a restaurant to eat something and a salad cost 12 leva, that is 120 TL. Once, I used to be able to buy 100 leva for 80 TL. But this time, I spent 700 leva on my last trip, that's 7000 TL. I was able to buy only 6 bottles of *ouzo (uzo)* and some cigarettes. Before, I used to come back with 100 bottles of 1.5 litre whiskey every time I went. How did I do it? I knew the people at the customs, all of them, both on the Turkish side and on the Bulgarian side, we had become friends because I went there every week. I would call them in advance and say that I was coming, and I would cross the border without any problem. Now we don't know anyone anymore.

Although Haşim rejected that he brought them to sell, later as the conversation went on, he conceded that he was bringing a bulk of alcoholic beverages and cigarettes to sell here. Upon how he succeeded to get those across the border, he meant that there was the effect of his intimate relationship with the border guards and customs officials. He meant that he minimized the risks of carrying such goods with a system of bribery,

[20] "Hani biz büyüyen bir ülkeydik?"

apart from the “knowing people working at the border gates”. That was not possible only criss-crossing the border once or twice, as Haşim stated, to achieve that kind of illegal small-scale smuggling, he had to have a web of social relations (Williams & Baláž, 2005).

In many border studies, it is obvious that borders between the neighbouring states provide an opportunity to profit criminal or informal cross border trade. In fact, the scale and the (in)formality, or (il)legality of those economic actions are perceived differently by the locals when compared to the regulations by the state. For instance, the main reason why smuggling of cigarettes and alcoholic beverages is so widespread, especially in Turkey, first on the Southeastern borders, and then on the borders in the West, is the high tax rate imposed. This is the case in many borders like the border between Turkey and Bulgaria because they are relatively simple to smuggle and carry in even individual border crossings. Moreover, as the prices and the taxes applied in those products is extremely high in Turkey, it is also easy to make profits for the ones who take that risk. Obviously, they are not normally forbidden or illegal to buy for cross-border shoppers, but as in the other examples mentioned above, yet with the ‘border effect’ upon every commodity or living beings, the transition from the legality and illegality is very fluctuating and volatile. That is, when considered from the perspective of shoppers going from Kırklareli to Bulgaria, the amount of alcoholic beverages they buy for their own needs is beyond the limit determined by customs, but when they do this by hiding it in some way, they do not consider themselves to have brought these goods illegally. They justify their informal or illegal acts by claiming that it is very expensive in Turkey, particularly because of the taxes and as they generally buy those products for personal needs.

6. CONCLUSION

The main difficulty in examining the concept of the border - we can also say its value - is that it is not only examined from the bottom up, but also analysed on a horizontal plane with all the variables it encompasses. More specifically, the fact that the border is not only a temporal phenomenon, i.e., a phenomenon that changes and transforms over time, but also a spatially changing and transforming phenomenon that changes and transforms all the objects and subjects around it, has made it the main problem of this ethnographic study. As a researcher, I wanted to analyse the border between Turkey and Bulgaria and the political, economic and cultural elements that shape it and are shaped by it, along with its spatial and identity extensions. As Robert Alvarez argues, the study of border and borderlands constituted a new genre, "a basis upon which to redraw our conceptual frameworks of community and culture area" (Alvarez, 1995, pg. 447).

The new genre of borders emphasises mobility across borders and presents borders as spaces of transition and encounter where different identities and cultures meet. These studies have become a model using the border as an image for a liminal space between two nation states where a multiplicity of identities intermingles. They have encouraged the search for hybrid cultures as accelerated flows and mobility crisscross borderlands, giving border cultures a subversive potential that defies the ideologies of nation states.

During my doctoral studies, which focused on concepts such as space and identity, I thought of a field of study that would support the theory that culture and identity is a changing, shifting, non-spatial phenomenon. At that moment, the city I was living in, Kırklareli, started to be like an open laboratory for me. Furthermore, it was not possible to explain all this chaos in the city in terms of the perception of space, culture, and identity with migration alone. There was a contestable reality in this city that explained all the issues associated with it, and that was the border. The hybridity, the in-betweenness, the liminality that I saw in Kırklareli all seemed to be a

consequence of the border. In this phase, I investigated the effects of the border in all other border cities in Turkey and tried to highlight the "unique" features of Kırklareli.

Kırklareli, which constitutes the research area of this dissertation, is a city on the Turkish-Bulgarian border that has not been studied as a border town before. Like many other border cities, this city on the periphery of the country is quite different from the south-eastern and north-eastern border cities of the country. In other words, just as the dynamics of each city are different, so are the dynamics of each border. When we read border cities through a border lens, it is possible to analyse the elements that make up the south-eastern border of Turkey in terms of main themes such as smuggling, terrorism, landmines and refugee flows from the Middle East (Aras, 2020). On the other hand, when we look at the borders in the northeast of Turkey, the main elements of borders there can be explained as daily labour and shuttle trade (Özbey ,2016). However, if we consider Kırklareli as a border town in northwestern Turkey, which is located on a part of the border between Turkey and Bulgaria and is the smallest town in the Thrace region, since a significant part of the Turkish-Bulgarian border stretches along Edirne province, Kirklareli could be considered as a background town that is not a remarkable border town. However, for this study, it has become clear that the town and all its components have interacted with the border in some ways. Therefore, this border, whose physical presence is sometimes negligible, has provided a rich treasure trove for an ethnographic study. In other words, in the city of Kırklareli, which lies along the Turkish-Bulgarian border at the foot of the Istranca Mountains on the Anatolian side of the Balkan Peninsula, this study aims to reveal the historical changes and transformations along this border, while also addressing many spatial and socioeconomic variables within the city and discussing their causality with the border.

The border between Turkey and Bulgaria was drawn by the İstanbul Treaty on September 29, 1913, as agreed upon by the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. Since then, the border between Turkey and Bulgaria became permeable with population exchanges during Ottoman times and later by the migration of Turks living in Bulgaria to homeland. However, starting around 1990s, as the respective nation-states increased their influence, the permeability became quite limited. Nevertheless, during the last decades, especially after Bulgaria acceded to the EU in 2007, it has become a random occurrence for Bulgarians to cross the border for daily visits and shopping purposes, while Turks must meet several requirements to cross the same border in the opposite

direction. On the other hand, thousands irregular/illegal migrants, who see it as a gateway to Europe through Turkey, risk their lives trying to cross the same border to the European land.

In other words, a historiographic analysis of the social, cultural and political issues related to the lives of immigrants and the minorities living in the region in detail have been presented from a historiographic perspective in this dissertation. In addition, the dynamics of the border from World War II until the collapse of the Soviet bloc and in the last two decades, when Bulgaria became a member of the European Union in 2007, were examined in order to analyze the reconstructed meanings attributed to the Turkish-Bulgarian border. The aim was therefore to recognize the different subject constructions of the border inhabitants in the past and in the present *vis-à-vis* the representation of the various new 'others', i.e. both the everyday Bulgarian shoppers and the irregular/illegal immigrants who try to use this Europeanized border as a pass.

It would be more accurate to evaluate this study as a study in which temporal, spatial, and cultural elements and identity representations in the city are discussed through the border. To be more precise, if someone were to study the Turkish-Bulgarian border from the Edirne side, they would come to different conclusions. However, this study is based on the question of how the Turkish-Bulgarian border in Kırklareli, which is a land border, is perceived in this small town. On the other hand, if this dissertation were written by a Bulgarian researcher on the Bulgarian side, the observations, findings and results would be the other way around. As a result, by placing the town of Kırklareli as a border town at the center of the problem, I wanted to observe and examine everything that it associates with the border - or everything that the border associates with it - on the mind mapping.

Unlike the "old-style" border studies, borders today are more about "discourses" and "practices", rather than their "forces" and "functions" of separating states rigidly and rigorously (van Houtum, 2005; Agnew, 2007). Therefore, the central question of this dissertation is in what ways the border affects the lives of those living in the city: How does the Turkish-Bulgarian border in Kırklareli create opportunities for economic development for the city? How do local identities reconstruct themselves, and what are the everyday material realities of all the economic and political inequalities? To this end, in this ethnographic study, I used empirical data to

examine how border people make sense of their everyday experiences in relation to border.

The first thing that attracted me to this study was not the physical structure of the border phenomenon, with its such elements as border gates and barbed wires, but it was the different representations of the border and the different typologies of what I broadly call `border people`. Because borders are not only places of demarcations where differences are revealed. They can also be places of presentation where pluralistic identities can emerge. There are encounters one cannot experience anywhere else (Warschawski, 2005). In the fieldwork I had prepared different sets of questions to be used for each group and representation, but in the end all the questions answered two main questions. First one is how border people construct their own identities while positioning the others they encounter along the border in a hierarchy of otherness and for which identities the border is more permeable. Secondly, the "illegal" activities that take place at the border create different hierarchies of illegality, as the permeability functions differently on both sides of the same border and locals and authorities perceive "illegality" differently.

The first interviews with border people were conducted with Bulgarian Turkish migrants who had crossed the border for migration reasons to understand the meanings they attributed to crossing the border in terms of their national and cultural identities. Although crossing the border may seem like a process of returning to the self, as a result of a series of semi-structured interviews, they stated that the national and cultural Turkish identities they had established in their own selves were not accepted by the local people after they crossed the border and came to Turkey. In other words, they were not accepted by Bulgarians in Bulgaria because they were Turks, and they were marginalized by their Turkish compatriots in Turkey because they were called Bulgarians. Nevertheless, the general conclusion I drew from the interviews is that the Bulgarian Turk migrants who settled in Kırklareli have not severed their ties with the other side of the border and have in fact created a hybrid identity for themselves - with or without dual citizenship. And in doing so, because of their attachment to their Turkish roots, they have had no difficulty in adapting and feeling that they belong to the homeland.

Secondary interviews were conducted with Bulgarian daily shoppers, including Bulgarian Turks who still reside in Bulgaria, and it was found that for them crossing

the border is quite easy and advantageous. On the other hand, the interviews with local people and shopkeepers revealed that the Bulgarian daily shoppers' easy crossing of the border with only their ID makes the local residents feel like 'other' or 'foreigner' in their own land. As Agnew states; “borders frequently transgress rather than celebrate or enable cultural and political difference” (2008, pg.182). The Turkish-Bulgarian border embodies a border between the citizens of two states, where there is a long history of migration flows and there is a common Balkan culture and everyday life practices. Therefore, while borders remain important for states, there are other important factors that accumulate rights and privileges that transcend them (Sassen, 2005). All over the world, regional, religious, and ethnic affiliations contest the territorial state as a site of political identity. Moreover, increasing mobility of people and capital, that is, new migration flows and economic expansion challenge the geographical basis of traditional border practices (Agnew, 1994; Sassen, 2009). In other words, the hegemonic space of the state appears as a set of configurations that exclude, divide, and marginalize between neighbouring nation-states. Moreover, border disruptions and transformations affect peoples, spaces, cultures, and memories of border (Aras, 2020). As a result, Bulgarian shoppers are welcomed by local shopkeepers as daily visitors with easy access, as they create an economically ‘positive border effect’ through their contribution to the economy. However, this study has shown that the locals on the Turkish side of the border are constantly confronted with the inequality of their relationship in their encounters with the Bulgarian visitors as wealthy Europeans with free access and visa exemptions, and consequently see themselves as the ‘other’ of the space along the border.

Thirdly, the interviews were intended to be conducted with the group of people who are called 'refugees' in the vernacular, but who are generally referred to as 'irregular migrants' by official institutions and the media, or 'illegal migrants' due to their illegal border crossing attempts. However, due to the illegal situation of the migrants in this group, it was quite difficult to reach an illegal migrant to be interviewed due to their fear of being sent to removal centres and then being sent back to their countries, and its risks for the researcher. For this reason, a series of interviews were conducted with border villagers who frequently encounter these migrants in their daily lives, with a migration expert and a Turkmen woman sent to removal centre. Considering the migrants' relations with this border, and their general conditions, it is

understood that border villagers and local people place those irregular/illegal at the bottom of the hierarchy of otherness.

In addition, in my interview with a Turkmen woman who stayed in Pehlivanköy Removal Centre for a while because she appeared to be an illegal migrant, I tried to explain the conditions faced by the people staying there until they arrived and during their stay there, and the conditions that the migrants experience when they cannot cross the border and are pushed back by Bulgaria and due to the concentration camp-like conditions of the removal centres, using the Italian philosopher Agamben's concept of 'Bare Life' and '*homo sacer'*. As a result of findings, it is deduced people who cross the border illegally and flee to Europe are viewed as "*homo sacer*," or "*persona non grata*," whose lives are redeemed to "Bare Life" by both sides of the border. Moreover, this study presents that the border continues to be an increasingly uncrossable barrier for both non-European Turkish citizens and migrants from third-world nations, even if it acts as a point of entry for wealthy visitors and shoppers from Bulgaria who are EU citizens. We may argue once more that borders are complicated areas with interwoven realities of physical space, political, ethical restrictions, and overlapping cultural and social realities, in light of all these intricacies that this study has uncovered.

Nation-states separated by sharp borders are also a consequence of the spread of the territorial state model, state-centred political economy and the combination of democracy and territorial citizenship from Europe to other parts of the world. However, the idea of the territorial state is both a political ideal and a justification for a set of migration policies and border regimes based on this ideal (Agnew, 2008). According to the findings of the research, it is detected that, in contrast to the permeability of Europe's internal borders, Europe's external borders are only flexible in terms of "exit", but very rigid in terms of "entries". This fact not only puts Turkey in a critical geographical position, but also makes the fact that it is the 'other' of Europe more visible. Even a series of agreements and protocols with the EU and the praise of Turkey as a "privileged partner", "neighbouring country", "safe country", etc. cannot turn the tables. On the contrary, it is a sign that the EU externalizing Turkey and all elements within it. (Fine, 2018).

Furthermore, since I have treated the border issue in Kırklareli in a multi-layered study, those who engage in 'illegal' activities along this border have been

included in the various typologies that interact with the border in this study. ‘Illegality' along borders is a vulnerable issue that can be exploitative, accumulative and violent. This is because state power maintains border areas for border control and surveillance, and yet no illegal activity can be totally prevented. In this sense, this study aims to explain illegality at the local level through the experiences and testimonies of people on the ground. Therefore, I have tried to explain the illegal activities at the border, which I have described under three subheadings: the smuggling of migrants at the local level, the smuggling of alcoholic beverages and cigarettes on a small scale, and the informal/petty suitcase trade of Bulgarian buyers observed by local shopkeepers and locals, with different interpretations and observations of the locals in economic and sociological terms.

In many studies conducted in Turkey, the general opinion is that migrant smuggling is an organized business with international, national and local connections. At the Turkish-Bulgarian border in Kırklareli, it is believed that this business is run by a group of smugglers based in Istanbul to smuggle migrants to Europe. However, the local people, especially those living in the border villages, do not directly know or see the people or groups doing this work. They only see the miserable conditions of the migrants who fail to make the crossing and therefore they think that this situation is not very organized and systematic. However, there is a systematic migrant smuggling along this border in which locals cannot see the exact practitioners of this business. The locals in general are only aware of the fact that the migrants do not manage to cross the border or they are pushed back from the Bulgarian side frequently. However, there are some ‘drivers’ and ‘transporters’ among the locals whom the immigrants offer money to take them back to their safe haven, which they call ‘*mektep*’ in İstanbul. Indeed, by returning to the main practitioners of this smuggling business with international relations and with whom they have made an agreement in İstanbul, the irregular/illegal immigrants aim to try to cross the border again without being locked up in the Pehlivanköy removal center or sent back to their country. In that sense, I tried to examine the 'local' pillars of this migrant smuggling activity and came to the conclusion that the group that transports migrants from Kırklareli to İstanbul or places near İstanbul, take some risks which may contribute them financially, but this job is not profitable for them as much as other associated partners in the smuggling business.

On the other hand, I interviewed people who bring products such as alcoholic beverages and cigarettes into Turkey from Bulgaria. That kind of small-scale smuggling activities of local residents in Kırklareli all tried to be justified as the products have a very high tax rate in Turkey. Those small-scale smugglers are mostly Bulgarian Turk immigrants who have citizenships on both sides. Since they do not need a visa to enter or leave the two countries, they can cross the border frequently, and since they know the customs officials, they have no problems transporting these goods. Those who do not have dual citizenship have been in this business since the Bulgarian lev was cheaper than the Turkish lira, and they explained that they can find a market in Kırklareli because alcoholic beverages and cigarettes are very expensive in Turkey. It turned out that about five years ago, in the mid-2010s, they could get long-term visas when applying for visas to enter Bulgaria and that this business was usually done by everyone in Kırklareli because the Bulgarian lev was not that valuable. But especially with Bulgaria's accession to the EU, the appreciation of the lev against the Turkish lira and the difficulties in getting long-term visas, this is no longer possible for people who do not have dual citizenship.

But while crossing the border has become increasingly difficult for the Turks, it has become easier and more advantageous for the Bulgarians. Since Bulgarian daily shoppers can buy all products except alcoholic beverages and cigarettes at very low prices, and since they can cross the border only with their ID cards, it has been concluded that they buy goods in Kırklareli in large quantities beyond their personal needs, which, according to the observations of local shopkeepers, they take back to their home country and sell there. Since many points distinguish this situation from the suitcase trade in İstanbul Laleli, where Russians order textile products in batches and bring them back to their countries, I preferred not to call it suitcase trade, but informal/petty suitcase trade, which is another advantage of the border for Bulgarians.

To conclude, in sociologic and anthropologic studies, there is little attention to border crossers such as daily or seasonal workers, shoppers and tourists when it is compared to refugees and any kind of immigrants (Wilson, 2023, pg.36). The difference between international tourists as daily visitors, shoppers or travelers and other migrants is that, in tourism, borders are expected to be open, easy to cross and the right to travel is expected to be granted equally to all. At the same time, however, the paradox is that borders may differ in their potential to be crossed by countries on

either side of the border due to political reasons and strong security concerns. According to Bianchi and Stephenson (2023), at the frontiers of Europe and the Mediterranean, the mobility injustices are starkly revealed (pg.78). As those borders are both a place of intense demands of tourism as well as excessive fluxes of immigrants, they inevitably become the place of different mobility regimes and border governance. By making use of digital technology of bordering and surveillance, as well as the visa regimes applied differently for each and every country's citizen, it becomes easier to travel for affluent tourists while it is becoming more complex for *persona non grata*. In the globalization, there are "increased demarcations between "desirable" and "undesirable" mobilities, once seen by rich nations as essential to economic growth, is now being perceived as a prevailing threat" (Bianchi & Stephenson, 2023, pg. 82). Therefore, free movement of people within the borders of the European Union, can be attributed to the effectiveness of its policies that allow them to regulate their borders in terms of migration and tourism. However, the fact that these policies cannot be applied in the rest of the world may also be due to the discriminatory nature of those same policies.

Although borders are supposed to be equally attractive to both sides, there might be a disconnect in the right of travel and in the application of policies and visa requirements with respect to two countries separated by a border. Crossing border even for just pleasure or for daily visits, not to mention immigrants who forced to migrate and maneuver for crossing border illegally, reveal the magnitude of mobility inequalities for each party of the same border. As a result, by this dissertation, for further studies on borders all around the world, I offer that one and the same border can construct different subject positions for people living on both sides of the border, and that in the light of all the data, border is an element that brings different sociological, economic and political variables together, while crystallizing inequalities, intertwining unequal subjects, and pushing ordinary beings into different legal and illegal acts.

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