PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE TURKISH WORKERS LIVING ABROAD REGARDING INTEGRATING WITH THE HOST SOCIETY

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Abstract - Migration, immigrants and matters related to their integration with the host society are the common problem of societies around the world. In this study, the adaptation problems of the Turkish workers abroad are addressed by asking three basic questions to the sample group. Out of these questions in the first question the participants are asked whether they have been subjected to discrimination abroad and it has been determined that 26% of the participants were either subjected to discrimination or witnessed Turkish workers who had been subjected to discrimination. The distribution of those also differs who declared that they had been subjected to discrimination according to various countries. Among the participants, 83% of those (5 persons) who went to Russia, 30.5% of those (29 persons) who went to Germany, 25% of those (1 person) who went to the Netherlands, 11.7% of those (2 persons) who went to S. Arabia, and 20% of those (1 person) who went to the US have declared that they experienced discrimination at different levels. It is evident that the share of the sample is insufficient in the samples other than that of Germany. However, these numbers are nevertheless given because they allow us to make a rough comparison.

Keywords - Turkey, Turkish Workers, Immigration of Workers, Integration with the Host Society

I. INTRODUCTION

Millions of Turkish citizens live and reside abroad. At the same time, a significant portion of those people are in the position of being a citizen of the countries where they are located. Similarly, some of those people are also in the position of dual citizens. As Germany is the only country which does not accept dual citizenship in the world and vast majority of the Turkish citizens abroad are located in Germany, it may be said that the Turkish expats have problems in this matter. This situation regarding Germany has become synonymous with the Turkish expats experiencing a problematic integration process abroad when other factors, which are valid for other countries, are added into the picture.

In this study, it is attempted to obtain detailed information regarding the integration problems of the expats by making interviews with 146 expats. However, most of the participants have chosen to respond to the questions briefly even if the questions are open ended questions. In the interviews, questions were asked regarding whether the expats have experienced discrimination especially in the process of looking for jobs and generally during their lives, whether they had difficulties in adapting to the host society and finally what the expats were thinking about whether it was unjust and excessive for the host countries to request adaptation from the expats and what their comments were regarding this matter, and the responses given for those questions are arranged and transformed into a text.

The subject of integration is one of the most fragile subjects of the contemporary studies on power. Indeed, it may be argued that there is not a full consensus regarding what the definition of the concept of integration should be. Thus, the concept of integration in the literature comes to the agenda and is discussed in a wide range starting from adapting into the system in terms of obeying the laws to assimilation in terms of fully becoming one of the members of the host society socially and culturally. In this study, the integration problems of Turkish expats abroad are addressed with a bifurcated approach as integration into the system in terms of obeying the laws and as social integration in terms of participating into the social life.

II. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TARGET POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The data of this study is obtained through interviewing technique. A total of 146 expats have participated into the interviews. Short questions composed of open ended questions are asked to the expats and the frequency and percentage of the given responses are separately calculated. The vast majority of these expats are composed of expats who went to Germany. With 95 persons, the number of those who went to this country has a high percentage of 65.5% in the total target population of the study. However, in the target population of the study, there are expats who went to 19 separate countries. In other words, the number of people who went to countries other than Germany is very low. Indeed, the number of other countries where people went as workers and the number of people are as follows: S. Arabia (17 persons); Russia (6 persons); the US (5 persons); the Netherlands (4 persons); the UK, France and Iran (2

persons for each country); Afghanistan, Japan, Romania, Canada, Belgium, Italy, Austria, Turkmenistan, Sweden, Kazakhstan and Libya (1 person for each country). As it is seen, although the European countries represent the region where the Turkish expats have intensely went to work, it is striking that outside of Europe the second country which was went to work is S. Arabia. On the other hand, almost all of the expats are composed of manual workers and most of those workers have been employed as construction and factory workers. This also means that the percentage of qualified workers leaving Turkey to work abroad is pretty low. Indeed, some of the previously conducted studies provide significant information in this matter. For instance, the study conducted by Abadan-Unat in 1972 revealed that about 60 or 70 percent of the Turkish workers leaving Turkey to work abroad were elementary school graduates and the remaining individuals were either just literate or illiterate people. Again, in the same study, the percentage of qualified workers was 16 percent among the Turkish workers while it was a very high number among the Yugoslavian workers which was 55 percent. Another meaning of these numbers not in themselves but in the daily life is that the Turkish workers would be subjected to treatment that may mean more discrimination or that may be interpreted as discriminatory when compared to the Yugoslavian workers. Indeed, the findings revealed by this study are greatly such as to support this prediction precisely.

III. PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES REGARDING DISCRIMINATION

Among the target population of the study, a total of 38 expats have declared that they had experienced discrimination abroad at various levels. Out of those expats, 6 persons have indicated that they had been initially subjected to discrimination for various reasons, however as they got to know people and learn the ways and languages of their countries, the discrimination was eliminated and discrimination even was replaced with good relations. Again, one of those expats indicated that he/she did not experience any discrimination, however witnessed those who had been subjected to discrimination. As such, the number of those who indicated that they had been subjected to discrimination or they had seen others being subjected to it corresponds to 26% of the total target population of the study. Ideally and theoretically, discrimination may not be accepted whatever the reason is, and this percentage may be considered as extremely high. However, as one goes into the details of the daily life, it will be understood that this discrimination is not just about identity, race or ethnicity, but it almost always completely relies on cultural stereotypes and it is a problem of communication regarding those who don't know the language.

On the other hand, the percentages of those vary who indicated that they had been subjected to discrimination according to countries. Among them, 83% of those who went to Russia (5 persons), 30.5% of those who went to Germany (29 persons), 25% of those who went to the Netherlands (1 person), 11.7% of those who went to S. Arabia and 20% of those who went to the US have indicated that they had experienced discrimination at various levels. It is clear that the share of samples other than Germany is insufficient. However, these numbers are nevertheless given to provide an idea and to be able to make a comparison. Among those numbers, the samples of Germany and partially the samples of Russia are in a condition to be interpreted. In the basis of discrimination in Germany, the abovementioned lack of communication based on cultural and linguistic differences may be determined. If it is necessary to seek a reason beyond this, a reference may be made to the "racism" approach which is frequently mentioned regarding Germans. And the situation regarding the Russians may be based on a historical Turkish-Russian rivalry and conflict beyond lack of communication. Indeed, in the imagination of the Turkish people, the impressions regarding Russians are not very positive. In fact, the negativity regarding this matter may not even be compared with the Germans. For instance, the Turkish proverbs are pretty suggestive regarding this matter. One of those proverbs says "You can't get a hide from the bear, and you can't make a friend from the Russians" Also, expressions which are derogatively used among the public such as "Son of a Russian" or "Offspring of a Russian" may be added. It would not be an extreme thought to imagine that similar expressions would prevail among Russians. Thus, the fact that the citizens of the Republic of Turkey state that they had encountered more discrimination coming from the Russians when compared to other countries may be based on a historical, sociological and socio-psychological basis.

The participants in the target population of the study have expressed their experiences regarding discrimination in various ways. Those who experienced discrimination in Germany have expressed themselves as such: P9 (Germany): "Yes, I have experienced discrimination. I had difficulties in finding jobs as they were giving more jobs and higher salaries to the citizens of their own countries, and after finding a job, I even saw that no legal action is taken regarding this discrimination and no precautions are taken." P28 (Germany): "Yes, I experienced discrimination. While a worker was being selected, the Turks were being selected for the jobs the latest." P42 (Germany): "Yes. I experienced serious discrimination both because I am a Turk and also I am a woman. I am able to get much lower

salary despite the fact that I do the same job with the same performance as men. The worst and lowest paid jobs are given to Turks in the factories." P43 (Germany): "You experience discrimination in every aspect. The Turks are a shoved and marginalized community there. Regarding jobs, Turks are never given any priority." P44 (Germany): "Yes, I experienced discrimination. They were not enthusiastic about hiring me because I am a Turk." P96 (Germany): "Yes I experienced, there were places that did not hire me because I am a Turk." P97 (Germany): "Yes I experienced, they gave the easiest jobs to the members of their nationality, but they let us do the dirty and difficult jobs." P109 (Germany): "Yes I experienced it. The Turks were discriminated because they were Turks." P115 (Germany): "Yes I experienced. They did not like Turks much. They used to give us the toughest jobs." P126 (Germany): "As it happens everywhere, we have also experienced discrimination coming from different sections of the society. Now, think about Turkey, there are people coming from Syria. Some sections of the society embrace them and some other sections ask why we have to share our bread with them. They (the Syrians) have privileges everywhere. However, actually there are people who think that we are citizens of Turkey but they have more rights than us, Germany was exactly like this. Some of them did not want us while some of them embraced us. Indeed, because of that we the Turks were employed in the toughest jobs." P144 (Germany): "Yes, I experienced. There were accusations because I was a foreigner."

Those who went to S. Arabia expressed their experiences in the following manner: P14 (S. Arabia): "Yes, there was no hospitality." P41 (S. Arabia): "Discrimination happens inevitably. Regarding jobs, the priority was given to their own citizens not because we were Turks, just because we were foreigners. And this caused us to have difficulties in our jobs."

Finally, the expats who went to Russia expressed the discrimination that they had experienced in the following manner: P85 (Russia): "Occasionally, I experienced discrimination. There was a racist attitude." P89 (Russia): "I experienced it. I was treated like a second class person." P143 (Russia): "Yes I experienced it. I had difficulties in finding jobs when I first went (to Russia)."

As it is seen, the perception of discrimination that comes to the fore is manifested as "not being able to find a job", "being preferred the least" and "not being preferred." It is clear that such situations are not fully discrimination; they are rather experiences that are encountered due to lack of communication based on cultural and linguistic differences as mentioned above and that need to be perceived as normal. However, concrete cases are mentioned beyond these experiences. For instance, an expat woman pointed out a sexist incident. Another expat pointed out a racist incident and many expats pointed out that they had been degraded and discriminated by being employed in the jobs with low social prestige which are expressed as the most difficult and the "dirtiest" jobs.

IV. PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE EXPATS REGARDING ADAPTATION PROBLEMS

The participants in the target population of the study were also asked whether they had experienced any adaptation problems culturally abroad. Within the target population of the study, 56.8% of the expats which is 83 persons in 146 indicated that they experienced adaptation problems, and the remaining 43% which is the remaining 63 persons indicated that they did not experience such a problem. As it is expected, more than half of the participants have declared that they had experienced adaptation problems abroad. A significant portion of those who had indicated that they had adaptation problems emphasized culture, language and habits. Out of them, a significant portion have indicated that they were able to overcome the adaptation problem over time. A significant portion of those who indicated that they did not experience any adaptation problems provided certain answers such as "No" or "No. I did not experience any problems." If we consider some of the answers given by the participants such as "No, why would I experience a problem?", "No, I did not experience any problems, because I am a harmonious person", "… because I am a warm person" it appears that those participants have perceived the matter of adaptation not as a matter of dual and reciprocal interaction, but as a matter of personal and subjective matter. If this was not a problem of subjectification and the question was understood correctly and in full, possibly the ratio of those who indicated that they had experienced adaptation problems would be much higher.

However, a significant number of participants have understood this question right and they have given original answers. The expressions of those who indicated that they had experienced adaptation problems are as such: P2: "Every person is used to the culture in his/her own country and has problems with getting used to other cultures, but after a certain amount of time the person gets used to the new culture, we also had difficulties in the beginning but later we got used to the new culture." P3: "I definitely experienced adaptation problems, every country and every people have different cultures but if you live in their country you have to obey their rules and culture and I got used to the culture gradually despite that I had difficulties in the beginning" P5: "Even though I had some problems initially, I had to get used to it

(the culture) unwillingly, and because of this I did not think about this matter thoroughly." P8: "I surely experienced adaptation problems, I missed the culture of my country, but I was unable to find a way of getting what I wanted, I was unable to find the food, the wedding ceremonies, and the customs of my home country, after some time I started getting used to the culture here" P34: "Yes, I had adaptation problems for sure. Not knowing the language made it difficult to adapt. Also there was a very different cultural structure than our own culture. And this made us look like faulty." P99: "It is very different from Turkey where I was born and grew up, and a lot of different religions coexisted here. This inevitably causes a conflict." P113: "We definitely had adaptation problems at the beginning. But as they are more disciplined than us, we got used to them after some time and we also started to like it." P133: "I had adaptation problems in my relations with my neighbors."

As it is seen, the expats especially pointed out cultural, linguistic and lifestyle differences alongside with differences of rules regarding adaptation problems. They also added that they were able to overcome these differences by time and at least at the sufficient level. Another important point is that the expats were highly aware that they were respectful for the rules and lifestyle of another country and they were the ones who needed to adapt.

Most of the participants who indicated that they did not experience any adaptation problems indicated that they did not experience this problem by pointing out that the number of citizens of the Republic of Turkey abroad was plenty. There were also different approaches indicating that they did not experience such problems because they were curious about the culture of the country that they went and they liked to live in a modern way. In short, except those who said "I did not experience any problems", some of the responses that interpret the subject and point out to different points are as such: P6: "The conditions there were just for me as I was a little bit more modern. I was unable to act as I wanted to in my country and to enjoy from my life, (now I am able to do it here) thus I did not have any problems." P84: "It may not be argued that I am having a lot of adaptation problems. Because of accepting workers, Germany has already become like a Turkish homeland." P91: "I did not have much adaptation problems. I did not go out alone and establish relations with the people outside. I generally went out with my husband if I was to go out. We already lived in the Turkish neighborhood." P92: "No, I did not experience any adaptation problems. Generally, there were Turks in my neighborhood. I had my adaptation with them easily." P96: "I did not have any adaptation problems because I generally respected their culture." P97: "I got used to the environment when compared to the elders as I was not old when I went there. For that reason, I did not have any problems." P98: "I did not have any adaptation problems as they were living systematically." P9: "I did not, because there were Turks there and we mingled with them, the traditions of Germans are not binding for us, but their attitudes were good, they were respectful."

As it is seen, among the participants, a significant portion of those who indicated that they did not have any problems abroad do not perceive the matter of adaptation as being within the borders of a different country and being subjected to the rules of another state and having difficulties in daily life in this regard, quite contrarily they perceive the matter of adaptation as intermingling with the Turks or foreigners. This is a typical reflex of the pastoral societies. The people of pastoral societies produce a mechanical solidarity reflex in such situations, not an organic solidarity reflex. And the responses given by the Turkish nationals living abroad belong to the group of responses which completely remind us of these types of mechanical solidarist, feudal conceptions. However, besides those who indicated that they were modern in terms of their lifestyles and thusly they did not have any adaptation problems, there are also individuals who indicated that they did not have any problems in adapting into the environment as they went abroad at an early age. These types of responses are the answers that relate the problem with being closer to the urban culture and lifestyle with a more modern understanding.

V. REACTIONS OF THE EXPATS AGAINST THE ENVIRONMENT AND RULES OF THE FOREIGN COUNTRY REQUESTING ADAPTATION

The participants in the target population of the study were asked the question of "Is it an unjust and excessive expectation for the people abroad to ask Turks to obey social and legal laws?" and almost always a positive response was obtained from them such as "No, it is not an unjust expectation." While 94.6% of the participants provided the response of "No, it is not an unjust expectation", the remaining 5.4% have provided the response of "Yes, it is an unjust and excessive expectation" from different perspectives.

It is understood that the participants out of the expats who provided a negative answer to this question such as "Yes, it is an unjust and excessive expectation" have addressed the issue correctly in a two-layered way. The first layer out of those layers is the legal rules, and the expats have no opposition regarding this matter and they are highly respectful towards the legal rules. However, they provide the comment which is "Yes, it is an unjust and excessive expectation" when they relate the request for

adaptation with the customs and traditions, style of dressing and behaviors. Here, it is seen that the expats, without knowing the scientific details, have made a differentiation between "Integration into the system" and "Social integration" that Husserl pointed out, and this is very striking. The expats approve and accept integration into the system and accept obeying the legal rules with extreme respect, however when it comes to social integration they request time and tolerance; this request is a request which is responded positively all around the world. The practical approach that comes to the fore around the world regarding minorities and immigrants is the first group's loyalty and adaptation, and the second group's tolerance. While it is necessary to obey the rules and adapt to the social structures, it is accepted as a basic principle for the states to be tolerant towards individuals and groups coming from different social and cultural backgrounds. Even if it is at the level of 5.4%, among the expressions the most striking ones that scrutinize and criticize the matter of adaptation are as such: P52: "It is necessary to obey the legal rules, and in the social life there needs to be mutual respect." A similar interpretation is the following: P124: "From a social perspective, yes, it is unjust!" Another expat asks for tolerance: P43: "Everybody may not get used to it (the social environment, rules, etc.). There needs to be some goodwill." Another expat indicates that this request is an excessive request in terms of its social dimension by pointing out to the difficulty of changing habits by saying: P121: "Yes, it is unjust. Because we were unable to adapt."

The other majority group of expats indicates that the adaptation requested by the foreign countries needed to be performed without any questioning and express the following statements in this matter: P1: "I am a lawyer and I was a graduate student of law when I was there. A country has legal rules and every country who earns his/her living and resides there needs to obey those laws. In my opinion, it is not an excessive expectation." As it is seen, this participant overlaps his/her profession with his/her legal approach by indicating that he/she is a lawyer. The lawyer expat kept integration into the system outside of the discussion so much so that he did not consider the fact that thinking within the legal grounds in matters having a social dimension may produce negative outcomes. Even if he/she knows this, for the purpose of emphasizing the significance of integration, the expat has displayed well-intentioned behavior in favor of the social dimension and a "benign neglect" behavior in favor of the foreign country.

Other remarks of the citizens of the Republic of Turkey regarding adaptation request abroad are as such: P2: "In my opinion it is not an excessive request, every person needs to respect the rules of the country where he/she earns his/her bread." P3: "It is a necessary request. Every person needs to obey the rules where he/she lives." P4: "Each country has its own unique rules and every person living within the boundaries of that country needs to obey those rules." P5: "Every person needs to obey the rules of the country where he/she lives or visits. If someone in your country does not obey your rules, would you like it? Think of it this way if you want." P6: "each country has its own unique rules and whoever you are, you need to obey those rules if you are within that country. And this expectation is not an excessive expectation in my opinion." P7: "No it is not an excessive request, people need to respect the rules and every country has its own rules and we need to respect them." P8: "Each country has its own rules. Everyone needs to obey the rules of the country and in my opinion this is a very reasonable expectation." P9: "No, I never think like that, when they obey the rules in their own countries, it is a very reasonable thing to expect us to obey those rules. If we show empathy, we would be in the same situation." P10: "No it is not an excessive request, if they were in Turkey, we would expect them to do the same thing." P11: "No, it is not excessive. If we live in a different country, we need to obey the rules." P90: "No, it is not excessive. No separate rules are applied to the Turks living abroad. Turks were expected to obey the rules that their own citizens needed to obey. Is it correct to adapt to the environment when you go to a place or is it correct to expect the people there to adapt to you?"

As it is seen, the vast majority of the expats have responded to the adaptation, which the host countries requested from the workers and immigrants, positively and without questioning and even with much optimism, and they agreed that the adaptation request was a rightful request. This approach is an opinion and an attitude regarding how much the Turkish people deem it necessary to obey the rules of the country where they reside abroad. This attitude is undoubtedly very valuable. However, it also needs to be remembered that actions are different and independent of attitudes. In this regard, by leaving a room for flexibility, the reflexes and attitudes of the expats regarding adaptation can't be appreciated enough. It is known that the majority of the expats belong to the lower income and educational level and it also needs to be remembered that in such circumstances, those who violate the rules are mostly from the upper income and educational levels, not from the lower levels. It is known that the people from the upper income and educational levels display more self-assured and bolder attitudes and they approach issues from a more critical perspective. The only problem of the lower level group is really the lack of information and knowledge. Regarding the adaptation problems of the expats abroad, addressing their problems and providing information would be

the most effective ways. Developing projects by the related countries would be able to provide extremely positive outcomes.

VI. CONCLUSION

The matter of integration is a valid and significant problem for all kinds of immigrants changing their countries or even for those who change their cities. As everyone is in a mobile position in the contemporary world, another meaning of the previous statement is that nowadays one of the most important problems of the world is the matter of integration. A significant portion of the international mobile population is composed of the workers. The workers are away from integration culturally even though they are closer to integration through their intentions. The Turkish workers exactly have the same situation. As it is also indicated by the research data, the Turkish workers abroad characterize the adaptation expected of them by the countries where they went as a normal and appropriate expectation, not as an excessive and unjust expectation. However, in terms of intentions and psychologically, it is not sufficient for people to perceive adaptation positively. In order to adapt, an appropriate cultural infrastructure and a relatively high social capital are also required. As it happens for every immigrant, also in the immigrant workers and Turkish workers abroad, the integration process is generally interrupted when the cultural infrastructure and social capital are not sufficient. In such cases, as they are expressed in the literature, both integration into the system, and social and cultural integration are interrupted. However, the well-intentioned and positive approach encountered among the Turkish workers at least acts as a factor that guarantees integration into the system to a great extent. Social integration is based on time and cultural integration is based on choice. A vast section of the Turkish workers abroad have been integrated into the system and they have come to the point of resolving the issue of social integration. Although the problem is largely resolved for those who were able to make their minds about cultural integration, for those whose minds are confused, this process continues to become a big problem. To solve this problem, the things that need to be done by the homeland and the opportunities that it needs to provide have to be carried out.

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