



“You Know, We Live in Fear”: Transit Migrants with Their Neglected Disabilities in Istanbul-Kumkapı

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Abstract

When migrants are not able to reach their target country, they stop by in other countries on their migration route. Kumkapı area is one of the passing points for Europe targeted migration, which is home to long periods of waiting. This study will talk about the obstacles the international migrants go through in Kumkapı-İstanbul region; the immigrants who have left their home and try to keep their culture alive in a place they do not belong to. The obstacles these transit immigrants experience in an urban environment without the facility of making use of public and other services are reviewed with the ethnography method. Kumkapı area has been a transforming area since 1970's, and currently has a social mosaic that is filled with illegality and poverty. This region, which can be called an area of the excluded, has become an area that never gets visited by the other classes of the society.

Keywords:

Transit Migration, Neglected Disabilities, Kumkapı, İstanbul

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INTRODUCTION

A city is a place in which strangers always have to live together. Migratory movements have a lot of diversity, which strengthens the urban environments by enabling strangers to meet and live together. The concept of illegal and transit migration has an impact on our cities in economic and social spheres. The European Union region has become the main geographically and economically targeted area (Böcker&Havinga, 1997; Boswell, 2005). In order to diminish the migratory pressure, the European Union solidifies its immigration policies and is more careful about border checks. Therefore, international immigrants are having to use illegal ways or pass transit. There are human smugglers who have encouraged illegal and transit immigration since the 1990's, and many immigrants have had to stay in intermediate routes on their way to the EU. Because of its geopolitically close position to Europe, Turkey has been one of the countries which have been affected by these movements for the last 20 years. Transit migration take longer than it is usually expected. Therefore, new precautions and policies are trying to be implemented to prevent the migration in transit regions.

Immigrations mostly try to settle (legally or illegally) in a certain geographical region (Portes&Robert, 1986). Actually, in the cities, there are no allocated areas for immigrants, but due to their social network and areas, their density starts being visible after a while. In Istanbul, Kumkapı is one of the areas in which such illegal immigrants are dense. At that point, although Kumkapı is a central area, it is the home of various secluded, informal sectors, regardless of its governance (such as foreigners' guesthouse).

TRANSIT MIGRANTS AND BEING DISABLED

This study, which claims transit migrants to be disabled groups, has been based on the World Health Organization's definition of disability. Accordingly, disability is the restriction on a person's role, or that person's inability to realize an activity within the normal ways or according to the accepted norms, because of some restriction or incapability or disability they have, regardless of their age, sex, social and cultural factors (WHO, 2001). The theoretical and practical approaches towards disability was initially about having a medical impairment. However, as of 1950-60's, due to the social model understanding, the definition of impairment has slightly changed. As of that period, the word impairment has been replaced by disability. The measurement of disability according to the ratio of the society's reaction on disability is in the foreground of the social model.

According to that, what makes a person disabled is not the disability itself, but the society's disabling attitude towards disability. We believe that, as part of the social model, it would be appropriate to classify any excluded or disadvantageous groups in the society as disabled. Transit migrants are one of those disadvantageous groups.

Turkey approaches the disabled from a medical viewpoint, and only comes up with a mixed model by adding social models on top of the traditional approach (Özgökçeler ve Alper, 2010). Statistically, disabled people make up 10% of the world population (600 million people) (WHO, 2011). In Turkey, 12.29% of the population is disabled (around 10 million people) (EYH, 2002). 3,2% of the world population is made up of immigrants (232 million people)(UN, 2013). Officially, Turkey has 1,3 million immigrants (Sirkeci, 2013). However, considering the number of illegal immigrants and refugees, the real figure is much higher than that. In comparison to the world ratio, one third of Turkey's disabled population is made up of illegal/transit/refugee migrants. Transit migrants represent a large number of people who are devoid of social rights, as part of the human rights, and socially excluded. These migrants try to continue their lives in challenging conditions. Their rights of movement are legally bound. Also, they are at the bottom level in terms of economic life standards (Yılmaz, 2013). That is because, illegal migrants are usually people with low income and education, considered as unqualified labour, and are mainly made up of young men (UTSAM, 2012).

These transit migrants, who are supposed to have the natural human rights just because they are human beings, actually do not have them, just like the disabled. According to Duffy (1995), social exclusion means not being involved in the economic, political and cultural life, alienation and being distant from the rest of the society. Those who are excluded from the society vary from one society to another. In many countries, although cognate migration is considered disorganized/illegal, it gets accepted quickly; whereas, non-cognate migration is also not accepted in the same way but leads to a bit amount of exclusions. The same way, belonging to the same religion is also a widely accepted norm.

As transit migrants come from their homes where there is poverty, war or other problems, naturally, they do not have any legal rights; thus, they do not belong anywhere and have a big, life-threatening disability. As their situation is temporary and illegal, they do not try to claim any rights. The biggest problem is their lack of economic resources. Their unfamiliarity with the country's language is another obstacle. Various legal, bureaucratic, economic, social and linguistic obstacles turn them

into invisible disabled. The fact that they do not have any organizations or institutions that they can make claims to puts them in a very disadvantageous position. They try to continue their lives temporarily at the transit stops, and try to work so that they can earn some money to get to target country as soon as possible. That is a very difficult process, which forces illegal migrants to consult to illegal ways to survive. They have to settle in the remotest, darkest and worst locations. As a result of these factors, transit migrants represent a completely disabled group that is legally, socially, economically and locationally excluded.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the social, legal and economic obstacles that transit migrants face in their daily life have been presented in their own words with an ethnographic method. Ehrkamp and Leitner (2006) mention that, it is possible to witness migrants' daily life, troubles and struggle by means of ethnographic studies (unstructured and deeply-structured meetings) in the environments they live. In ethnographic research, it is possible to use more than one method, such as questionnaires, observations, records, etc. (Goulding, 2003: 299). As the researcher has to spend a certain amount of time with the groups (Elliot and Elliot, 2003:216) as part of the research, the group was observed over a period of summer time (July-September 2007 and August-September 2008). Ethnographic method is gaining more importance in refugee and immigrant studies. In the study, half of the participants observed the activities of the migrant groups with the observation method. The reason for using the summer period for the study is because the migrants are more visible and denser in the area during this period.

In the study, there were sessions with 22 transit migrants. These were 12 women and 10 men. Also, 8 of them had an ongoing process of being deported at the Foreigners Office, and they were seen with the permission of the police officers in the Foreigners' Guesthouse. 7 of the migrants were from Senegal, 2 from Somali, 2 from Moldova, 25 from Ethiopia and the remaining were from Ukraine, Azerbaijan and other African countries. There were also deep sessions with 6 people in the region who were; 2 pharmacists, 1 butcher, 1 call shop owner, 1 restaurant owner and 1 doctor. In addition, there were sessions with a total of 5 police officers; 1 Foreigners' Branch Director and 4 officers from different foreigners' units. The sessions were voice recorded and the transcriptions were reviewed. The people's personal information has been protected due to ethical reasons. The study area covers residence units from 3 different neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods are: Katip Kasım,

Nişanca and Muhsine Hatun. The study area has been limited to the main roads and areas in which the migrants live.

THE FREIGHTENING LIFE OF THE TRANSIT MIGRANTS IN ISTANBUL-KUMKAPI

Kumkapı region is a residence area located in the south-eastern part of Istanbul's historical peninsula, which has deep-rooted past and historical values. Historically, due to its geographical position along the coast line, it was used for port and dock activities (Müller – Wiener, 2003). Due to being close to the historical peninsula's market area and Topkapı Palace, Kumkapı was a busy district during the Ottoman empire period (Akın, 1999). It is surrounded by commercial centres Aksaray, Beyazıt and Laleli, which are still very busy today. The railway line which was built in the mid-19th century constrained Kumkapı's contact with the sea. Also, after the sea was filled up in the mid-20th century, the coastal highway (Kennedy Road) was built, which caused Kumkapı to lose its connection with the sea completely (Üner, 2006:14). In the beginning of the 20th century, Topkapı Palace lost its administrative authority, and Sultanahmet and its surrounding areas were turned into tourist attractions. After that change, as part of Kumkapı area is physically close to the centre, it is used as an area of tourist attraction and for food and beverage. In addition, Kumkapı's importance for the religious institutions (especially the Armenian Patriarchate and St. Mary's Church) in the mid-17th century is still valid today (Üner, 2006:14-15).

According to the study of Kelly Brewer and Deniz Yüksek (2006), there were 4,000-6,000 transit migrants in Istanbul, and that number decreased following the transit to Europe, Canada and USA in the summer, but increased in the winter. Although it is hard to come up with an exact number for the transit migrants in Istanbul metropole, the estimated number will be much lower than the real number, due to the economic activities off the record. The statistics from the Police Headquarters support this assumption. According to the data from Foreigners' Branch Administration, in 2008, the number of deported people was 29 each day. The total recorded number of deported illegal migrants from 2001 to until May 2007 was 64,700. This data does not include those who are given residence permits, released and whose refugee applications were accepted. We also need to add that there are migrants who cannot be arrested.

Kumkapı area is located in the Aksaray-Laleli line. This line is densely inhabited by people who try to form a living strategy by doing suitcase trade and trade in other informal sectors. A pharmacist has highlighted that, the migrants started

settling in this area as of 1980's. The first comers were rich people who came from The United Arab Emirates between 1985-87. During that period, they came here as a summer activity, rented apartments and then stayed for a longer period of time. After the dissolution of the Eastern Block, there were migrants from Romania. Those who came after 1990's are usually Polish, Russian, Albanian and Macedonian people. Recently, it is reported that Armenians above their middle age are coming to the area, and it is also being used by illegal migrants that came from different areas of Africa. As the area is close to the historical and touristic areas, there have been many hotels built. The small sized hotels, hostels and guesthouses then became a home for crimes such as prostitution, drug dealing and human smuggling (Sever, et al. 2007). With its single person rooms and hotels, Aksaray-Laleli continues being an attractive living centre off the record (Danış 2004:14). The police officers in the sessions have mentioned that prostitution and human smuggling in the area still continue to a large extent.

The Foreigners' Guesthouse of the Police Headquarters is also located in this area, which is the starting point for the study. The guesthouse opened on 3 April 2007. The guesthouse building is on an enclosed land of 7,000 m², and has a capacity of 600 beds; 400 for men and 200 for women. The building has a restaurant, lawyer meeting room and visitors room. The building has 3 floors; the first 2 floors are for men migrants and the top floor is for women.

Figure 1. Kumkapı Foreigners' Guesthouse.



Figure 1.

Foreign nationals are detained in Kumkapı Guesthouse for a variety of reasons, whether as a result of alleged criminal activity, illegal entry or exit from the country. This guesthouse is

a totally detention centre in which detainees are held involuntarily. In August 2007, the male migrants in the Guesthouse were mainly from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, and the female ones were mainly from Turkmenistan, Moldova and Uzbekistan. A woman police officers in the guesthouse said that, the women that came from the Turkic Republics have been through forced marriages and ran away here, leaving their husbands behind. Here, they make money on prostitution and send the money they earn to their children. In the guesthouse, 16 women stay in a single room (on bunk beds). The 3rd floor has a total of 120 migrant women. In this enclosed place, which is not much different to a prison, they are rarely allowed to walk in the courtyard.

The branch manager for the guesthouse says that, the main problem for the migrants who stay here is that they did not have any passport documents with them when they got caught. It takes longer to deport those who do not have any documents with them, which makes them have to stay in the guesthouse even longer. Especially, if the country they come from does not have a consulate in our country, they have to stay here for a very long period of time. They periodically identify which countries they have such trouble with, and try not to catch too many people from those countries. If they do, they give them temporary residence permit and release them after a while. A superintendent in the guesthouse said that, the most innocent group of migrant people who do not get involved in illegal activities are the ones from Somali. He also added that, for many illegal migrants, Turkey is "a target country by obligation." In the houses which are rented by human smugglers, there are up to 80 people living in one house.



Figure 2. Female migrants in the Forigners' Guesthouse.

Figure 2.

He said that, the Ministry of Employment and Social Security does not inspect the illegal activities in Laleli, and all the work has been dumped on the Foreigners' Branch. As the branch does not have sufficient personnel, the area is full of illegal migrants. Some of the migrants who came from the Turkic Republics are caught in some car parks in the area whilst they are sending goods and materials to their home country. As it is hard to get a work permit in Turkey, the migrants have to get involved in illegal activities. Whilst walking around with another police officer in the area, when he was asked whether the migrants would be able to go and sit in the nearby coffee houses, he answered that they would not allow any migrants in those coffee places.

The social facilities in the area in which the migrants are settled are 2 primary schools, 2 Byzantium Greek primary schools, 1 anti-tuberculosis dispensary, 1 private polyclinic (mostly used by the migrants) and 5 pharmacies. There are also 5 mosques and 3 churches as religious facilities. The main and back streets are full of call shops from which the migrants can make their international calls.

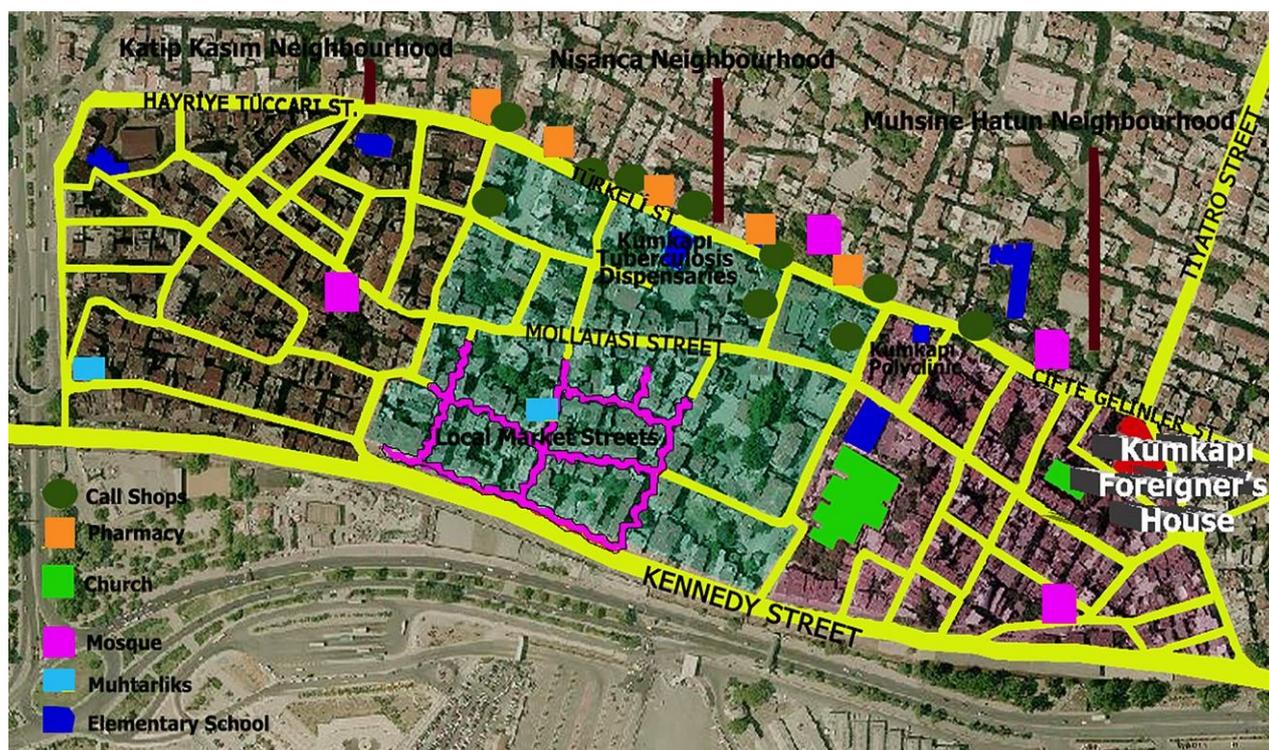


Figure3.

Figure 3.Kumkapı study area.

The areas in which the migrants are settled are usually Nişanca, Katip Kasım, Laleli, Langa and Kagir. A restaurant owner said that, after the Foreigners' Branch was opened, the area attracted many policemen, too. The other migrants living in the area were spoken to with the help of a call shop (international

calls) owner. He has migrant workers who do not have a work permit. The other call shops - which are plenty in the area - are also full of similar migrant workers. The main reason for that is because the migrants can speak the language of the other migrants. After a migrant starts working here, it becomes easier for the other migrants from the same country to come here. After a while, the area turns into a social meeting point for them.

The area also has a Turkish bath for men and women. There are laundries and dry cleaning shops that the migrants can easily use. In some streets, there are second hand and spot goods shops. The housing agencies are usually located in small shops in the basements. The area is also full of small hotels and guesthouses. The building groups in the area are quite old, disorganized and worn-out. A single housing unit is occupied by many families and crowded groups of people, and the house owners charge their rent in dollars or euros. Most young and male migrants live as 6-7 of them in a single room. Also, some of the female migrants that came from the Soviet Block who sleep in the houses they work in as a servant, have a day off in a week. 6-7 of such women rent a single room together so they can use it to sleep on their day off (Yılmaz, 2013). On their day off, they have the pleasure of staying in a place on their own.

The first sessions were done in a call shop in which Senegalese migrants work. This shop is located in Çifte Gelinler Road within 5 minutes' walking distance to the Foreigners' Branch. The Senegalese were communicated with, and the places they work were the ones that were most frequently visited during the study. The sessions later turned into a friendly relationship, which made it possible to compare the first pieces of information with the latter. During the study period, some migrants who were working illegally were caught by the policemen and brought to the Foreigners' Guesthouse. Later on, some of them were released, and some of them were taken into the process of deportation. One of the released migrants was seen to be employed in another call shop by the same owner. The African group was observed to have settled around the Katip Kasım Mosque. The Muslim ones preferred to settle and socialize around the mosque, like the Christian ones did the same around the church (Shepherd, 2006).

Because of the colour of their skin, the African migrants get spotted easily and they are the group that gets excluded the most. The area also has a large number of Kurdish transit immigrants who came from Eastern Anatolia. Kumkapı area has social networks which are very disconnected from one another. It is an area which is inhabited by migrants (both domestic and international) who are excluded from the society. They also

excluded one another within themselves. A doctor who works in the polyclinic said that, he sees Kumkapı as a mosaic of nations from 7 continents, and underlined that these migrants live without many basic human rights. The migrants have no security, support, education and health services. "State, country, nation, flag, border, language, religion, race, sect and colour have no importance for them. Most of them live "without papers," says the doctor. He serves these migrants who, he says, are subjected to police violence, deportation threats, bribery, forced prostitution, insults, degrading and racial discrimination.

Every Wednesday, there is a street market, in which poor Armenian migrants, African migrants who have no security and other illegal migrants from other places set up their market stalls and try to earn a crust (Kara and Karakuyu, 2009). The ones that come from the Old Soviet Block usually work in rich districts as cleaners, child, patient or elderly care workers. Migrants are positioned at the bottom level in every country. In Kumkapı, Turkey, they are at the bottom of the bottom. The doctor reports that the ones that are at the bottom of the bottom are the Bangladeshi people. From a social harmony point of view, having equal rights of education and health is a right and opportunity for a disable person, which reduces the future doubts of that person and the people around that person. It is very clear that the transit migrants are devoid of that.

Although these transit migrants plan to use Turkey as a passing point to reach Europe, the number of people who can achieve that are very few. The ones who stay in Turkey work in textile, shoe making and construction sectors at extremely low wages. The sectors they work in depend on the country they come from. They all have a tendency to get organized and inhabit certain areas within themselves. It can be reported that, the ones from the Philippines are all women and usually work in houses as child care workers or house keepers. The Armenian ones are the ones that stay the longest, and after a while, they settle here with their families. The social network of the Moldavian is relatively weaker. The most organized African group with strong social networks is Senegalese. They are even able to lead the other African groups, and they usually try to make their living by brokering in trade. The ones that come from East Africa (Somali, Sudan) are usually the ones who escaped war. Some Somalians are financially in a better position, but most of them are in a very bad position. The number of Ukrainians keep rapidly decreasing.

According to the police officers, those who have been caught because of prostitution usually deny it, and most of the female migrants are caught on prostitution. A Ukrainian migrant we had a session with was doing prostitution in a house near the guesthouse. She said that her house is also nearby. She has been

caught and released by the police 3 times. She explained that, she does not have any documents, Ukraine does not recognize her, Greece does not give her any paperwork, therefore she cannot get deported. She admitted, "Nobody wants to take me back." She said she does not get caught and brought to the Kumkapı Guesthouse that often, as the policemen already know her by now. The last time she got caught by a policeman was when she was taking her children to the Greek church.

Also two Tunisian migrants were interviewed in a street near the guesthouse. They claimed that they come here every two weeks for trade. When they were asked where they live, they answered Aksaray very timidly. The possibility of getting caught by the police any time usually makes the migrants feel uneasy. That is why, most of them did not want to speak.

Another woman staying in the guesthouse is from Ukraine and came here by meeting a Turkish person over the internet. She said, "There are no jobs in Ukraine, so we have to come here." She admitted that when she gets sent back to Ukraine, she will come back after 2-3 months until they forget about her. She also wants to come back having changed her age. She plans to set up her own business after she has worked here for 4-5 years. She said she is Christian but does not practise it that much, but she tries to become Muslim.

A male Azerbaijan migrant in the area has a local business that sells lahmacun. He has been in the area for the last 12 years and knows about the other families that come from Azerbaijan. He said those families usually work as interpreters in Laleli, and some of them do trade. He added, "There used to be an Azerbaijan Public Front Party in Aksaray where we used to get together, but it is no longer active." One of the male Senegalese migrants admitted that it is very hard to live here, because nobody respects the human rights. He tried to express his disappointment by saying, "They say Turkey is 100% Muslim, but that does not seem to be the case." He also expressed his surprise, "Young people here all say they want to go to Europe, why you have a lot of jobs here." He also added: "*Now, if we went out and walked on the street with you, they would swear at you. A friend of mine was going out with a Turkish girl for 2 years, but they asked her why she was going out with that animal, the foreigner. He wanted to marry her but he couldn't. There are some people here who married some Turkish people, but they can't go out together.*" He was kept in the guesthouse for 10 months, due to breach of law on his visa. He said, "*How is it ever possible, they need to release you within 24 hours. They let you go to find money for deportation. Then, they catch you working illegally. There is no food served in the guesthouse in the weekends. The canteen is very*

expensive. Sometimes a journalist comes, asks you questions and then he writes lies about us."

A Senegalese migrant married a Russian woman and had a daughter. He has been living here for the last 4 years and does not like it at all. He said he only lives here because he has to work. He mentioned that he does not talk to his neighbours because they are very ignorant. He said he has relatives in Italy, Spain and England, but he is not sure about going to Europe. When he was asked how he meets other Senegalese, he said, "There is a Senegalese Association and we organize tournaments." During the study, a group of Africans were observed going to see a football match. When they go to see a match together, they are exposed to hostile looks. 1-2 months after the first session, he got caught by the police and was taken to the guesthouse, after which we got permission from the police officers and saw him again. We found out that his wife had left her. He was not aware that he was in the process of being sent back to Senegal. He thought he would be released within a week. Although he had contradicting expressions, it was clear that he was trying to hold on to life and overcome the obstacles.

Two male migrants from the Philippines reported that they were here to go to Europe. He explained that, the rent for a single room was 500 tl and they have to pay a commission of 200 dollars and 400 tl deposit, which forces them to rent a room 10 people together. He complained that it was very dirty where he lived.

Another Senegalese migrant, a businessman, said that he has been living in Turkey for 9 years and married a Turkish woman 3 years after he first came here. He told us that he lives in Bakırköy, because this area is not appropriate for families. He explained that he is not a Turkish citizen yet. His skin was initially a concern for his neighbours, but they got used to it later on. When he was asked if his wife ever comes to Kumkapı, he answered no. When he was asked whether any of his friends in Kumkapı ever go to his house, he answered very rarely. He said, he does lace trading between Turkey and his family in Senegal. He gets the goods here and sends it over there, after which his family sells what he sent and sends the money he needs back to him. He calls his family in the call shops around here, and his family calls him on his mobile. He mentioned that he has cousins living in Europe. When he was asked if he wants to go to Europe, he answered no. He monitors his work in an internet café in Kumkapı. He also used to work as an interpreter for tradesmen.

Another Senegalese migrant works in a call shop. He has been living here for 5 years and his flat is opposite the Maryami Church with 4 rooms, and they live as 2 people in each room. The average rent for a single room is 200 dollars a month. The other

rooms are occupied by migrants from Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. They work in factories or shops. He said he does not talk to the other migrants, as he does not like the fact that they are not very clean. As they eat outside, they do not have a problem with flat sharing. He works from 9am to 12am, 15 hours a day. He said that he has been living here for 1,5 years. He used to work as an interpreter and sell watches etc. in the market. When he worked in the market, he used to get told off by the other people in the market or by some officers from the municipality. He added, "Those who came from Senegal with their wives would not live in Kumkapı, they are probably around Tarlabası or so." He says he is upset about his friends who got caught. He wants to either go back to Senegal or to Europe, as he does not want to live such misery here any more. He also added that, most people are not able to walk around in the street where the guesthouse is, because everybody is scared of the police, and he also tries not to pass by there.

When a migrant from Gambia was asked his first question, he answered, "I am scared of you, you will deport me." He has been living in Turkey for the last 9 years and has been married to a Turkish person for 4 years. He stated that Gambia is as small as Fatih district and everybody goes to England from there. He came here by mistake but wanted to stay as it is a Muslim country. When he was asked "How do Turkish people treat you?", he answered, "*They know about Africans since 1998, so it's quite new. Sometimes I ask someone a question and they run away. They say oh those cannibals. There are so many people like that, but it should be ok over time.*" He lives in Millet Road in Fatih and when he was asked if he would consider living in Kumkapı, he said, "I wouldn't live here even if it was for free. It so dirty here, so crowded, complicated, so many things, and it's expensive, this is the most expensive area." He said he usually says hi to the other African migrants but does not meet them very often, as he is usually busy with his job.

An Ethiopian woman migrant in the Foreigners' Guesthouse said she was brought here by human smugglers, from Syria to Antakya and then Kumkapı. She lived in a ground floor flat here with 27 people in for 5 months. She explained that they were all scared of going out in case they would get caught. Some of them worked as cleaners or care workers in some houses, and those who had money could be smuggled to Greece straight away. She made an application as a refugee, but was caught in the process and was brought here. She said she wants to live and work here.

Another woman migrant from Kenya who came to Turkey to work in a hotel as a masseur got caught for working illegally. She used to live in Taksim before she was brought to the

guesthouse. She has been living in various locations around Istanbul. She also reported that she is pregnant but can't reach her boyfriend, and she will go back to her job as a masseur, if she ever gets out. Finally, she summarized the life of the migrants by saying "You know we live in fear."

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The transit migrants see themselves as temporarily living here. However, their efforts of trying to go to Europe keeps getting harder, and because they are somehow able to make their living here, their stay gets longer. Most of them see this long stay as an obligation. They are stuck between a better future and the uncertainty of their situation. The hardest thing for these migrants is "living in fear." These migrants who have no residence and work permit try to relatively sort out their accommodation and work problems during their temporary stay in Turkey. This is due to the fact that the off the record economic activities are very common. However, staying illegally is a very tough process for them.

Most of them try to shelter in the worst and remotest parts of Istanbul, or in the ruined areas of the city centres. While men work in unqualified jobs such as a porter, and construction worker at extremely low wages, women work as cleaners and care workers. These off the record jobs enable them to earn at least a very little amount of money; however, they are exposed to a lot of exploitation. If they are not exposed to threats such as being deported, they have to take care of themselves to continue their life. The networks of solidarity such as relatives, religion, ethnicity or race are very important for them (Danış 2004: 14). According to results in this study, the most organized groups are Armenians and Senegalese hence the most advantageous ones.

The obstacles in the area are not about the transit migrants, but rather about the legal, economic and social environment which brings unequal opportunities. In order to offer equal rights and responsibilities for the disabled and non-disabled, you need to have an environment which does not tolerate the breach of human rights. There are so many similar disadvantageous groups that are not disabled (such as the obese) (Düzgün&Ç. Özservet, 2013). The transit migrants are one of the most neglected groups. They are a group of people who live in the worse than the bottom part of social life, and they constantly live in fear. They cannot go out and participate in social and economic life, but they still try to survive. Just like the disabled, the transit migrants try to deal with legal boundaries as well as trying to adapt to the environment they are living in. They live a double life between their own culture and another culture they are living in. Similar to the exclusion of the disabled from social platforms, these transit migrant groups have also been excluded

from the society and have formed their own surroundings separate from the city.

Within the frame of "human rights" in general and "social rights" in particular, and according to the thesis of equal private and public rights for all citizens, these "disadvantageous" social groups should be able to make use of these rights in line with the "equal opportunities" principle. This could be acted upon by positive discrimination which aims to remove all kinds of disabilities (Seyyar, 2006). This study, which has tried to show their neglected disabilities, has been carried out with a very small group of transit migrants that we could contact in Kumkapı. Detailed analysis and observations will enable us to see the bigger picture. However, even though this is the smallest part of the picture, it can be said the situation is not very pleasant.

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RESUME

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