NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES OF CHILDREN OF IRANIAN ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN KAYSERİ

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

MERVE ÇALHAN

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
PROGRAM OF MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

MAY 2008

ABSTRACT

NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES OF CHILDREN OF IRANIAN ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN KAYSERİ

Çalhan, Merve

M.S., Program of Middle East Studies

Supervisor: Assist. Prof Dr. Aykan Erdemir

May 2008, 144 pages

This thesis analyzes the construction of children of Iranian asylum-seekers' national and religious identity who are dwelling in Kayseri provisionally. Identity construction of the children was based on a 'flexible' and 'malleable' ground in the research. The research was conducted through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with a selected group of participants. The participants belong to two different religious cohorts, Shi'is and Baha'is. Within the scope of the research question, national and religious of the children were investigated profoundly by taking into consideration of related identity theories. In addition, childhood experiences of the children were examined in order to find out if there is any interplay between childhood experiences and national and religious identities. It was determined that ambit of a contested process of identities, national identity enunciated its vigour by far for all the participants. It was also ascertained that while for the Shi'i children, religious identity has reduced its strength; religious identity is still potent for the Baha'i children in the host society. Moreover, the children's interrupted childhood results from their religious professions and their family's political views reconstructed in Kayseri. The

participants' interrupted childhood in Iran achieved a relative maintenance in Kayseri without any fragmentation due to relative free environment comparing to Iran.

Keywords: children of Iranian asylum-seekers, identity construction, national identity, religious identity, childhood experience.

ÖZ

KAYSERİ' DE YAŞAYAN İRANLI SIĞINMACILARIN ÇOCUKLARININ ULUSAL VE DİNİ KİMLİKLERİ

Çalhan, Merve

Yüksek Lisans, Orta Doğu Araştırmaları Programı

Tez Yöneticisi: Yard. Doç. Dr. Aykan Erdemir

Mayıs 2008, 144 sayfa

Bu tez Kayseri'de geçici olarak ikamet eden İranlı sığınmacıların çocuklarının ulusal ve dini kimliklerinin kurgulanmasını analiz etmektedir. Bu araştırmada, çocukların kimlik kurgulamaları şekillendirilebilir ve esnek bir zemine dayanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, seçilmiş katılımcılarla yarı yapılanmış derinlemesine görüşmelerle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Katılımcılar iki farklı dini grup olan Şiilik ve Bahailiğe mensuptur. Temel araştırma sorunsalı kapsamında çocukların ulusal ve dini kimlikleri konuyla ilgili olan kimlik teorileri dikkate alınarak derinlemesine incelenmiştir. Ayrıca, katılımcıların çocukluk yaşantılarının ulusal ve dini kimlikleriyle olan ilişkisi sorgulanmıştır. Birbiriyle yarışan kimliklerin etrafında, tüm katılımcılar için ulusal kimliğin açık ara farkla üstünlüğünü ilan ettiği ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca, konuk oldukları toplumda, Şii çocukların dini kimlikleri gücünü yitirirken, Bahai çocukların dini kimliklerinin hala güçlü olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca, dini inançlarından ve ailelerinin politik görüşlerinden ötürü İran'da kesintiye uğrayan çocukluk yaşantıları Kayseri'deki görece özgür ortamdan dolayı bir devamlılık kazanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: iranlı sığınmacıların çocukları, kimlik kurgulanması, ulusal kimlik, dini kimlik, çocukluk yaşantısı.

To My Parents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly I am grateful to my supervisor Assist. Prof. Dr. Aykan Erdemir for his comments, suggestions, guidance and insight throughout the research. He has been tremendously patient and supportive through each step of the process.

I express my endless gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç for her suggestions and comments. I offer grateful thanks for her patience and assistance.

I am thankful to Mr. İbrahim Vurgun Kavlak who helped me to reach the Iranian asylum-seeker children. This research would not have been possible without him. I want to express my appreciation to Miss. Hilal Kavafoğlu for her enormous efforts to determine the participants. I am also grateful to Miss. Leyla who made interpretation throughout the interviews without charging a fee.

I want to express my deep gratefulness to my parents, Zühal and Mehmet Gökberk who have supported me both financially and emotionally throughout my academic endeavors. They always dispel my boredoms and concerns with their constant interest in me. I could not have got through it without you!

I indebted to my truehearted friends Ahu Paköz and Can Yalçınkaya who responded to my interminable questions during the thesis process. Thank you for your incessant encouragement.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the children of Iranian asylum-seekers to not turn me down to be part of this research. Without

them there would have been no thesis. I am also obliged to the many others who assisted me in carrying out this research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: GENERAL STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AREA

This thesis analyzes the *forced migration*. It subsumes moves of the people who left their homelands permanently for reasons such as conflicts including civil war, generalized violence, human rights abuses, political repression and persecution on the grounds of nationality, race, religion, political opinion or social group because the state authorities are unable or unwilling to protect them (Martin, 2002, p. 26, Forced Migration Online, "What is Forced Migration?" n.d.). In this framework, the thesis comprises child asylum-seekers and the case is based on Shi'i and Baha'i children of Iranian asylum-seekers between the ages of 10–16. All the interviewees immigrated to Turkey directly from Iran with their families. In other words, interviewees are "*accompanied children* who are with one or both parents, the family unity principle clearly applies and, in most cases, a dependant child will be accorded with the parent's status" (UNHCR, 2007, p. 98-99). To eliminate any misunderstandings, it should also be noted that the interviewees are not the Iranian asylum-seekers who entered Turkey from Iraq.[1] In this regard, Baha'is and Muslims will be taken up in order to reveal various asylum-seeking experiences from the eyes of two different

[1] Iranian asylum-seekers who entered Tukey from Iraq is called "Iranian refugees ex-Iraq". They constitute a different category. According to UNHCR, "[o]ne of the main protection challenges was the search for durable solutions fort the almost 1,200 Iranian refugees who reached Turkey from Iraq in 2002 and who can not return to Iraq or the Islamic Republic of Iran. UNHCR's negotiations on durable solutions for this group had, by the end of 2006, failed to overcome the Government's conern that resettlement would act as a pull factor and result in more asylum-seekers coming to Turkey" ("UNHCR 2006 Global Report: Turkey", 2007, p.3). Therefore, their experiences are rather different than other Iranian asylum-seekers. For further information see section 3.1.

religions. All the interviewees are living in Kayseri[2] provisionally. The interviewees comprise the Iranian citizens who speak Farsi and who lived in Iran since their birth. In this research, the scope of the notion of Iranian covers a person who has or had Iranian citizenship regardless of whether they hold several citizenships or not.

I chose to work on children because among the world's refugees, children under the age of eighteen, making up more than half of any refugee population, are the most significant "persons of concern" to the UNHCR[3] (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2007). Among the world's asylum-seekers, who come from Middle Eastern countries to Turkey constitute a different case when comparing to the asylum-seekers who come from European countries. Therefore, it is significant to reveal the term complexity in the problem area. Even though the terms 'asylum-seeker'[4] and 'refugee'[5] are rather

[2] Turkish government has designated twenty-six different cities around Turkey where asylum-seekers and refugees must reside; one of these cities is Kayseri ("Refugee Voice Newsletter," n.d.). Kayseri is one of the largest and the most industrialized cities in Central Anatolia, Turkey. Its area is 16917 km2 (Kayseri Governorship, "Geographic Structure"). The city's population is currently around 1,094,000 (Kayseri Governorship, "Administrative and Demographic Structure"). It is among the cities that are called as the pioneer "Anatolian Tigers" which have a strong voice in industry and commerce in Turkey and around the world through their industry and commerce accumulation that is based on the past. Moreover, the State Planning Organization indicated that Kayseri is one of the most developed cities in Turkey according to socio-economic development index 2004 (Kayseri Chamber of Industry, "Economy of Kayseri", n.d.).

[3] The United Nations General Assembly established the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on December 14, 1950. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country (UNHCR, "Basic Facts," n.d.).

[4] According to UNHCR, an asylum-seeker is a foreigner who seeks international protection but whose eligibility for refugee status has not yet been determined (UNHCR, "Manual on Mandate RSD," n.d., p. 7).

[5] Etymologic meaning of the word "refugee" derived from the French *se refugier*, one seeking asylum. The word was used for Fr. Huguenots who migrated after the revocation in the UK in the late 17th century. The word meant "one seeking asylum" shifted to mean, "one flees home" after 1914. The term first applied in this latter sense for civilians in Flanders migrating west to escape fighting in Word War I (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d. & Rutter, 2006, p. 16). According to Article 1 of the 1951 Convention and UNHCR, a refugee is "a person who is

different in terms of their significance**,** the term 'refugee' could not be used for the people who are coming from outside Europe, non-conventional refugees, (Kirişçi, 2003) in the Turkish legislation[6] (Kirişçi, 2001, p. 76). In this framework, non-conventional refugees could not stay permanently in Turkey and they have to resettle in third countries eventually. In this argument, the focal point is based on the 1951 Convention[7], which Turkey initially signed at the end of World War II. In this regard, Turkey imposed a geographical and time limitation like other signatories, whereby only European refugees and asylum-seekers could access to asylum procedures (İçduygu, 2004, p. 96). Considering this fact, the term *children of Iranian asylum-seekers* is used instead of the term *children of Iranian refugees*.

In the reserach, I preferred to choose children of Iranian asylum-seekers because UNHCR sources showed that 1057 children of Iranian asylum-seekers out of 2607 between the ages of 0–17 years constitute the majority among all the asylum-seekers of the same age groups in Turkey. I preferred to conduct the research in Kayseri due to the fact that the majority of this specific group is living in Kayseri. Moreover, Kayseri is close to Ankara which helps to maintain close contact with the interviewees more easily.

As the number of refugees continuously increased massively with the end of the Cold War, so devastatingly did the number of children faced with asylum-

---

outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution" (UNHCR, "The 1951 Refugee Convention," n.d., p. 6).

[6] For a recent analysis of Turkey's refugee policies see İçduygu, A. (2004). Demographic Mobility and Turkey: Migration Experiences and Government Responses. *Mediterranean Quarterly*, *15*(30), 88-99.

[7] According to UNHCR sources, "it defines what the term refugee means […]. It was the first truly international agreement covering the most fundamental aspects of a refugee's life. It spelled out a set of basic human rights, which should be at least equivalent to freedoms enjoyed by foreign nationals living legally in a given country and in many cases those of citizens of that state under the auspices of the United Nations. It recognized the international scope of refugee crises and the necessity of international cooperation, including burden sharing among states, in tackling the problem (UNHCR, "The 1951 Refugee Convention," n.d., p. 6-7).

seeking experience. UNHCR assumed that an estimated twenty-five million children, under the age of 17, currently uprooted from their homes, are increasingly marking the post-Cold War era (UNHCR, "A Child's World," n.d.). They face a broad range of challenges to their development and survival making them not only a vulnerable subgroup among the world's children, but also a vulnerable subgroup among refugees. For this reason, the United Nations adapted "the Convention on the Rights of the Child" (UNCRC) that is the first legally binding international instrument to coalesce the full range of human rights in 1989.

> The Convention sets out these rights in 54 articles and two Optional Protocols. It spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. […] The Convention protects children's rights by setting standards in health care; education; and legal, civil and social services. (The United Nations Children's Fond [UNICEF][8], "Convention on the Rights of the Child", n.d.)

Referring to adoption of UNCRC, the UNHCR released guidelines on the protection and care of refugee children are based on the 1989 Convention in 1994. Most recently, United Nations prepared a new agenda for the world's children which sets out three necessary outcomes: the best possible start in life for children, access to a quality basic education, including free and compulsory primary education and ample opportunity for children and adolescents, to develop their individual capacities in 2002.

As is perceived from these declarations and sessions, refugee and asylum-seeker children are facing extreme hurdles, which affect their physical and psychological conditions negatively. Hence, displacement is of utmost importance that should be firstly considered as a breach of human rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights takes a strong interest in the Rights of the Child; therefore, displacement should be secondly considered

[8] UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate survival, protection and development of children. UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and struggles to establish children's rights (UNICEF, "UNICEF in Turkey: Mission Statement", n.d.).

as a violation of the rights of the child. In that respect, it violates almost every right of a child – the right to live, to be healthy, to survive and develop, the right to grow up in a family environment and to be nurtured and protected, the right to a have an identity and to belong to an effective nationality, the right for education and prospects for the future. Within the scope of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 22 deals with broadly rights of asylum-seeker and refugee children:

> [s]tate Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refuge status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties. (UNICEF, "Convention on the Rights of the Child: First Part, Articles 21-30," n.d.)

Therefore, it is vital to understand what these children have experienced in order to gain insight into their experiences as asylum-seekers.

According to UNHCR sources, every year Turkey receives more than two thousand immigrants from world to claim asylum. Of all these asylum applications, the number of those belonging to Iranians reached 1060 out of 1840 in 2006 ("UNHCR Turkey Briefing Note-Statistical Overview", 2006). It was the highest rate among the new applicants.

1.1 Research Question

Upon arrival in Turkey, Iranian asylum seeker children come to terms with a new society with different social and economic dynamics. As I learnt from the Iranian people who are living in Kayseri, the social environment of Turkey is quite similar to Iran in terms of leisure time activities, school curriculum and human relations. Thence, children of Iranian asylum-seekers have advantages in terms of social adjustment. At this vital point, my research question is to reveal, 'How do the children of Iranian asylum-seekers reconstruct their national and

religious identity in Turkey?' In this research**,** identity is worked on as dynamic and fluctuating, which is achieved rather than simply given. Even though national and religious identity can be regarded as a part of ethnic identity, I prefer using 'national identity,' and 'religious identity,' separately rather than ethnic identity to avoid from any kind of misunderstandings owing to the fact that there is no widely agreed-on definition of ethnic identity. I used 'ethnic identity' only if the writers use the term from whom I quote references. Related with this point of view, in most part of the research, I merely used identity which refers to national and religious identity [they are my main concern] all of a lump. Actually, I used the term of identity on a slippery floor in this research to avoid any kind of generalization. When identity definition runs away from my triad main concern, I will kindly specify it. One thing I should highlight that during the research, I came to realize that even different understandings and emphases exists about identity, they are intertwined in a crucible intrinsically. For instance, religious identity overlaps national identity in some of the interviews that I have done.

Within the scope of the research question, my foremost aim is to ascertain *interruption* and *maintenance* perceived by asylum-seeker children in their identity throughout their asylum-seeking experience. In other words, I will question both "continuties" and "discontinuties" of their identity on the way of constructing a new identity in Turkey. My other aim is to throw light on their childhood experiences and ascertain if there is any interplay and overlapping among their national and religious identity and childhood experiences. In this framework, I will try to find out whether deconstruction of national identity in conventional terms of language, religion, education and etc. takes place or not (Bash & Zezlina-Phillips, 2006, p. 1). At this point, I will discuss the most known identity theories which are congruous with my arguments. It should also be emphasized that I dwelled upon 'gender' issue to shed light on whether the experiences of girls differ from those of men in terms of exposure, opportunities, constraints, and responsibilities within the household and the community.

1.2 Literature Review

This research attempts to eliminate an unmeritorious prejudice regarding children as a passive receiver of life in which they are living. As Knörr and Nunes cited, "James & Prout point out, that children 'must be seen as involved in the construction of their own social lives, the lives of those around them […]. They can no longer be regarded simply as the passive subjects of structural determinations'" (Knörr & Nunes, 2005, p. 11). The underestimation of children's potential in terms of constructing their own lives causes notable lack of specific information in asylum-seeker and refugee children studies. Urged by absence of documentation in this area, the overall purpose of my research is to present new and further information about children in asylum and highlight the uniqueness of the asylum seeking experience in Turkey, about which there is a scarcity of knowledge. In this framework, this research will contribute significantly to the efforts of sociologists, social workers, psychologists, and others whose concerns center in identifying and ameliorating the plights of asylum-seekers and refugee children.

During the literature review, I did encounter some considerable researches, which laid stress on identity issues of asylum-seeker and refugee children through different perspectives. In terms of sociological researches that have been done about asylum-seekers' and refugee children's identity construction through the world, Julia Resnik (2006), Deborah Sporton, Gill Valentine and Katrine Bang Nielsen (2006), Hadjiyanni Tasoulla (2002), Nadina Christopoulou and Sonja de Leeuw (2005) have respectable researches and articles on this field. Even though researches are more deals with 'refugee' identity, the term 'asylum-seeker' is a weaker identity than 'refugee' in this research.

The article "Post Conflict Identities: Affiliations and Practices of Somali Asylum Seeker Children" (2006) by Deborah Sporton, Gill Valentine and Katrine Bang Nielsen, dealt with the exploration of the identities, affiliations

and practices of Somalia asylum-seeker children, aged 11–18. The research was conducted in Sheffield, UK after the ascertainment of the perpetrators of 2005 terrorist attacks in London. They were the child asylum-seekers from East Africa. In that respect, the authors argued that the actions of two bombers should be appraised throughout the complex processes of social identification on the ground of discrimination and social exclusion in the context of UK immigration policy. They regarded *intersectionality* as the key concept and starting point for understanding the identity construction of young asylum-seekers. According to the authors, different social categories such as age, gender, race, religion and class are not fixed or solid but they are enmeshed in each other which makes young asylum-seekers' identities fluid, fluctuating and malleable. Within this process of identity construction, young refugee children are active agents in terms of constructing and reconstructing their identities. To demonstrate this intersectionality, the authors discussed how the UK policy may shape refugee and asylum-seekers' identity formation and own narratives of the self. On that point, the authors drew on empirical research with Somali children, currently living in Sheffield, UK to examine the identity practices and affiliations of child refugee and asylum-seekers to all pupils in the years 7, 9 and 11 in eight Sheffield secondary schools and one further education college. Firstly, the authors initiated a questionnaire about children's senses of identity and appertaining at home, school and in the community. This questionnaire allowed the authors to compare the Somalian children's affiliations and identity practices with other children from other minority ethnic groups and white majority children. The qualitative stage of the research was comprised of in-depth interviews with local authorities, who worked at Somali community spaces, and was comprised of in-depth interviews with Somali children and their parents to understand their narratives of the self and their own identities. At the end of the research, the significance of specific geographical sites such as home, school and community transpired in terms of both enabling and undermining the ability of young people to achieve positive outcomes. In this article, I drew upon the concept of "intersectionality" in order to display the interplay among

national and religious identity and childhood experiences and the malleable face of identities.

In Julia Resnik's article, "Alternative Identities in Multicultural Schools in Israel: Emancipatory Identity, Mixed Identity and Transnational Identity" (2006) touched upon instability of identities and continuous invention of new and old identities. She set an example of first, second and third generation immigrants' participation in identity construction the recently founded multicultural schools such as Kedma, Shevah/Mofet and Bialik in Israel. She determined different identity forms for children who belong to different social groups. According to the author, rather than facilitating integration into hegemonic national identity, alternative identity forms provide empowering options for child immigrants within Israeli society. The Kedma School intended for the third generation of Mizrahi immigrants from Arab countries. In this regard, "emancipatory Mizrahi (Oriental) identity" at Kedma stressed the right to equal opportunity and the positive value of oriental culture. It aimed at empowering third generation Mizrahi immigrants to eliminate the discriminatory socio-cultural hegemony. The Shevah/Mofet School was founded for the children of immigrants from the Former Soviet Union. The "mixed Russian-Israeli identity" at Shevah/Mofet buttresses Russian language and culture so that first and second generation Russian speaking children surmounted negative stereotypes reserved for immigrants. The Bialik School attempted to shape a "transnational identity" for the children of migrant workers as a bridge between Christian and Muslim cultures and the Jewish culture in Israel. The "transnational identity" at Bialik inhered in multiculturalism, which enabled children of migrant workers to live on in the homogenous Jewish temporal host society, but at the same time prepares them for their next country of residence. Thus, by owing to these alternative identities child immigrants were able to immerse themselves in the mainstream society. In fact, Resnik's article was comprised of a rather interesting and noteworthy research about immigrant children's identity shaping which was based on interviews with the directors, pedagogic coordinators, and homeroom teachers of the three schools.

The argument in terms of segregation of identity according to ethnic belongings and regarding identities as being constructed and reconstructed within different socio-cultural contexts were remarkable in this research.

The most impressive and comprehensive research about refugee children is Making of a Refugee: Children Adopting Refugee Identity in Cyprus (2002) by Hadjiyanni Tasoulla who emphasized on dynamic feature of identity construction by intertwining past, present and future. The author, as a refugee herself, set out to analyze refugee identity in Cyprus. She focused on the children whose parents experienced the displacement first hand. In this regard, this book explored and questioned the "refugee consciousness" of these children by giving these children a chance to raise their voices about what it is like being a refugee. As she states "it is through this journey of 'home is where you come *from*' and 'home is where you come *to*' that identity is grounded and supported" (Tasoulla, 2002, p. 217). Being an architect, her illustration about formation of refugee children consciousness in Cyprus bedazzled me in terms of the dimensions[9], which she purposed for the formation of "refugee identity". These dimensions are called as a *shared identity, an identity grounded in the past, a transferred identity, a proposeful identity, and a nurtured identity, an identity grounded in the loss, a dynamic identity* and *an identity of the future*. In the framework of the scope of the research, the author went through 100 in-depth interviews with Greek Cypriot children (67 boys and 33 girls), between the ages 6–22. The author also carried out 100 interviews with their parents. Even though the research is not pertinent to merely identity construction, it is the most wide-ranging research that I have red about one of the most neglected areas of inquiry in both refugee and childhood studies.

Apart from the research above, I was also inspired by Children Making Media, Constructions of Home and Belonging[10] (2005) by Nadina Christopoulou and

[9] When it is necessary, I will touch upon some of thedimensions in the following chapters.

[10] For the article, please see Jacqueline Knörr (Ed.). (2005). *Childhood and migration.* USA and London: Transaction Publishers.

Sonja de Leeuw which discussed the findings of a European research project on "Children in Communication about Migration" (Chicam) with existing theories on identity and culture. In this research, I was inspired by the writers' reconcilement of identity issues and the concept of *habitus* by Bourdieu (1977) in the context of both new (current situation of uprootedness) and old (pre-migration) habitus form within which new actions and reactions could be invented. The concept of habitus is concordant with this research in terms of throwing light on the interwiewees' present perceptions and actions about national and religious identity and childhood experiences through their experiences of the past.

The other researches which deal primarily with issues pertaining to refugee and asylum-seeker children are about schooling and educational experiences (Myers, 1999; Greathouse, 1994; Castro, 1983; Rutter, 2006, Bash & Philips, 2006, Greathouse, 2000), social work about participation in decision-making processes and interventions for refugee children (Couch & Francis, 2006), social exclusion of immigrant groups into the host country (Beirens, Hughes & Spicer, 2007; Anderson, 2001), psychological well being and emotional problems (Ring, 2002; Derluyn & Broekaert, 2007), unaccompanied minors (Halvorsen, 2005; Kohli, 2005; Wallin & Ahlström, 2005; Antle, 2006; Goldberg & Kralj, 2005, Antle, 2006), acculturation (Curio, 2004; Maegusuku-Hewett, Dunkerley, Scourfield & Smalley; Anderson, 2001; Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006, Castro, 1983) and to a lesser extent, ethnicity of immigrant groups (Senders, 2002).

Even though the refugee literature in Turkey is limited in terms of diversity of the reseraches, there are some noteworthy ones in the field. One of the expansive and contemporary researches belongs to Önder Beter that is called The Hopes beyond Borders (2006). This book contends the problems and difficulties which 'refugee' children have in Turkey from their perspectives generally. In addition, the book also touched upon child soldiers, unaccompanied minors and the children who are the victims of woman

circumcision. Moreover, the book covers the migration phenomenon, the problems which are met in the field, national and international regulations, and migration policies of states and the future of the refugee problem in Turkey from a critical point of view. The book also articulates innovations and solutions to the current problems of refugees. As a social worker, Beter suggests new opinions to improve social works for refugee well-being in Turkey. Other significant research belongs to Ülkü Zümray Kutlu. She wrote a thesis which is called "Turkey as a Waiting Room: Experiences of Refugees in Turkey". This research subsumes the asylum-seekers who came to Turkey from the Middle Eastern countries merely to move to a third country. As Kutlu demonstrated the asylum-seekers who applied for the status determination to UNHCR have to wait for a long time. Moreover, if they are recognized as a refugee, they have to wait again to move to third country. Therefore, they live a period of transition in Turkey and Turkey is the *waiting room* on their way to West. In this framework, the aim of the research to reveal how the asylum-seekers live and perceive the period of transition in terms of language, housing, job opportunities, health and education services in Turkey. In order to obtain the information about the issues above, Kutlu conducted in-depth intervieews with ten recognized refugees at UNHCR Ankara Branch Office. The results of his research could be explained briefly. First of all, the international refugee regime does not bring any effective solutions for today's asylum-seeker and refugee question. Secondly, being a transit country, Turkey is lack of effective refugee politics and policies. Thirdly, refugees are regarding Turkey as a waiting room on their way to West and throughout this period, they could not take initiative about their lives. As it is related to one of these research arguments, the refugee experience in Turkey is not a process in which the immigrants can integrate socially, economically, culturally and politically. Fourthy, according to the interviews and observations of the author, refugee experience differs regarding specific cities that immigrants are settled. Furthermore, interviewees described their refugee experiences concordant with the term 'stranger' in terms of housing, job opportunities, and health and education services. Finally, author criticized the

dual strategy of Turkish refugee policies and politics on account of emphasizing a humanitarian aid by giving permission for the non-Europeans for a temporary stay. On the other hand, as the author highlighted living strategies of refugees are based on informal ties rather than formal such as kin-friend-refugee networks. Another research was conducted by Alper Tarımcı (2005) which is called "The Role of Geographical Limitation with Respect to Asylum and Refugee Policies within the Context of Turkey's EU Harmonization Process". In his thesis, he analysed geographical limitation[11] which Turkey persists in carrying on due to the security rationale. He discussed whether the geographical limitation is necessary for Turkey on the way of convergence with European Union. In other words, this thesis aims to fill the academic work gap in Turkey's asylum and refugee policies. In this framework, he put forward the development of international refugee regime, Turkey's asylum and refugee policy, European Union's asylum policies and EU-Turkey harmonization process. In addition to these resources, some notable researchers have significant studies in the field. Serving as a member of the External Relations Advisory Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Kemal Kirişçi have academic works on refugee law, irregular migration flow, asylum regulations, and convergence with EU in terms of asylum regulations in Turkey. He has numerous articles about immigration, refugees and asylum-seekers such as "Reconciling Refugee Protection with Combating Irregular Migration: Turkey and the EU" (2004) and "The Question of Asylum and Illegal Immigration in the EU and Turkish Relations" (2003). Being the director of Migration Research Program at Koç University, Ahmet İçduygu focuses on international migration regime in Turkey. He has various articles such as "How Do Smuggling and Trafficking Operata via Irregular Border Crossing in the Middle East? Evidence from Fieldwork in Turkey" (2002) and "Socio-Economic Development and International Migration: A Turkish Study" (2001). Çiğdem Alp has a thesis research which is called "Asylum Harmonization

[11] As Tarımcı stated, "geographical limitation refers to an option for state parties to accept asylum seekers only related to the events that occured in Europe before 1 January 1951; specifically referred to in Article 1 B of the Convention" (Tarımcı, 2005, p. 1).

Process and Its Impacts within the Context of The EU Enlargement" (2005). She discussed the extension of European asylum *acquis* to the third countries, common European asylum policy, and involvement of candidate countries in the EU's asylum and migratin strategy and negative implications regarding the establishment of a European refugee regime and its extension beyond Europe in general. She reached some significant results about EU immigration policies and leveled criticism at the very idea of 'Fortress Europe' in terms of lack of adequate standarts regarding exposure of refugee protection to third countries. In this framework, sending refugees from the EU territories to the neighbouring countries can not be an effective solution both for the refugees and third countries. Being the managing editor of *Migration Letters* journal, İbrahim Sirkeci has articles about international migration and internal migration in Turkey such as "The Ethnic Question in an Environment of insecurity: the Kurds in Turkey" (1999) and "Socio-Economic Development and International Migration: A Turkish Study" (2001). He examines patterns of the migration both economically and politically in Turkey. Finally, Deniz Yükseker has significant researches on international and forced migration which focused on Kurdish internal displacement in Turkey, African migrants and asylum-seekers in Turkey. She approaches migration issue culturally and socially. In this framework, she has noteworthy articles and surveys. The most cuurent research is called "A Survey on African Migrants and Asylum Seekers in İstanbul" (2006) and "Coming to Terms with Forced Migration: Post-Displacement Restitution of Citizenship Rights in Turkey (2007). In the light of the scope and focal point of the researches, refugee literature in Turkey consists of politic and legal researches which are based on shaping refugee law and migration legislation according the EU convergence process to a large extent.

Some civil society organizations in Turkey have projects and programs about refugees and asylum-seekers to support asylum-seekers and refugees. One of them is 'Human Resource Development Foundation'. Within the scope of the foundation, 'Orientation Program for Immigrants from Bulgaria' and 'Program for Supporting Refugee Women Residing in Turkey before Departing for a

Third Country' were carried out. Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) implements projects and programs about various problems of asylum-seekers and refugees since 1995. Association initiates informative works intended for public opinion about asylum-seekers and refugees and trains immigrants about their rights. Currently, the association is carrying out 'Psycological Counselling Project for Asylum-Seekers and Refugees'. Helsinki Citizens Assembly which is one of the most active NGOs, carries out 'Refugee Support Program'. Within the scope of the program, *Refugee Voices* which is a quarterly newsletter is being published. In addition, they prepared an evolution report on UNHCR Refugee Status Determination Procedural Standarts to make relevant recommendations. Assembly prepares an informative brochure to provide information to asylum-seekers, refugees and other non-governmental organizations working with refugees which includes definition of a refugee, applying procedures for refugee status in Turkey and information on the UNHCR procedures as well. Furthermore, assembly initiates and organizes 'World Refugee Day' activities and 'Refugee Advocay Training Program' for NGOs. Apart from the beforementioned NGOs, 'Amnesty International Turkey', 'Organization of Human Rights & Solidarity for Oppressed People', 'Human Rights Association', 'Light House Association', 'International Catholic Migration Commission' and 'Caritas Internationalis' have humanitarian works, projects and financial support programs to serve and protect uprooted people, refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey.

Taking into account the aforementioned researches, and as a result of which having realized the non-existence of researches which take into consideration the interplay of national and religious identity and childhood experiences of asylum-seeker children particularly, my thesis intends to fill this gap. Considering the above-mentioned research analysis, this research is unique in the field. Even though interviewing only eight children, in-depth interviews helped me to reach the asylum-seeker children's perceptions, feelings and attitudes in their asylum-seeking experience in order to reveal how they construct their national and religious identity and experience their childhood.

This research is also unique in terms of the methodological perspective. I draw upon Hermeneutics while analyzing the in-depth interviees to acquire how the interviewees' of the past experiences and future anticipations influenced their understandings, attitudes and actions in the present.

1.3 Methodology and Research Techniques

The theoretical perspective for the proposed study will be referred to *hermeneutics*[12], which is related to *interpretive sociology*. Before going into hermeneutic, it is significant to the interpretive sociology briefly:

> [f]or interpretive researchers, the goal of social research is to develop an understanding of social life and discover how people construct meaning in natural settings. An interpretive researcher wants to learn what is meaningful or relevant to the people being studied, or how individuals experience daily life. In contrast to positivist view that social life is "out there" waiting to be discovered, interpretive social science (ISS) states the social world is largely what people perceive it to be. Social life exists as people experience it and give it meaning. ISS assumes that multiple interpretations of human experience, or realities, are possible. In sum, the ISS approach sees social reality as consisting of people who construct meaning and create interpretations through their daily social interaction. (Neuman, 2006, p. 88-89)

In this framework, my foremost aim is to reach to inner dynamics of participants' lives and thereby subjective level of human experience. With in-depth interviewing, participants' unique experiences were captured without assuming any set of values a better or worse.

Although there are diverse schools of hermeneutic thought, I grounded my argument on Dilthey who is one of the major theorists of hermeneutics. As Palmer denoted, Dilthey explained hermeneutic in context of *meaning*. According to Dilthey, life must be understood from the experience of life itself, which is seen in terms of meaning. The context of life are derived from the

[12] As Neuman stated, "[h]ermeneutic comes from a god in Greek mythology, Hermes, who had the job of communicating the desires of the gods to mortals. This method associated with interpretative social science that originates in religious and literary studies of textual material, in which in-depth inquiry into text and relating its parts to the whole can reveal deeper meanings" (Neuman, 2006, p. 87-88).

reality of lived experiences which in "neither a realistic nor an idealistic but a phenomenological context" (Palmer, 1969, p. 103). The principle component of meaning subsumes the context of the "past" and "future" for expectations, which are provisional and finite, and they should be understood in a historical context (Palmer, 1969, p. 117).

Neuman stated pointed out that interpretive researchers use in-depth interviews to create meaning in everyday life (2006, p. 88). In the research, I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with the participants in order to capture how their experiences of the past and anticipations of future influenced their understanding and actions in the present. I paid attention to understand, to give meaning to the way of expression and interpretation of their experience.

In hermeneutic phenomenology, meaning changes with time because point of views and perspectives are subjected to change. In view of this thought, meaning turns up as mutable through history with alternating socio-economic dynamics. In short, Dilthey formulated a methodology that approaches the issue as "experience-expression-understanding" whose aim was to transcend the objectivity of the natural sciences and returned to human experience (Palmer, 1969, p. 107).

The operation of understanding occurs within the principle of "hermeneutic circle." According to the principle, the whole is defined by its parts and the parts are defined by the whole. The meaning takes place when understanding grips this mutual interaction of the whole and the parts (Palmer, 1969, p. 118). As one of the most distinguished philosophers of our time, Ricoeur argued for, "[…] events and narratives endlessly inform and influence on another. The point is to examine this process of configuration and reconfiguration of events in narratives" (Ezzy, 1998, p. 178). I utilized hermeneutic circle especially while I was analyzing the discontinuities within asylum-seeker children's identities. I tried to explain how the children's relationship between the whole and the parts changed during the asylum-seeking experience in Turkey. In an advanced state,

while I presumed the both home and host society as the 'whole', asylum-seeker children are presumed as the 'parts' of that whole. I tried to demonstrate that their relations with the home society are different from the relations in the host society. In a similar vein, the home society's relations with the asylum-seeker children are different from the host society's relations with them. Throughout the interview, I strived to reveal this ebb and flow between the whole and the parts in order to reveal the way of construction of identities.

Within this research, I preferred to resort to hermeneutics because I do not aim at reaching objective knowledge. As Mul denoted in his book, The Tragedy of Finitude, "[…] Dilthey did not desire objective knowledge, but because this desire was always coupled with the realization that all knowledge is eventually rooted in the unfathomability of life" (Mul, 2004, p. 332). At this point, hermeneutics is in tune with Interpretive Social Science (ISS) as well. As Neuman (2006) undercored that "[f]or ISS, facts are fluid and embedded within a meaning system; they are not impartial, objective, and neutral" (p. 92). In addition, it should also be highlighted that I benefited from only 'hermeneutic circle' where the research question is congruous with the method.

A qualitative approach was employed in this research as the most appropriate method to analyze the thoughts and perceptions of asylum-seeker children who are living in Kayseri. The aim of the present research was to present first hand experiences of the participants, as Yegidis and Weinbach (2006) pointed up; "qualitative method" aims to catch on human experiences from the perspective of those who experience them (p. 21).

This method aims at the exploration of normalcy of daily life (Shaw & Gould, 2001, p. 6). It looks for to expose particular details of individuals, groups and societies that are sometimes typically masked in situations of everyday life. Hence, "[i]t emphasizes words such as *subjective*, *relative*, or *contextual*; therefore, there is no pretense that the researcher can collect data in an objective, value-free manner" (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2006, p. 21). Throughout

the research, every participant gave priority and underlined various things as a unique individual. They denoted the same thing in multitudinous paths. In this framework, I did not look for a single and permanent objectivity but I looked for various and floating subjectivities to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings which participants attributed. I tried to get the participant talk to acquire their everyday life in Kayseri and as well in Iran by in-depth interviewing. In addition, I tried to bring up an overview of the participants' culture with comprehensive questions, which touched upon "every edge" of social life for a holistic research (Shaw & Gould, 2001, p. 6-7).

1.4 Selection of the Research Site and Research Participants

I chose to conduct this research project in the Office of "Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants" (ASAM) in Kayseri for a few important reasons: (1) according to the UNHCR sources, 186 children – under the age of 17 –out of 1027 are residing in Kayseri currently. In other words, the majority of children of Iranian asylum-seekers are amassed in Kayseri; so, it would be easy for me to decide on interviewees. (2) The presence of one of the offices of ASAM canalized me to Kayseri in spite of the fact that employees know almost every asylum-seeker child by name and domiciles. Apart from these facts, (3) I heard that children of Iranian asylum-seekers drop by the office almost every week. Thereby, I would connect with them rather easier than I thought. With all these foreknowledges in mind, I decided on ASAM as an adequate place to make the interviews.

The large majority of children of Iranian asylum-seekers are residing in Kayseri as it was highlighted above. Asylum-seeker children in Kayseri are all living with their nuclear families. According to the ASAM, the majority of the children are Baha'i and others are Muslims who belong to Shi'i and Sunni denomination and Christians but they do not know the exact number of children. The Sunni children are very few in number and their ethnic origin is Kurdish. They are the 'Iranian Refugees ex-Iraq'. Majority of the children are attending

school in Kayseri; nevertheless, most of the Baha'i families refrain from sending their children to school because they have a self-sufficient Baha'i community in Kayseri to meet the children's education needs.

The research was conducted through semi-structured in-depth interviews with selected children of Iranian asylum-seekers, which comprises of two different religious groups, 'Shi'is[13] and 'Baha'is[14]. Even though one may deduce that I put 'religion' in the center of my research, I actually wanted to throw light on Shi'is' and Baha'is' different experiences in order to contrast them because their migration reasons are quiet different from each other and deserve equal attention.

After deciding on religion groups, eight participants would be acceptable to conduct the research. I relied on two main sources at the ASAM office for identifying potential participants: Mr. İbrahim, project coordinator of Psychological Counseling Project for Asylum-Seekers and Refugees; and Miss. Hilal, consultant of ASAM. I went to Kayseri ASAM office three times to determine the participants. I used purposeful sampling and determined on the participants with the help of Miss Hilal and Mr. İbrahim according to the children's successes on communication skills. Accessing the participants is rather effortless because whenever Miss Hilal called up, they were expecting to hear from UNHCR about their permission letter to pass to a third country that they will stay permanent; therefore, some of them came to the office quiet earlier that we expected. When they arrived in the office, Miss Hilal informed them about the research and arranged a proper time for interview. Almost all the

[13] Shi'ism is the largest denomination based on the Islamic faith after Sunni Islam. Shia's conceded Ali İbn Abi Talib (Muhammad's cousin and husband of Fatimah) as successor to Muhammed and rejected the legitimacy of the first three caliphs of Islamic history (Rippin, 2005, p. 122). I will argue the Shi'i understanding of its origins in the following chapters.

[14] "The Baháism is a world religion based on the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. He explained that there is only one God and one human family, and that all religions are spiritually united. Bahá'u'lláh's writings offer spiritual guidance as well as directives for personal and social conduct" (The Baha'is, "About the Baha'i Faith," n.d.). I will explicate the Baha'i faith in the following chapters comprehensively.

children that Miss Hilal called came to the office with one of their parents and mostly with their fathers. I explained the purpose of the research and format. Just two parents asked to acquire further information. Having relied on Mr. İbrahim profoundly, children's parents did not object me interviewing their children. I met with the children on the arranged date of the interview. Before conducting the interview, I delienated the scope of the research to them, then tried to explain why I drew upon their help. Throughout the research, a child's refusal to participate was respected but I did not encounter any difficulties to induce both parents and children regarding their participation in the interview.

1.5 Data Collection and Field Experience

Data was collected using the individual, semi-structured, and in-depth interviews with eight children in order to gain insight into how they conduct their 'national', 'religious' and 'child' identity in Kayseri. To determine the appropriateness and validity of the questionnaire, a pilot study was administered three children regardless of their religion and ethnic origin prior to implementation. Upon completion of the pilot test, I made necessary changes in the questionnaire. From the data deduced from the pilot test, the final questionnaire was shaped. In order to able to work a language barrier, the individual interviews were conducted through the assistance of an interpreter. In this framework, I relied on the assistance of the interpreter of ASAM office throughout this study. Her role was to convey questions and responses between the participants and myself as well as to make up any misunderstandings derived from cultural differences. Before going into interviews, I informed her with necessary information about my research. Before the individual interviews, I initially asked demographic questions to acquire general information about the participants.

Each participant was interviewed only once and each interview was audiotaped lasting between 45 minutes to 60 minutes long. I conducted one to one interviews with the children in ASAM office. Only one of them wanted his

father by herself during the interview but I persuaded her to be interviewed alone.

While I was preparing the questions, my initial concern was to compose comprehensive questions, enough to let the participants' freedom of speech and expression. I avoided asking questions, which may give rise to vagueness and confusion. I also avoided using emotional language. I did not persist to request their leaving story of Iran as my co-supervisor advised me in advance. I also tried to be sensitive about questions about religion taking into consideration their possible drawbacks. I did not observe any discomforts in the questions. Through the interview, as the circumstances required, I changed the order and form questions according to the answers that I acquired from the participants. Thence, I did not follow strictly interview guide during the research. Leaving a room for flexibility, my focus was predominantly on the participants rather than the questions. In some circumstances, I let them talk about the issues that they wanted to elaborate on as much as they could in order to obtain more in-depth, rich, and detailed data with an intensive listening.

In this research, I did not make a psychological trauma analysis. Even though forced migration is a traumatic experience, I did not ask any questions which is about violence and persecution that the intervieews might have experienced in their home country. I thought these kinds of questions would unsettle the children between the ages 10–16 unnecessarily.

Through the interviews, I did not encounter any challenges regarding participant's different language. The existence of an interpreter during the interviews may seem as a filter for this research, most of the time I was able to understand what the intervieewes said. Having a little command of Farsi was my advantage at this point. I could not speak Farsi fluently but I could understand; therefore, I could engross the conversation between the interpreter and the participant.

1.6 Significance of the Research

This research was conducted to eliminate an unmeritorious prejudice regarding children as a passive receiver of life in which they are living. "As James and Prout pointed out those children 'must be seen as involved in the construction of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and […]. They can no longer be regarded simply as the passive subjects of structural determinations'" (Knörr & Nunes, 2005, 11). Due to the underestimation of children's potential in terms of constructing their own lives, paves the way for notable lack of specific information in asylum-seeker or refugee children studies.

In the UK during the 1990s there was an increase in the demand for children's voices to be heard and their opinions to be sought in matters that affect them. The UK government ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which has important clauses on children's right to participation. Article 12 stipulates that "States parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her views the right to express those views freely *in all matters* affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturing of the child" (Morrow, 2004, p. 1).

With all these in mind, children could be enrolled in a research study as intervieews or consultant if the research topic affects them markedly. In other words, they could be taken account of as rational agents in researches which provide knowledge about them. As Bessant contended, children's involvement in a research project refers to the idea of "equality". "[a]s human beings young people have human rights and ought to be accorded those rights in the same way other people are" (Bessant, 2006, p. 53). The most crucial point of this research is to let the children set forth their thought, experiences and perceptions about asylum-seeking experience and give them a chance to express themselves freely. As Bessant underlined, this child-centered approach also contribute to the construction of their own identities (Bessant, 2006, p. 56).

In addition, urged by absence of documentation in this area, the overall purpose of my research is to present new and further information about children in asylum and highlight the uniqueness of the asylum seeking experience in Turkey, about which there is a scarcity of knowledge. In this framework, this research would contribute significantly to the efforts of sociologists, social workers, psychologists and other whose concerns center in identifying and ameliorating the plights of asylum-seeker or refugee children.

1.7 Research Ethics

Ethics in a resreach could be defined as by Sieber, "[…], the application of a system of moral principles to prevent harming or wronging others, to promote the good, to be respectful and to be fair" (as cited in Morrow, 2004, p. 1). One of the quandaries about the research ethics is related to participation of children in a research study. Such ethical quandaries are raised by particular formulation of children as vulnerable minorities because of their lack of physical capability and their lack of knowledge and experience; therefore, they need to be protected from exploitative researches (Morrow, 2004, p. 6). Even though researchers are inclined to not involve children in research studies for various ethical requirements and competency reasons, there is a growing tendency that children's views, thoughts and perceptions can and should be taken into consideration in researches that affect them (Morrow, 2004, p. 2). There are some noteworthy developments and facilities to eliminate the "fixed-age rule"[15] for this growing tendency. For instance, the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (National Health and Medical Research Committee (NHMRC) which constitutes a basic guideline for ethical considerations in researches is being replaced by a new document which is more inclusive for children' and young persons'participation in research studies by allowance to obtain consent from child or young person without parental

[15] As Bessant implied, "[t]he current fixed-age rule approach, which requires parental\guardianship consent for reserach involving under 18-years-olds" (Bessant, 2006, p. 56).

permission in all matters affecting the child (Bessant, 2006, p. 50-51; Sterling & Walco, 2003, p. 242).

This research involved children because within the scope of the research question, the participation of children is incumbent in order to give them a voice and to gain insight into the forced migration from their perspectives. In addition, in this research the relevant knowledge could not be derived from adults. In other words, my research proposal involved children as potential participants. Moreover, the semi-structured questions were prepared by taking into account the children's emotional and psychological safety; therefore, the research is not contrary to the child's best interest. It is also significant to keep in mind that, according to Mizen, in some specific situations, children and young people are maturing earlier than they were historically. "Many young people have also demonstrated their capacity to 'be responsible', ethical and socially competent" (as cited in Bessant, 2006, p. 54). Eventhough the children under 18-year-old participated in this reserach, experiences of the asylum-seeking children matured them enough to participate in the research and answer the questions. Therefore, the research is regarded to be low risk for the children.

Furthermore, before the research was conducted on children, particular requirements about research ethics were taken into consideration. Relevant information about the research was provided to the parents and children. Parental and child consent were obtained orally. The consent was based on 'voluntariness' so that the children were informed that they could withdraw from the research whenever they wanted.

Prior to the interview process, all participants and their parents were informed that their names and addresses would remain confidential when publishing the results of the research. All participants appear under pseudonym names to reduce discomfort and treat the participants with dignity. None of the participant asked for any changes or dismissal of any personal information.

1.8 Organization of the Chapters

The introductory chapter depicts the general statement of problem area and general information about the interviews, research participants, field experience and significance of the research. Subsequently, the specific methodology utilized in the current study is presented.

The second chapter gives the theoretical background of the study by defining national and religious identity and childhood experiences comprehensively in referance to related identity theories which will be utilized in analyzing the interviews and research questions. This chapter ends with yielding the effects of adaptation patterns to reconstruction of identities.

The third chapter is a historical segment which reveals the situation of Iranian asylum-seekers since the Islamic Revolution. It presents the Turkish regulations on asylum-seekers through a continuous historical line. This chapter also offers a general overview of Shi'is and Baha'is in Iran in order to justify their immigration reasons.

The forth chapter is devoted to the analysis of the in-depth interviews and observations. National and religious identity of asylum-seeker children will be appraised considering the concepts "situational identities" (Smith, 2001), "substituted identities" (Christopoulou & Leeuw, 2005), "and fragmented identities" (Hall, 1996), "ambivalent identities" (Bauman, 2004), "stranger" (Simmel, 1950) and "memory negotiation" (Christopoulou & Leeuw, 2005).

The last chapter of the study offers a brief conclusion which presents my own observations and results of the in-depth interviews. Also, implications and recommendations for future research were presented.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Identity has come to the forefront in the researches of scholars since the end of the 1980s and early 1990s (Christopoulou & Leeuw, 2005, p. 115). After the 1980s, as Giddens denoted**,** "the need for identity has increased and the process of identity construction has become more difficult and complex" (as cited in Christopoulou & Leeuw, 2005, p. 115).

Unlike the modern concern of identity whose primary interest was to keep identity static and absolute, the post-modern concern of identity was to avoid fixation for the sake of *fluid* identities, which change across time and social context (Hall, 1996, p. 18). As most of the terms are being exposed to change in the post-modern era, the term identity was affected by this change; therefore, multitudinous depictions of identity were cropped up and started to flourish.

In delineating a research that is based on identity is stringent due to the presence of multitudinous depictions of the term identity; therefore, I tried to present the related identity definitions which comprises the basic problematic of this thesis.

2.1 Overview of Identity Theories

Definition of identity reveals considerable confusion and ambiguity about the issue. As Phinney noted, a surprising number of the articles, which he reviewed about the identity issue, (about two thirds), provided no explicit definition of the construct (Phinney, 1990, p. 500). Referring to Phinney's complaining, Giddens pointed out, since social identity become popular among scholars since

the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, the need for identity has increased and the process of identity construction has become more difficult and complex (as cited in Christopoulou & Leeuw, 2005, p. 115). Hence, to avoid from this complexity, I decided on to constitute a crucible, which subsumes the most widely recognized researchers' identity definition in parallel with data that I acquired from interviews.

In this research, primarily, identity was worked on as a dynamic product rather then simply given which is subjected to construction and reconstruction in any social context. Related with dynamic feature of identity, Anthony Smith used the most appropriate term, *situational*, for to explicate national identity in his book, Nationalism (Smith, 2001). As a result of my research, about identity literature, I found Anthony D. Smith's explication of identity intelligible and comprehensive in the field. As he stated in his own words:

> [t]he above analysis may give the impression that collective cultural identities are somehow fixed and static. That is very far from being the case. True, we are dealing here with long-term constructs, but these are not essences or fixed quantities of traits. Cultural identities and communities are as much subject to process of change and dissolution as everything else, and these changes may be gradual or cumulative, or sudden and discontinuous. The only difference from other kinds of collective identity is the generally slower rate and the longer time-span of the rhythms of cultural change […]. (Smith, 2001, p. 19-20)

Having realized the slippery floor, which identities derive from, I, thought that theory of Anthony Smith would be beneficial while I explain identity. In addition, throughout my research, I came to realize abounding examples of *flexible* and *malleable identities.*

In this research, abundance of both identity theories and terms grasped my mind so much that making a decision on explaining the identity issue was not easy. For example, the term *hybridization*, which is preferred largely in post-modern debates, was not proper for every case of this research. For instance, one of the children that I interviewed rejected her native culture and language. Whereas, if an asylum-seeker or refugee child is subjected to *hybridism*, he or she

harmonizes native and foreign culture or one culture may become preponderant when compared with the other. In this case, the asylum-seeker child borned into her native culture but later on she was subjected to foreign culture codes intensively; therefore, she eradicated both native and foreign culture by *engulfing* both of them.

As I highlighted in advance, Iranian children asylum-seeking experience is unique owing to the fact that they are temporarily settled in Turkey. Referring to this fact, the children whom I made interviews with were living by remembering the past memories and dreaming for future. They are straddling home and host society; therefore, they could not take place to carry out any of the *acculturation*[16] attitudes completely, apart from 'marginalization', limited 'separation' and limited 'assimilation' in terms of peer contact and preferring social activities, which involve both nationals and their own ethnic group. They do not take on cultural values of host society and move away their own cultural heritage. They can integrate, separate and assimilate limitedly. Therefore, throughout the research, my intensive effort has been to avoid putting them in categorical templates owing to the fact that there is no widely agreed definition of identity. Moreover, as Phinney (1990) underscored also, comprehensive range of construction of identity exist; therefore, researchers have to take into consideration multitudinous paths to explain identity construction. In this framework, I strived to lay out various theoretical orientations and measures that are unique to each religious group.

Smith employed identity in a rather straightforward way. To Smith, identity is tantamount to "sameness." For instance, the members of a particular group differ from non-members outside the group who dress, eat, and speak in different ways. "This pattern of similarity-cum-dissimilarity is one meaning of national 'identity'" (Smith, 1991, p. 75). However, even the traditional meaning of identity touches upon 'exclusion' and 'difference.' For instance, members of

[16]As Phinney premised, "[…], acculturation focuses on how immigrant groups relate to the both host society and their own group as a subgroup of the larger society" (1990, p. 501).

a particular group may constitute a unity within themselves, but they define themselves and this unity according to other individuals who belong to a different group. In other words, 'sameness' embraces 'difference' at the same time.

According to Hall who is one of the leading scholars in the field of identity politics, identities are increasingly fragmented and fractured and constantly exposed to change and transformation as there is a continuously shifting position in late modern times. Identities are subject to radical change and transformation within historically specific developments in relation to the processes of globalization (Hall, 1996, p. 4). He proposed that with modernity, local development and practices overspread to other cultures and populations and gave an example of how processes of forced migration transformed into a global phenomenon (Hall, 1996, p. 4). In fact, he pronounced that identity is a process of becoming rather than being within the context of history, language, and culture. That is, identity changes if the history is told in a different way. As Hall stated, "[…], we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices by specific enunciative strategies" (Hall, 1996, p. 4). The identity theory of Hall pointed out narratives and how individuals positioned themselves within the narratives of the past. Apart from emphasizing the role of narratives in identity construction, Hall also presented a point of view, which is rather different from the traditional meaning of identity, which emphasized 'sameness.' As Hall noted, for any identification process, there is a need for the *other* within the context of power, which helps to indicate difference and exclusion. Thus, identities are the product of the marking of difference and exclusion rather than the traditional meaning which refers to it as an indicator of "constituted unity" (Hall, 1996, p. 4-5). In a similar vein to Derrida (1981), Laclau (1990) and Butler (1993), Hall placed great emphasis on the relation to the other through the construction of identity because identity can not be formed independently of outside influence. Nevertheless, internal-external dialectic of identity formation is not sufficient to describe identity construction. Identity construction does not

just transpire from the contrast between a home community and the outside host community; therefore, it is not enough to ask questions of 'who am I, where do I belong and how do I fit into society?' and of identification by others, such as 'who are they, are they part of my group?' In spite of the fact that foregoing questions form a considerable part of the process of coping with predicaments and agonies, the identity formation needs further explications. For instance, "memory negotiation" is also a very noteworthy area in the process of identity construction (Chirstopoulou & Leeuw, 2005, p. 121). As Chirstopoulou and Leeuw observed,

> [i]n the context of migration people are confronted with several degrees of discontinuity. As their notion of identity is undermined they apparently start looking for continuity in order to feel 'at home' again. In the new space people feel the need to relate themselves somehow to the past. In the context of migration identity construction is informed by both past memory and current experience in the new place. The notion of home is being articulated in particular in the concept of family, yet imagined […]. For migrant children this is a common experience whereby something which is "remembered" but may no longer exist as such, becomes substituted, "re-membered" and reconstructed in a new context. (Chirstopoulou & Leeuw, 2005, p. 117-119)

What is really important to me in the theory of Hall is that he regarded identity as a process of becoming rather than being. He argued that identities are exposed to change unavoidably and continuously but he missed a significant point within his identity theory. He overlooked the past may be reinvented and accommodated into the present more differently than specific discursive formations and practices. Even though Hall regarded identities as produced in specific historical and institutional sites, individuals may transform the historical site by reinventing their experiences with their unique discourses as Christopoulou and Leeuw contended above. I draw upon memory negotiation limitedly in the research by asking questions about the past memories and current experiences in the host society. For example, the notion of home in the home society was questioned by referring to their home in Iran to throw light on how it was remembered in their host society.

Tasoulla is another scholar whom I resorted to her research which is about "refugee identity" formation of refugee children in Cyprus. According to her, identity could be explained regarding the loss of home, origins and roots (2002, p. 90). Hadjiyanni stated that when refugee children lose their identity and sense of belonging, feelings of discrimination and alienation come out and these feelings lead them to construct a new identity in the host society (2002, p. 90). In this regard, Hadjiyanni concurs with Hall concerning identity as a process of becoming rather than being. In addition, she articulated that identity is reconstructed in a new context as Christopoulou and Leeuw argued beforehand because she contended that loss of significant values such as home, origins and roots directed children to construct new identities in their host societies**.**

I also acceded to Bauman's depiction of identity in this research. According to Bauman "[y]es, indeed, 'identity' is revealed to us only as something to be invented rather than discovered; […]. [T]he forever provisional status of identity can no longer be concealed" (Bauman, 2004, p. 15-16). By declaring the contingency of identities, he also accepted the elusive, ambivalent and constructed natures of identities which are in tune with the features of this research. According to Bauman, identities are not fixed or static.

> Longing for identity comes from the desire for security, itself an ambigious feeling. […], 'betwixt-and-between' location, becomes in the long run an unnerving and anxiety-prone condition. On the other hand, a fixed position amidst the infinity of possibilities is not an attractive prospect either. In our liquid modern times, when the free-floating, unencumbered individual is the popular hero, 'being-fixed' – being 'identified'inflexibly and without retreat – gets an increasingly bad press. (Bauman, 2004, p. 29)

Finally, I drew upon Simmel's notion of "stranger" as well when analyzing the interviews. As Simmel pointed out,

> [t]he stranger […], as the person who comes today and goes tomorrow. He is, so to speak, the *potential* wanderer: although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going. He is fixed within a particular spatial group, or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries. But his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to

> it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself. (Simmel, 1950, p. 402)

Being an outsider, immigrants have significant drawbacks regarding the feeling of not belonging and being an outcast in the host society. When the period of immigrants' habitancy lengthens, they become more unsettling than a tourist in the eyes of the mainstream society due to the fact that the unknown always intimidates individuals. Stemming from this tension, immigrants construct their identities as a synthesis of remoteness and nearness. Thus, the foreigner is defined by this major duality (as cited in Bagnoli, 2007, p. 33).

2.1.1 National Identity

Nation is regarded as a rather ambiguous word, which used to denote people linked by residence, birth, and ancestry. It is also used extensively to indicate territory, its inhabitants, and the government that rules them from a single, unified center (Joseph, 2004, p. 92).

As Joseph argued, apart from the ambiguity of nation as a term, the success of nation-states as a connective power upon the inhabitants who are dwelling is one of the most discussed issues of recent years. To explain roughly, today not all of the members of a nation by birth are residing in their home country for numerous reasons. Such a perfect ideal of nation-state was damaged considerably on the ground of globalization phenomenon. In other words, globalization dissolved the very ideal of puristic nationalisim and the idea that nation can really unify (Joseph, 2004, p. 92).

Nation is closely related to *national identity* which denotes political borders and autonomy, often justified by arguments centered around distinguishing features of a group, such as shared cultural heritage and individuals' sense of belonging to it, but where the ethnic element is inevitably multiple.

Bearing all these in mind, following section will question, what the primary constituent elements of a nation and national identity are, based on ethno-

sybolist paradigm; therefore, I preferred to dwell upon Smith's definition of national identity which is the most proper definition for this research.

Ethno-symbolist paradigm aroused from the reaction against modernist paradigm as a middle-ground approach by a number of scholars. In striking contrast to modernists, they brought pre-existing texture of ethnic ties, myths, symbols, values, memories and shared emotions in the foreground during the formation of modern nations (Özkırımlı, 2000, p. 167).

Anthony Smith is the most notable scholar who explicitly acknowledged and elucidated the ethno-symbolist paradigm to understand the inner worlds of nationalism. As Smith stated, ethno-symbolist paradigm shares a number of concerns. The Paradigm's primary aim is to bring out the symbolic legacy of ethnic forebears for today's nations by arguing that a distinct continuity exists between 'traditional' and 'modern.' A second common aim is to eliminate elite's role in shaping national identities. Ethno-symbolists lay stress on the relationship between elites and the masses (Smith, 2001, p. 57).

In fact, according to this paradigm, "nations are neither all recent and novel, nor just products of modernization, then it becomes necessary to search for another paradigm that would encompass and do justice to the oft-remarked duality […]" (Smith, 2001, p. 60). Ethno-symbolist paradigm interweaved both objective factors such as language, religion, customs, territory, and institutions and subjective factors such as attitudes, perceptions, sentiments, symbols, memories, myths, values, and traditions to define the term nation.

By directing attention to the ethnic forebears, ethno-symbolist paradigm grounded on the rise of nations and nationalism[17] by a transformation from *ethnie* to nation. According to Smith, ethnie or an ethnic community stresses on the role of a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, differentiating elements of common culture, an association with a specific

[17] According to Smith, "nationalism is an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining the *autonomy*, *unity* and *identity* of a nation" (1991, p. 74).

"homeland" and a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population (Smith, 1991, p. 21; Smith, 2001, p. 13).

As Smith underlined, a nation is neither a state, nor an ethnic community. It is not a state, because the concept of state relates to autonomous institutions, which differentiate from other institutions in a given territory. In contrast, nation is based on a collective will and shared emotions of specific moral community (Smith, 2001, p. 12).

Nation is not an ethnic community because an ethnic community does not necessarily presuppose occupy a specific homeland; therefore, members of an ethnic community are not able to have a shared history and a public culture (Smith, 2001, p. 12). As Smith stated,

> *public culture* […], represents a key feature of the concept of nation, endowing it with a sense of unity and a recognized distinctivess. It is not enough for the designated population to share a common language or religion and customs. This language or religion must become a common public property and part of an acknowledged, or official, distinctive culture. (Smith, 2002, p. 20)

According to Smith, the alteration from demotic ethnie to civic nation has some significant steps. These include:

- A movement to a politicized community with a unified policy in order to constitute a sovereign state.
- A desire towards a universally recognized "homeland" for an absolute demarcated territory.
- A single economy with control over its own resources.
- A movement to turn ethnic members to legally equal members by presenting them single code of civil, legal, political rights and duties under a common legal system.
- A movement to confer on new roles by re-educating them through compulsory and standardized mass education in national values, myths and memories (Smith, 1994, p. 153-154).

Bearing these in mind, Smith delineated nation as "[…] a named human community occupying a homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a common public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members" (Smith, 1991, p. 14; Smith, 2001, p. 13; Smith, 2002, p. 17). Smith went further and suggested indispensable provisions for survival of a nation. These are national autonomy, national unity, and national identity (Smith, 2001, p. 9). Since it is related to my research, I will deal with national identity.

According to Smith, having created by nationalism, "national identity" was perhaps the most fundamental and powerful identity myth in the modern world among the multiple identities which human beings share today (Smith, 1991, introduction section, para. 6). As Smith denoted, the existence of a homeland[18], common culture, common historical myths, and memories, reciprocal legal rights for all members of a nation regardless of their gender, status, or race are the fundamental features of "national identity." Such a definition, which lays stress on a number of interrelated components, brings out complex, multi-dimensional and abstract nature of national identity. In that respect, to Smith, the term national identity embraces two kinds of dimensions: "Civic and territorial" and "ethnic and genealogical" (Smith, 1991, p. 15). While civic and territorial dimension accentuates a definite social space within which members must live and work and be subject to common laws and institutions under a common legal system, ethnic and genealogical dimension accentuates presumed descent ties, vernacular languages, customs, traditions, myths, symbols, and historical memories. In other words, while national identity comprises cultural identity with its emphasizes on ethnic and genealogical dimension, it also comprises political identity with its emphasizes on civic and territorial dimension. According to Smith, creating a widespread awareness by instilling ethnic and genealogical dimension, which are pre-existing local ethnic

[18] In this definition, Smith enumerated the "existence of a homeland" at the outset because he strongly supported the idea of "nationals outside the homeland were deemed to be 'lost' " (Smith, 1991, p. 75).

configurations, such as myths, history and linguistic traditions into the community, the idea of ethnic nation was imprinted to members' of the nation's memory because nations always presuppose ethnic elements (Smith, 1991, p. 12).

As Smith argued, even though other types of collective identities such as class, religion, gender, and race may have an affect on the direction of national identity, they rarely come through to downgrade its significance. The reason, which lies behind the potency and durability of national identity, is its ubiquity. National identity is so pervasive that it touches on a wide range of spheres of life such as, assumptions, myths, values, memories as well as in language, law, institutions, and ceremonies (Smith, 1991, p. 143-144). With all these foreknowledges in mind, Smith warned his readers not to underestimate identities' "chameleon-like" nature as well (Smith, 1991, p. 144). To Smith, individuals identify themselves with various identities and roles ─ familial, territorial, class, religious, occupational groups, regions, parties, confessions, ethnic and gender ─ Individuals can modify or even abolish these social classifications, as circumstances require (Smith, 2001, p. 18).

Smith also accentuated that identities which are based on primarily cultural elements such as religious and national identities tend to resist to dissolutions more than other types of collective identities, such as classes, regions, parties and so forth because memories, values, symbols, myths and traditions tend to be more persistent and binding (Smith, 2001, p. 19). The above-mentioned analysis of Smith may make the readers think that collective cultural identities are static and stark; however, he underscored that every type of identity is subject to process of change and dissolution. He stated, "these changes may be gradual and cumulative, or sudden and discontinuous. The only difference from other kinds of collective identity is the generally slower rate and the longer time-span of the rhythms of cultural change […]." (2001, p. 19-20).

In short, contrary to criticisms aimed at Smith by Özkırımlı, Smith conceded and recognized flexibility and the situational context of identities. In this regard, even though he accepted national identity as the most powerful and dominant among individuals, he noted that even the strength of national identity could change within various social-contexts; therefore, I do not take into consideration the major criticism leveled against ethno-symbolists for their so-called underestimation of the fluidity and malleability of identities. In the modern world, memories, symbols, myths, traditions, identities, and the like are also subject to a constant *reinterpretation* and ethno-symbolists are aware of this fact. In this framework, I drew on Smith's points of view about identities throughout my research because with his unequivocal attention to the ethnic memories, myths, symbols and traditional ties, he does not sweep away the vestiges of the past and its patchwork of ethnic and religious culture, but he does not regard primordial objects solid and absolute at the same time (Smith, 2001, p. 85-86).

2.1.2 Religious Identity

In this section, religious identity, which is one of my focal points in the research, is a valid reason to claim refugee status for UNHCR [in case of a restriction or violation of right to have a religion, to practice one's religion and to change religions]; and therefore, it has been examined in detail. (UNHCR, "Manual on Mandate Refugee Status Determination", n.d., p. 33). Firstly, some crucial religious identity definitions will be given and the functions of religion for immigrants in general will be demonstrated.

As it has been accepted by twentieth century social scientists, religion is still playing an important role in people's lives. This view dates back to the inception of sociology regarding the significance of religion in social life. For instance, Durkheim who is one of the founders of modern sociology, defined religion as the cement, which held modern societies together (Alwin, Felson, Walker & Tufiş, 2006, p. 530). Beyer, a professor of sociology, who focused his

researches primarily on sociological theory of religion and religious diversity in Canada regarding recent immigrants, defined religion "as a global societal system which is transnational in character and acts like nation-states or the economy" (as cited in Akçapar, 2006, p. 819). For French sociologist Hervieu-Leger religion is a cultural memory of a society, which helps to transit identity from one generation to another (Mitchell, 2006, p. 1138). For Hamf, religion summons the community because religion began to grow in the socialization process of early childhood (as cited in Mitchell, 2006, p. 1140).

Religious identity describes membership of a community defined by common beliefs, traditions of ritual, certain symbolic codes and value system or ancestry (UNHCR, "Manual on Mandate Refugee Status Determination," n.d., p. 33). According to Wimberley (1989), the members of a specific religious group anticipate that each member will perform appropriate religious behaviors and be compatible with certain normative religious beliefs. This particular kind of *role performance* constitutes religious identity (p. 129). According to Smith (1991), religious identities are quiet different from class, profession and gender identities owing to the fact that these identities appear from production and exchange activities but religious identities derive from communication and socialization (p. 6). In other words, Smith contended that religion has a dual character in terms of its spiritual and social role. When masses summon around a faith, members of that faith feel that they are sharing certain symbolic codes, value systems, and tradition of belief and ritual. In a way, they have a tendency to join in a single social community. Within this period, they are subject to socialization since their early childhood (Smith, 1991, p. 27). Moreover, religious identities are not acquired but mostly passed on by family, religious groups or other social entities (Smith, 1991, p. 6).

In the framework of religion, Smith laid out another delicate point. Even though the foundations of modern nations are not based on a religion simply, Smith warned his readers about religion's decisive role in the formation of modern

nations because as Connor and Nash implied, religion is often articulated to the modern nations as an "imagined kinship" (Mitchell, 2006, p. 1139).

As an imagined kinship, religion has crucial functions among immigrants. Johan Leman below enumerated these functions,

- As an institutional conveyor of (ethno-cultural) bridging
- As a medium of socio-cultural integration
- As a medium for affirming original culture
- As a celebration of cultural and religious syncretism
- As an engine of (non-) adaptation (as cited in Akçapar, 2006, p. 818).

As Akçapar noted, religion plays a very crucial role in the formation of personal and social identity among immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees both in the context of the integration and transit period in the host country[19] (Akçapar, 2006, p. 818).

According to the identity theory of Tajfel and Turner, simply being a member of a group provides individuals with a sense of belonging with an emotional adherence bonded to that membership (Phinney, 1990, p. 500). In the research, I assumed this group as a religious group. According to the theory, if the preponderant group in a society excludes characteristics of another group and precludes them from basic ways of life, the excluded group is faced with a *negative distinctiveness* (Phinney, 1990, p. 501).

In the research, I measured the individual religiosity of the children by taking into consideration both *religious norm adherence* and *religious identity salience* (Wimberley, 1989, p. 125). According to Wimberley, religious norm adherence is "the degree to which an individual adheres to the normative expectations of his or her religious group" (1989, p. 130). On this account, Stark and Glock

[19] Significant functions and roles of religion will be discussed in Chapter Four in detail by referring to the interviews that I made with the children in Kayseri.

(1968) set forth five dimensions of "religious commitment" or "religious norm adherence":

> [b]elief orthodoxy, adherence to set of beliefs associated with one's religious tradition; (2) ritual involvement, the performance of public religious practices; (3) devotionalism, the performance of private religious practices; (4) experience, perceptions of rather direct contact with the divine; and (5) religious knowledge, the extent of one's knowledge about one's religion. (as cited in Wimberley, 1989, p. 127)

However, Wimberley (1989) pointed out that religious identity salience[20] is quiet different from religious norm adherence. Religious identity salience describes how an individual attaches to the specific religion and to what extent religious identity is superior among the individual's other identities (p. 130). As Wimberley (1989) posited, adherence to religious norms does not necessarily point religious identity salience, nonetheless religious identity salience is closely referred to the extent to which religious norms are internalized (p. 130). For Stryker and Serpe, the concept of identity salience is fundamental to identity theory. According to them, one's propensity to adhere religious norms in every given situation shows the salience of religious identity (Wimberley, 1989, p. 130-131). Conclusively, religiosity could be measured out through both norm adherence and identity salience. Persons who have religious identity salience will apt to carry out their roles as expected without taking into consideration rewards and external costs to violate non-religious norms (Wimberley, 1989, p. 136). When I was analyzing asylum-seeker children's religious identities in the interview, I took into consideration both norm adherence and religious identity salience.

2.1.3 Childhood Experiences

In this research, a comprehensive inquiry about 'childhood' is necessary because displacement and multiple traumatic impacts of the asylum-seeking experience pose a serious obstacle in their childhood experiences. On this

[20] As a phenomenon, religious identity salience belongs to Stryker's (1980) terminology (Wimberley, 1989, p. 130).

account, childhood was taken up as a social construction in this thesis. In an advanced sentence,

> [l]ooking further back I can see vast differences between contemporary and historical childhoods. Today, children have few responsibilities, their lives are characterized by play not work, school not paid labour, family rather than public life and consumption intead of production. A hundred years ago, a twelve-year-old working in a factory would have been perfectly acceptable. […] These changing ideas about children have led many social scientists to claim that childhood is a 'social construction'. They use this term to mean that understandings of childhood are not the same everywhere […]. (BBC Open 2.net, "The Invention of Childhood", n.d.)

Bearing the foregoing explanations in mind, the interviewees' childhood experiences will be examined by taking the implementation of the most fundamental child rights into account. According to World Childhood Foundation, "[e]very child has a right to a childhood, security, joy, playfulness and a general curiosity about life. Every one has right to grow up and develop socially and intellectually. However, many children are deprived of these most fundamental rights" (World Childhood Foundation, "About Childhood", n.d.). Nevertheless, experiencing childhood is not the same for the children who are living in different social contexts. For instance, asylum-seeker and refugee children, they are experiencing childhood rather differently from their coevals who live in their home country.

Moreover, underestimation of childhood studies prompted to examine construction of childhood in detail because children are still regarded as passive receivers of the society in which they are living. Moreover, their own voices and experiences are generally absent from the discourses of professionals and policy makers. In this research, I will reveal that children are active creators of their own life, and their parents' lives so much that they are able to create new roles for themselves in various social and cultural contexts. In the light of the above information, the concept of childhood will be discussed initially as the mainstay of this sub-title.

As James explained, childhood was conceptualized "[…] within evolutionary discourses of children's biological make up and was confined to mother-child relationships until the 1970s" (as cited in Dona, 2006, p. 23). It has been argued by Phillippe Aries, a French historian, that childhood did not exist in medieval society. This gave rise to emergence of a new paradigm in childhood studies (Dona, 2006, p. 23). This new paradigm regards childhood as a social construction. As James argued, children are no more the passive recipients but they are active and independent social agents who are sufficient to construct their own lives within this new paradigm (as cited in Dona, 2006, p. 23). As Christensen and Prout underlined, this paradigm shift also paved the way for a radical change in childhood studies towards an active child participant in the researches. As a result, children became subjects rather than objects of the researches (as cited in Dona, 2006, p. 32).

As Sporton, Valentine and Nielsen (2006) underlined, it is significant to ascertain when the childhood finishes and when the adulthood starts out. In most European countries the borders of childhood are defined by touching upon the age limit. According to this widely accepted age limit, adulthood takes place at 18. In other words, under the age of 18, all people are accepted as children who are vulnerable human "becomings" (Jenks, 1996) in most of the European countries (p. 207). At this point, by accentuating Jeffrey, McDowell, Robson and Jenk's point of views Sporton, Valentine, and Nielsen (2006) leveled against this prescribed definition of childhood for the reasons of its being hegemonic and based on a normative Western construction (p. 207). In fact, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) define a child as "anyone under the age of 18" (UNHCR, *Refugee Children*, n.d., p. 5; UNICEF, "Convention on the Rights of the Child: Summary", n.d.) but this superficial age limit can not describe the transition from childhood to adulthood comprehensively. As Jenks implied, this overlooks cross-cutting lines of cultural understanding of the transition to adulthood (as cited in Sporton, Valentine, & Nielsen, 2006, p. 207). In other words, apart from

the absolute childhood definition in the legally binding instruments, the concept of childhood is also ever-changing in various space, time and conditions whereby the transition to adulthood does not take place at the age of 18 in every social and cultural context.

This untimely adulthood damages to expeirnce childhood in some cases such as the case of the children who are experiencing asylum-seeking process. One of the great majority who could not live their childhood properly are refugees and asylum-seeker children certainly. As Fantino and Colak (2001) stated, "every day, nearly 5,000 children become refugees, with a vast number growing up and spending their entire lives in refugee camps" (p. 588). The children who are experiencing or has experienced the asylum-seeking process with their families sometimes assume almost a 'parental' responsibility in specific situations. In case of unaccompanied minors[21], asylum-seeker and refugee children have to face various challenges all alone. In such cases, they have to relinquish their childhood and take the role of their parent's adult identity in order to survive. In short, throughout the asylum-seeking experience, most of the children are deprived of their childhood.

In this research, even though most of the children of Iranian asylum-seekers who are living in Kayseri can participate in school, leisure, recreational, and cultural activities, their child role is replaced by the adult role in situations where they must interpret for their parents such as the situations in which they are in contact with local authorities, social workers, and doctors outside the school since they speak Turkish better than their parents (Anderson, 2001, p. 191). However, as I learnt from ASAM officers, some of the children of Iranian asylum-seekers are working in restaurants as a dishwasher or a cleaner in order to support the household economy in Kayseri. Therefore, they could not adapt to the host society and foreign culture as quickly, unlike the others who could

[21] According to UNHCR, "[u]n unaccompanied asylum-seeking child is someone under the age of 18 years who has been separated from parents and other adult care-givers, is making a claim for refugee status and needs the care and protection of welfare services in the country of asylum while that claim is examined and settled" (as cited in Kohli, 2006, p. 707).

because they are going to school. In short, these different cultural and social contexts of childhood pose a great impediment in experiencing their childhood in the new context.

In addition, even though Turkey signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on September 14, 1990 and even though this legally binding instrument subsumes the asylum-seeker and refugee children's rights, most of the children of Iranian asylum-seekers are deprived of their non-negotiable rights in Turkey**.** Furthermore, while Turkey ratified the optional protocols of the Convention on September 8, 2000, on the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography and on the involvement of children in armed conflict; nevertheless article 22 which is about the rights of asylum-seeker and refugee children was not ratified (UNICEF, "UNICEF in Turkey", n.d.).

2.2 Effects of Adaptation Patterns to Reconstruction of Identities

This chapter analyses the acculturation[22] literature on the theoretical situation of asylum-seeker children, considering factors that influence their adaptation and adjustment to host country from the perspective of two discrete models of adaptation to reveal both of the models are not consistent with the case of children of Iranian asylum-seekers in Turkey. In this regard, I will examine both "non-linear" and "linear" models of adaptation.

2.2.1 Non-Linear Models of Adaptation

Asylum-seeker children are often accompanied by stressors, predicaments, challenges, and potential barriers, such as a new social environment and neighborhood, a new education system, an additional language, a new socialization pattern, a new peer group, miscellaneous bereavements, poverty, loneliness, alienation, discrimination and so forth. All these foregoing reasons lead to difficulties in adapting to a new society. When this is considered, the

[22] Even though, acculturation results in cultural changes in both two cultural groups, I primarily dealt with the cultural changes within Iranian asylum-seekers' community in Turkey.

question “How do asylum-seeker children live betwixt and between two cultures?” gains significance. These cultures refer to those of the immigrant’s home community and those of the host community at hand. Do they assert their cultural heritage or conglomeration of cultural representations? Alternatively, do they encounter any challenges while living in a cross-cultural setting? Do they successfully adjust to the host society or do they need an effective adjustment process to engage in their intercultural relations? Even though early research that was done about adaptation patterns of both asylum-seeker and refugee children claimed that asylum-seeker and refugee children would inevitably be absorbed into the host society, this does not happen in every socio-cultural context because every country has its unique legal, social, economic, and political concerns. In this regard, it is noted that:

> [i]n this framework, two issues are raised: the degree to which people wish to maintain their heritage culture and identity; and the degree to which people seek involvement with the larger society. When these two issues are crossed, an acculturation space is created with four sectors within which individuals may express *how* they are seeking to acculturate. (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Wedder, 2006, p. 306)

The term acculturation deals broadly with cultural change that occurs when two or more cultures come into firsthand contact (Phinney, 1990:501). Berry identified four modes of acculturation, which is one of the most acknowledged models. These are named “assimilation,” “separation,” “marginalization” and “integration.”

- ***Assimilation***

Assimilation occurs when individuals relinquish their native culture and move into the mainstream culture (Berry et al., 2006, p. 306).

- ***Separation***

Separation occurs when adherence to culture of origin is kept while disavowing the culture of the host society.

- ***Marginalization***

Marginalization appears when individuals have negative attitudes towards their own as well as the host society culture. In this mode of acculturation, individuals reject the culture of both home and host society.

- ***Integration***

Integration involves the maintenance of native culture as well as incorporation into the host society.

Table 1

Terms used for Four Orientations, Based on Degree of Identification with Both One's Own Ethnic Group and the Majority Group

	Identification with Ethnic Group	
Identification with Majority Group	Strong	Weak
Strong	Acculturated Integrated Bicultural	Assimilated
Weak	Ethnically identified Ethnically embedded Separated Dissociated	Marginal

Source: Berry's "non-linear model": 1986 (as cited in Phinney, 1990, p. 502).

Berry regards acculturation as a two-dimensional process, which takes into consideration both the relationship with the culture of home society and the relationship with the culture of host society, and those two relationships may be independent (Phinney, 1990, p. 501). According to this model, immigrants can have either strong or weak identifications with their own or the mainstream culture because maintenance of home country culture does not require a weak contact with the host society. Bearing this in mind, while one may boast with

his or her own culture, at the same time, he or she may entertain positive attitudes towards the host society (Phinney, 1990; Rutter, 2006).

2.2.2 Linear Models of Adaptation

In addition to Berry's acculturation model, new models of acculturation were developed over time. One of them is called "staged approaches," which is regarded as one of the "linear models," and this model stresses the processual nature of adaptation and the temporal dimensions of exile (as cited in Rutter, 2006, p. 43).

In the linear model, the assumption is that strengthening one identity requires weakening another. Thus, a strong native identity is not possible among those who become involved in the mainstream society. Harrell-Bond and Al-Rasheed launched a further staged model with their concept of *liminality* where the immigrant identities change in order to construct hybrid identities.

Al-Rasheed cited the following stages:

- Physical segregation as immigrants in a new host country - In this initial arrival period, the immigrants are faced with the reality by loss of their homeland, culture and identity after a possible high occupational and social status in their home country (as cited in Rutter, 2006, p. 44; Stein, 1981, p. 324).
- The stage of liminality - With impressive effort to rebuild their lives, old forms of social stratification and culture of origin break down. As Stein also observed, within this period, the immigrants undermine the downward mobility by participating in social activities such as going to school, changing jobs, and language improvement (as cited in Rutter, 2006, p. 44; Stein, 1981, p. 325).
- Reincorporation - Having completed the major part of adjustment, cultural maintenance combined with a preference for interacting with the host country appears (as cited in Rutter, 2006, p. 44).

Throughout my research, I prefer referring to Berry's model of acculturation because it was based on a two-dimensional process which emphasizes asylum-seekers' and refugees' relationship with the culture of the host society and that of the home society. During the interviews, I witnessed that the intervieews' acculturation experiences were not based on a fixed and impermeable form; therefore, I could not use even Berry's model in its full sense. Even though most of the asylum-seeker children whom I interviewed chose to maintain their own culture as a significant stabilizing role, they also had absolute and obvious contact with the host society. However, I could not denominate this mutual relationship as an exact 'integration' as Berry stated because interviewees have noteworthy drawbacks to integrate socially, economically, culturally and politically such as lack of citizenship and work permits, temporary settlement in Turkey. To eliminate any misunderstandings, one thing should be highlighted. The reason for referring to Berry's model is denoting it is not consistent with children of Iranian asylum-seekers case in Turkey.

In short, asylum-seeker children's condition in terms of adaptation is rather ambivalent. Most of them oscillate between two different ways of positioning the self. A dream of return is always dominant for almost all children who either wish to immerse themselves deeper in the society into which they have just moved. As Rutter (2006) stated, "[…], all processual studies of identity assume a more or less linear pathway towards eventual incorporation into the host society or return – in short, a story with a happy ending" (p. 44).

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF IRANIAN ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN TURKEY

The following chapter on historical background will examine the reasons of the immigration flow from Iran to Turkey since 1980s. In this regard, it will be beneficial to learn both the pushing and the pulling factors that create the intensive migration flows from Iran since the Islamic Revolution in the first instance.

This chapter will also touch upon briefly the asylum and refugee policies of The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Turkish government because their policies affect the refugees and asylum-seekers conditions in host countries. In this framework, a summary of the regulations, conventions, protocols, laws and reforms undertaken by Turkish government on migration control and asylum-seeker/refugee protection will be demonstrated in turn.

3.1 Iranian Asylum-Seekers in Turkey since the Islamic Revolution

Iranians rank first among asylum-seekers in Turkey who come from the Middle East since the Iranian Revolution of 1979 (Akçapar, 2006, p. 827). After the setting up of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini installed a severe and repressive theocracy in Iran. This Shi'i centered state posed a serious danger for minority ethnic and religious groups; therefore, the people who opposed the Islamic regime fled from the religious persecution under Khomeini regime (Mcauliffe, 2007, p. 313). Thereby, initial flow of migration has started out from Iran to Turkey and Iran has become one of the most significant countries that produce asylum-seeker ever-more. In fact, 1979 was a 'breaking

point' for Turkey as well. As İçduygu implied, "Turkey has also been a major actor in international transit migratory movements since the 1980s" for various reasons (as cited in Akçapar, 2006, p. 821). According to Brewer and Yükseker (2006), political changes triggered to alter population movements in Turkey such as the Iranian revolution, the Gulf War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, economic disorders resulted from the collapse of socialist economies and political and economic turmoil such as civil war in Afghanistan (p. 15). "Situated in geographical area that serves as a bridge between East and West and North and South, Turkey has especially been home to waves of transit migration and illegal labor migration as well as movements of asylum-seekers" (Brewer & Yükseker, 2006, p. 15-16). In addition, Turkey shares a common border with regions and countries, which have a lingering history of political turmoil and ethnic divisions such as Iran and Iraq (Akçapar, 2006, p. 822; İçduygu, 2004, p. 90). These clashes have pushed people away from their homelands to other countries where they can find better life, security, and protection from persecution (İçduygu, 2004, p. 89-90). Another important reason is the existing flexible visa policy which further stimulated the massive swell of asylum-seekers to Turkey (Akçapar, 2006, p. 824). The last reason was based on the policies of "Fortress Europe". Within the framework of the policy; EU countries are still applying fortification of borders and erection of walls to divert Europe-targeted immigration flow to the peripheral countries around Europe such as Turkey (İçduygu, 2004, p. 90). On the basis of the preceding analysis, as İçduygu stated, "between 1980 and 1995, it has been documented that more than two million people arrived in Turkey as transit migrants, ninety eight percent of whom were from Iran and Iraq" (as cited in Akçapar, 2006, p. 821).

The Iranians who escaped from Khomeini's regime including former Shah supporters, regime opponents, Kurds and members of Jewish and Baha'i communities arrived in Turkey in the1980s (Kirişçi, 2001, p. 76-77). Throughout this period, Turkey adopted a policy which allowed the people who fled from the Islamic regime in Iran to enter the country without visa and stay

temporarily and although it is a big challenge to present the accurate statistics on their numbers, an estimated one and half million Iranian Kurds, Baha'is and Jews sought temporary stay in Turkey between 1980-1991 (Kirişçi, 2001, p. 77). As Kirişçi stated, most of them entered third countries by illegal ways. In other words, they did not apply for registration to UNHCR to acquire the legal asylum-seeker paper. The others who were registered by UNHCR obtained residence permit and waited to be resettled after their cases were examined by UNHCR (Kirişçi, 2001, p. 77). As I learnt from a UNHCR officer, among these Iranian asylum-seeker groups, Baha'i asylum-seekers were the luckiest ones when compared to other groups of asylum-seekers because UNHCR is still deciding on Baha'i asylum-seekers' cases in a much shorter time than deciding on other cases. UNHCR officers explained this priority as Baha'i asylum-seekers have well-founded fear of persecution because their religion is not recognized officially in Iran and they are subjected to a clear-cut persecution in Iran.

Table 2

New Applications – Non-European Asylum Seekers, June 2006

	Countries of Origin							
Year	Iran		Iraqis		Others		Total	
	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons
1997	746	1,392	1,275	2,939	83	117	2,104	4,448
1998	1,169	1,979	2,350	4,672	124	187	3,643	6,838
1999	2,069	3,843	1,148	2,472	184	290	3,401	6,605
2000	2,125	3,926	791	1,671	108	180	3,024	5,777
2001	1,841	3,485	497	998	372	709	2,710	5,177
2002	1,456	2,505	402	974	219	315	2,077	3,794
2003	1,715	3,092	159	342	373	514	2,247	3,948
2004	1225	2030	472	956	540	912	2,237	3,898
2005	1021	1716	490	1047	753	1151	2264	3914
2006	637	1060	118	223	426	557	1181	1840

Source: UNHCR Statistical Data Sheet 2006.

On the basis of preceding statistic, even though after the Islamic Revolution Iranian nationals ranked the first among asylum applicants, there was a distinct wane in the number of asylum applications from Iran after 2000. However, they still compose the top-ten list of asylum applicants in Turkey. Iranians see Turkey as a stepping stone to the Western countries as the other asylum-seekers who comes from the Middle East countries. Mohammadi indicated, "[t]oday, it is estimated that almost four million Iranians from different religious backgrounds and with diverse socioeconomic status live abroad, scattered in Western countries, notably the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom" (as cited in Akçapar, 2006, p. 826). As Abidi and Sarraf noted, some of the researches pointed out that Iranians do not contemplate returning to their home country unless the regime change (as cited in Akçapar, 2006, p. 826).

In brief, according to the UNHCR sources, great majority of registered Iranian asylum-seekers are living in Kayseri, Nevşehir, Van, and Konya today. For those Iranians whose cases were accepted, the UNHCR tries to find a resettlement country outside Turkey. The waiting period for those non-European asylum-seekers to pass to a West country is quite a while and this period's length depends on the Turkish asylum regulations.

3.2 The Turkish Regulations on Asylum-Seekers

Understanding of the Turkish regulations on asylum-seekers[23] is vital to understand why Turkey is often perceived as a waiting room for the asylum-seekers who came from the Middle East countries. In this sense, some significant regulations on asylum will be discusses in this section.

[23] In this section, I preferred to write a title which comprises the asylum-seekers in Turkey because as İçduygu noted, the people who are seeking asylum in Turkey came from mainly from the Middle East and various countries of Africa and Asia during recent years (İçduygu, 2004, p. 92). This asylum-seekers came from the Middle Eastern countries are referred to "non-Convention Refugees" (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 297) who are not accepted as refugees in Turkish legislation; therefore I did not use the term 'refugee' in title that I wrote.

With the end of the World War II, hundreds of thousands of refugees were living in makeshift camps; therefore, there appeared a need for international refugee regime. Even though international community founded refugee organizations and refugee conventions long ago, legal protection and assistance are still considerably insufficient On this account, the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees was adopted (UNHCR, "The Wall behind Which Refugees Can Shelter", 2001, p. 2). The Convention particularizes who refugees are, their legal rights and the legal obligations of states that have acceded to the Convention. The Convention also delineated a refugee's obligations to host governments and distinct categories of people who do not meet the requirements to obtain refugee status (UNHCR, "The 1951 Convention Questions & Answers", n.d., p. 4). Within the scope of the Convention, *non-refoulment* principle which prevents people from forcible return to the territories where they could be exposed to persecution has become the corner stone of the international refugee law (UNHCR, "The Wall behind Which Refugees Can Shelter", 2001, p. 2).

Hoping that the 'refugee crisis' could be settled in a short time, governments limited the scope of the Convention to refugees in Europe and to events occurring before 1 January 1951. Being a guardian of the Convention, UNHCR received a three-year mandate and it was expected the leave the business when the problem was solved ("The Wall behind Which Refugees Can Shelter", 2001, p. 2).

During this period, Turkey signed the 1951 Convention with both a "geographical" and a "time" limitation like other signatories, whereby only European refugees could be granted access to asylum procedures. In other words, Turkey would give the refugee status only to individuals who escaped from communist persecution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union occurring before 1 January 1951 (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 295).

Following the adoption of the 1951 Convention, the international refugee crisis did not diminish and refugee world has become more crowded. According to some critics, this made the Convention outdated and irrelevant on specific grounds ("The Wall behind Which Refugees Can Shelter", 2001, p. 2); therefore, the 1967 Protocol was signed to eliminate the time constraints.

With the 1967 Protocol, while almost all other signatories of the 1951 Convention were removing their reservations on the refugee definition, Turkey accepted to lift the time but did not remove its geographical reservations that excluded the non-Europeans from recognition as refugees (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 293; Kirişçi, 2001, p.74).

The violent fragmentation of the existing states and the formation of new nation states affected the nature and the size of movements of people into Turkey in the 1990s. Even though Turkish authorities were coping with a manageable flow of Convention refugees, the situation began to change at the end of 1980s when growing numbers of Iranians began to seek asylum (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 299; Kutlu, 2002, p. 30). This "continuing, diversifying and increasing irregular migration flows" triggered the coming into force of 1994 Regulation on asylum (İçduygu, 1994, p. 90). As Kirişçi implied, while Turkey turned into a transit country of irregular migrants and asylum-seekers from Middle Eastern, Asian, and African countries rapidly, the Turkish authorities were on the alert to prevent this overwhelming migration flows. In addition, Turkish authorities were concerned that Turkey started out to become a buffer zone to hamper refugees and illegal migrants from reaching Europe. Increasingly restrictive asylum and refugee policies in Western Europe reinforced this concern (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 301; Kirişçi, 2001, p. 79). In that respect, officials from the Ministry of Interior Affairs drafted the 1994 Regulation, which is entitled "The Regulation on the Procedures and the Principles Related to Mass Influx and the Foreigners Arriving in Turkey or Requesting Residence Permits with the Intention of Seeking Asylum from a Third Country." Thereby, Turkey began to take into

consideration the asylum applications from nationals of countries outside Europe (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 293).

Adoption of the 1994 Regulation brought on two different identifications about the categorizations of refugees. These identifications subsume "Conventional Refugees" who fled from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during the Cold War and "Non-Conventional Refugees" who fled from the Middle East countries (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 295-297; Kirişçi, 2001, p. 74-76). As Kirişçi noted, "[u]ntil the introduction of the 1994 Regulation on Asylum, Turkish national law had no provisions governing the status of asylum-seekers and refugees coming from outside Europe" (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 297).

The regulation was separated into five sections. The first section depicted the procedures and principles that shaped the Regulation to govern asylum in Turkey. The second section, described the procedures and principles concerning the asylum applications and status determination. One of the most conspicuous elements of this section is that asylum-seekers must register with the police within the five days[24] of their entry to Turkish territory. Furthermore, their reports must be sent to the Ministry of Interior Affairs. Thus, the Ministry became the final decision-making body for status determination (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 301-301; Kirişçi, 2001, p. 80). Even though the five-day deadline was considered a very short time by asylum-seekers, the Turkish authorities found this deadline reasonably generous when it is compared to many Western European countries where asylum-seekers have to register with the authorities within twenty-four hours (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 304; Kirişçi, 2001, p. 85). However, as the ASAM officers highligted, to implement the asylum-seeking and immigration procedures to the EU convergence operation plans, Turkey has initiated 'Asylum-Seeking-Immigration Twinning Project' with Denmark and England consortium in 2004. At the end of the project, 'Asylum-Seeking and Immigration National Action Plan' was prepared through the advices which

[24] As Ülkü pointed out in her thesis, "Turkey amended its 1994 asylum Regulation, extending from five days to ten the deadline for registering asylum claims with the authorities after arriving in host country in 1999" (Ülkü, 2002, p. 55).

derived from the project. According to this plan, ten day deadline was abrogated and 'reasonable period' to register with the authorities came into force.

The third and fourth sections deal with prevention of mass exodus (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 302; Kirişçi, 2001, p. 80). The final section elaborated on the details of administrative and legislative rules and principles regarding asylum such as deportation and temporary protection (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 303). In addition, a significant development of the Regulation is acceptance of implementation of the non-refoulment principle on both asylum-seekers and refugees from outside Europe. This principle had led serious conflict between Turkish authorities, the UNHCR, Western governments, and non-governmental organizations (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 303).

In addition to the Regulation's advantages to the asylum-seekers who came from the Middle Eastern countries, there emerged some considerable complications derived from the implementation of new asylum practices and rules within the Regulation. One problem that should be highlighted is "lack of a clearly defined role for the UNHCR" (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 305). Even though the Regulation called for a cooperation of the UNHCR and the Turkish authorities, the Turkish authorities seemed to interrupt this cooperation with the UNHCR with regard to the sharing of statistical information and to the resettlement of those asylum-seekers, whose cases have been accepted (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 305). Moreover, this Regulation called for cooperation on status determination between the Ministry of Interior Affairs and the UNHCR. At the same time, it identifies the Ministry of Interior Affairs as the main body responsible for status determination; nevertheless, UNHCR plays a more active role in status determination today (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 305) because the authorities of the Ministry of Interior Affairs has relied on the assessment of the UNHCR (Kirişçi, 2001, p. 86).

Another complication stems from the divergent opinions of the UNHCR and the Turkish police on deportation. This complication seems to be based on the five

day limit and the differences between the status determination of the Turkish police and the UNHCR. Here, the particular difficulties start out for non-European asylum-seekers. The failure to meet the deadline usually tends to an immediate deportation without examining the merits of the asylum claims. The majority of the asylum-seekers register with the UNHCR while the Turkish authorities are searching their cases. Therefore, UNHCR carries out its own unofficial status determination. As I learnt from a UNHCR officer, if the asylum-seekers accomplish to register with the authorities within five days, they have to wait for another several months for a second interview. Moreover, if these non-European asylum-seekers are accepted as a refugee by the UNHCR to move to a third country for resettlement, they should wait between eight months to two years in Turkey. Throughout this waiting period, asylum-seekers could not obtain work permit and housing but at least they can receive a limited healthcare and legal advice. Another result of this complication is that while Turkish authorities rejected a case, sometimes UNHCR considered the applicant's case as "people of concern"; therefore, deportation of these cases leads to violation of the non-refoulment principle. Nevertheless, according to the Turkish authorities, interference with their sovereign right to deport lead to transgression of the Turkish National Laws (Kirişçi, 1996, p. 306; Kirişçi, 2001, p. 81).

In brief, in spite of the complications and shortcomings of its implementation, the 1994 Regulation could be regarded as an outstanding achievement regarding the regularization of the status of asylum-seekers particularly those who came from the Middle East countries. In other words, it is a radical break from the past regularization about the non-Convention refugees.

3.3 Religious Groups in Iran: Baha'is and Shi'is

Iran embraces diverse religious groups such as Shi'ite Muslims, Christians, Zoroastrians, Jews, Baha'is and Sunni Kurds.

Table 3

Dimensions of Unity

	Religion			
Language*	Shi'te Islam	Sunni Islam	Recognized Religions	Others
Persian (Farsi)	Persians		Jews	Baha'is
	Bakhtiaris		Zoroastrians	
	Lurs			
Other Indo-Iranian	Kurds	Kurds Baluchi	Jews (Kurdish speaking)	
Other Indo-European			Armenian	
Arabic	Arabs	Arabs		
Other Semitic			Assyrians	
Turkish	Azeris			
	Quashqa'i	Turkoman		

Source: *Language classification is based on Nyrop, ed., Iran: A Country Study, p. 140-43; and Herbert H. Vreeland, ed., Iran (New Haven, Conn Human Relations Area Files, 1957), p. 48-51 (as cited in Higgins, 1988, p. 177).

According to Higgins, while Shi'ite Muslims make up ninety percent of the population, Sunni Muslims, Jews, Zoroastrians, Christians, and Baha'is make up ten percent of the population. In addition, according to the author, individuals who belong to non-Persian Shi'ite background integrate into Iran easier than Persian-speaking non-Shi'ites because in the Islamic Republican State religion takes precedence over language as the primary state ideology for unity (Higgins, 1988, p. 176-179). Nevertheless, assimilation of religious minorities is an undesirable act. As Higgins stated, "[a]s a result, religious minorities are likely to be less well integrated individually in the Islamic Republic than they were in the Pahlavi State, while linguistic minorities may eventually be better integrated economically and politically than they were formerly"(Higgins, 1988, p. 180). Related to the lack of integration of religious minorities, Varzi accentuated the centrality of Muslim identity in the post-revolutionary Iran. According to Varzi, Shi'i Islam is indispensable provision to be a good Iranian (Mcauliffe, 2007, p. 317-318).

On the basis of preceding analysis, I decided on to examine the asylum-seeker children who belong to Baha'i and Shi'i religious groups because these particular groups have different relationships with the Islamic Republic of Iran; therefore, I contrasted the asylum-seeking experiences of the Shi'i asylum-seeker children against those of Baha'i asylum-seeker children who are living provisionally in Kayseri. In this framework, I tried to gain insight into the different interaction ways of Shi'i and Baha'i children with constructed Iranian identity in the host society to ascertain the continuities and discontinuities within their identities during identity construction process. I also examined the saliency of post-revolutionary Iranian identity, which conflated with Muslim orthodox Shi'i identity within the asylum-seeker children identities**.** In addition, I made comparison between their religious and national identities in order to learn which one is the most important in their identification of self.

3.3.1 The Baha'is: An Unrecognized Religious Minority

The outgrowth of Shaikhism, which was a movement among the Shia's caused to transpire of the Baha'i faith. Adherents of Shaikhism expected the return of hidden twelfth Imam in 1844 (Sanasarian, 2000, p. 50). As Sanasarian argued out, Babi movement developed as a faction of Shaikhism initially but dissociated from it afterwards when its leader, Seyyed Ali Mohammad Shirazi (1819-50) who was known as Bab, proclaimed himself as Hidden Imam. Having distinct bounds of Shiism, Bab's early teachings were a tacit rebellion against social injustice of the ruler and the ulama. As MacEoin and Smith noted, the Babi movement was interpreted as a reformist form of Islam (Sanasarian, 2000, p. 50). As Sanasarian explained, by the execution of Bab and his adherents in 1850 by the government, the development of movement attenuated. Bahaism emerged once again in 1860 by one of the Bab's followers, known as Bahaullah's declaration of himself as the messiah predicted by Bab. Eventually, Bahaullah was exiled from Iran and died in Acre in Palestine in 1892. As Fischel and Cole indicated, today, in addition to Acre, Haifa is also a holy place for Bahaism because his adherents were buried there (Sanasarian, 2000, p. 50-51).

Higgins noted that Bahaullah's successors translated Baha'i texts into many languages; therefore, Bahaism spread quickly outside Iran, mainly in Third World countries, Europe and North America and achieved an estimated three million adherents in over a hundred countries (Sanasarian, 2000, p. 50; Higgins, 1988, p. 181). According to the information, which is derived from the official web site of Baha'is, with more than five million followers, Bahaism is the second most widespread faith on earth (The Baha'is ,"What is the Baha'i Faith?" , n.d.). Based on preceding researches about Baha'i faith and Baha'is, their teachings initially lay stress on "unity" which was the essential massage of Bahaullah. He recognized the other major religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam and their prophets. He thought that there is only one God, one human race; therefore, "the time has arrived for the uniting

of all peoples into a peaceful and integrated global society" (The Baha'is, "What is the Baha'i Faith," n.d.). Apart from unity, Baha'is bring the importance of universal education, sexual equality, world peace, the elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth, the harmony of science and religion, a sustainable balance between nature and technology to the fore (Higgins, 1988, p. 182; The Baha'is, "What is the Baha'i Faith", n.d.). As Mcauliffe underlined, by emphasizing on global society and global citizenship, Baha'is indicated that national identity downgraded in importance. On that point, Denis M. MacEoin who is a former lecturer in Islamic studies concurred with Shoghi Effendi who was the guardian of the Baha'i faith from 1921 until his death in 1957 with regard to end of nation-states and presage the imminent global unity (Mcauliffe, 2007, p. 320). As Mcauliffe implied, subordination of national impulses is not so important for many Baha'is (2007, p. 320). Furthermore, as Higgins noted, Baha'is are refrain from participation in politics[25] (Higgins, 1988, p. 182).

According to Sanasarian (2000), Baha'is reject being either a sect or a reform movement, but a progressive revolution within Islam, but the idea of progressive revolution conflicts with the Islamic worldview which accepts Mohammed as the last prophet and Islam as the last major religion (p. 51). The Baha'is claimed that Bahaullah is the predecessor of Mohammad (Hemmasi & Prorok, 2002, p. 64).

Though Baha'is are thought to be the largest religious minority in Iran[26], Shi'ite clergy, many Iranian Muslims, and the government do not recognize Bahaism as

[25] As Sanasarian (2000) noted, Bahaullah succesor, Abd-al- Baha annonced that Baha'is disjointed themselves from politics (p. 52). In this regard, Baha'is in the Pahlavi state kept away from political affairs. According to Mehr, "[s]everal cabinet ministers of the late Pahlavi era were rumored to be Baha'i, and their Baha'i parentage is acknowledged, though they considered themselves and were considered by the government to be Muslims" (as cited in Higgins, 1988, p. 183). Consequently, Baha'is had to find job in private industry which take on qualified individuals; so they become more succesful in business than the population in general (Sanasarian, 2000, p. 53-114).

[26] Baha'i sources announced that the global Baha'i population is estimated to be in the realm of five million and it is the second most widespread religion after Christianity (as cited in Mcauliffe, 2007, p. 325) According to Peter Smith, "estimating the number of Baha'is in Iran has always been difficult due to their persecution and strict adherence to secrecy" (as cited in

an official religion. As Richard (1995) stated, "[…], despite their considerable number, the Baha'is have always been treated as non-existent; figuring in the census of as Muslims, their marriages and inheritances have always run the risk of not being recognized, or of being annulled" (p. 74). Bahaism is regarded as an Islamic heresy or a British and Zionist backed political movement in Iran (Higgins, 1988, p. 182). As Sanasarian implied, even though the Baha'is have not been a recognized religious minority in either the Pahlavi or the Islamic Republican State, abuse and harassment which directed to the Baha'is lessened relatively during the reign of Reza Shah.

The Baha'i community was able to live relatively in peace under the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah. There were some important reasons for this comfort. One of them is that the Baha'is had high level of education in contrast to the rest of Iranian society because Baha'is were not able to be work in government services since the Iranian civil code presupposed applicants to identify their religion. Therefore, the only option to live on in Iran is employment in private sector (Sanasarian, 2000, p. 53). For these above-mentioned reasons, they were qualified enough to be charged with significant positions and duties. These high qualifications of the Baha'is made them accede to important positions in the civil administration, especially in finance within modernization and Westernization plans conceived by the Shah (Sanasarian, 2000, p. 52). The second reason is that Baha'i principles fell into the same line with those of the Shah's regime. For instance, as Higgins contended, "[…] Baha'is are expected to obey the laws of the state in which they reside and to refrain from participation in politics" (Higgins, 1986, p. 182). Their policy of nonparticipation in political issues and political obedience to the ruler in all circumstances supported the Pahlavis. All these beliefs and principles turned Baha'is into loyal subjects of the Pahlavi state and saved them from persecution that directed to them in Iran.

Sanasarian, 2000, p. 53).Cooper and Kazemzadeh reported the number of Baha'is in Iran has ranged from one hundred thousand to five hundred thousand (as cited in Higgins, 1988, p. 182).

However, in contrast to the Baha'i sources which emphasized the privileged status of Baha'is during the reign of Reza Shah, a notable number of Baha'i sources argued about many reported acts such as closing down of Baha'i centers and schools, denying access to government jobs, banning on the publication of Baha'i literature, nonrecognition of Baha'i marriages and sequestrating the Baha'i places of worships (Sanasarian, 2000, p. 52; Richard, 1995, p. 74). In spite of their relative improved status during the reign of Reza Shah, anti-Baha'i campaign was launched by the ulama in 1955. This riot incited Mohammad Reza Pahlavi who was the second monarch of the Pahlavi dynasty, to participate in anti-Baha'i movement because he was under pressure for being too Western and secular. He was instigated to strengthen and entrench his power by engaging the support of the clerics. Hence, the Shah's government decided to engage in counter movement against Baha'is in order to reaffirm Shah's authority and mollify Islamic leaders. Throughout the riot, Baha'i centers, religious sites and cemeteries in Tehran were destructed by government officials (Sanasarian, 2000, p. 52; Higgins, 1988, p. 182; Richard, 1995, p. 74).

As MacEoin implied, the clergy and religious segments carried on with their harassment collaborated with the government's secret service agency, the SAVAK, against the Baha'is in pre-revolutionary Iran (as cited in Sanasarian, 2000, p. 53). Even though United Nations, Amnesty International and other human rights organizations affirmed the constant persecution towards the Baha'is, religious groups have felt enmity towards the Baha'is because they were regarded as true "infidels" who should be destroyed (Sanasarian, 2000, p. 114-116). Some of the Muslim groups regarded Bahaism as the medium of British colonialist to destroy Shiism. As Douglas Martin who reviewed the history of the persecution of Baha'is in Iran, implied, Baha'is also were accused of being collaborators of the Shah's regime, anti-Islamic spies of Zionism in a conspiracy with United States and British Governments (as cited in Sanasarian, 2000, p. 114).

After Khomeini came to power under the Islamic Republic, the situation of the Baha'is was on the downgrade because the political role of ulama and the dominance of Islam as a state ideology coalesced. In other words, political power of ulama enhanced considerably.

Under the Islamic Republic, discrimination and persecution against Baha'is intensified dramatically. A much more destructive campaign was unleashed against the Baha'is. They were showed as a target that should be executed immediately for to be aided by Zionist to undermine Iran; therefore, they have subjected to various attacks such as kidnapping, disappearances, mob attacks, dismissal of Baha'i teachers and students from the schools, arresting, and execution (Sanasarian, 2000, p. 119). "On 21 August 1980, all nine members of the Baha'i National Spiritual Assembly (NSA) of Iran were arrested by the Revolutionary Guards and subsequently disappeared"[27] (Sanasarian, 2000, p. 116). Apart from the systematic attacks on the rights of live, the government also has confiscated Baha'i community property and destroyed the House of Bab, one of the holiest Baha'i shrines in 1983. In June, ten Baha'i women were killed after being tortured (Higgins, 1988, p. 183; Sanasarian, 2000, p. 117).

Expulsion of Baha'is from jobs and schools increased substantially after 1980. Islamic Republic of Iran envisaged an effective plan to impede the Baha'is social and economic development and deprive their livelihood. In the framework of this plan, Baha'i students who studied at schools and universities were fired or expelled (Sanasarian, 2000, p. 121). On this account, the growing threat to Iran's Baha'is is exposed on the Baha'is official web site. The most remarkable reported incidents are about denial of Baha'i students in schools and universities. They are facing with discrimination in higher education and they are subjected to expulsions in Iranian universities. They are being denied entrance to the institutions of higher education by the government in order to undercut the social, economic and cultural progress of Baha'i children and

[27] As Sanasarian stated, according to Baha'i sources, 117 people were killed by the end of 1984 (2000, p. 116).

young people so the community (The Baha'is, "The Growing Threat to Iran's Baha'is", n.d.).

In the Islamic Republican state, the Baha'is do not have right to have a religion, to announce their religion and to practice their religion but they have a right to change their religion. As Higgins pointed out, "[…], the Baha'is, […], are now being pressured to change their religious identification as the minimal price for citizenship in the Islamic Republic" (Higgins, 1988, p. 184). In the meantime, some of the Baha'is who decided to remain in Iran establishes their safety by pretending like Muslims. Their lack of distinguishing physical, linguistic, or behavioral features and their tenet that to become a Baha'i there is no need to being born into a Baha'i family are the advantages in this process (Higgins, 1988, p. 184).

In brief, the Baha'is still prohibited from enrolling in universities today. Baha'i arrests and disappearance continue. The Baha'i community is deprived of their property rights. Marriages, divorces, and inheritance rights were still not legally recognized. In the view of these facts, Iranian Baha'is choose either to convert, pretending like a Muslim, or leave the country to get rid of religious subjugation in Iran. As Mcauliffe (2007) pointed out, the long-lasting religious suppressions paved the way for outflow of the Baha'is dramatically so far as to feel that there was nobody left in Iran with whom the Baha'i asylum-seeker and refugees could establish links (p. 318).

Additionally, even though it is not mine research question, it should be noted that Baha'is representation in Turkey is significant in terms of understand the fictive-kin system among Baha'is. 'Turkey Baha'i Society' as a civil initiative has some noteworthy activities such as arranging formal visits to Edirne for mayor of Edirne, introduction commision president of Turkish Industrialists'and Businessmen's Association, and an administrative board member from Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation which is accepted as a holy place for Baha'is due to the fact that Bahaullah decided on important matters and he

announced his mission to the world leaders and kings in Edirne (Turkish Baha'i Community, "News" and "External Relations"). The Society also focuses on social issues such as violence against women. In this framework, members arrange panels to draw attention to the issue. As it could be understood from the Turkish Baha'i Community official web page, the society has close relations with United Nations, embassies, government members in Turkey. In brief, even it is not easy to find a relationship, Turkish Baha'i Community has closed-down relations with politic leaders around the world and it seems that they receive politic support around social development projects and introduction of Baha'i faith to the different stratums of Turkish society. Nevertheless, as I talked to Professor Cüneyt Can, director of the External Affairs Office of the Baha'i community in Turkey, he contradicts this opinion. Turkish Baha'i Community's close relations with Turkish government may be explained by current news in Turkish Daily News. According to Can, Baha'is in Turkey wants official recognition from the state and desires the elimination of prejudices and inaccurate public descriptions of their faith because many Baha'is charge that Turkey pursues a discriminatory policy against the Baha'i community in Turkey by not listing their faith on identity cards (Turkish Daily News, 2007). Finally, as I learnt from Cüneyt Can, Turkish Baha'i Community does not organize any activities in Kayseri.

3.3.2 Iranian Shi'is: The Majority under Pressure

Shiism is the largest minority denomination after Sunni Islam. Ten percent of all Muslims belong to the Shiite branch. Most of the adherents of the branch scattered across Iran, Bahrain, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, Azerbaijan, and Afghanistan (Fuller & Francke, 1999, p. 1-2). The roots of Shiite Islam dates back to the death of Prophet Muhammad in 632 C.E. Sunnis believe that he died without leaving any clear-cut evidence about who is going to be his successor and how the community should be governed. This ambiguity led serious riots after his death. In this chaotic situation, some Muslims chose to follow Abu Bakr, the Prophet's close friend and father- in- law. Some believed that

Muhammad had chose Ali Ibn Abi Talib who is the Muhammad's cousin, son-in-law, to succeed him because for Shiites the leader of the Muslim community should come from direct descendant of Muhammad (Nasr, 2007, p. 35; Mallon, 2006, p. 18). As Savory stated, "[t]hus was born te Shi'at Ali, the 'Party of Ali', consisting of those wo supported the claims of Ali to the caliphate; such persons were termed 'Shi'is'" (Savory, 1981, p. 132). Refusing the legitimacy of the first three caliphs, Ali was not selected to lead the community; therefore, he conflicted with his followers and Umayyid Dynasty in Damascus (Mallon, 2006, p. 18-19).

In 680 A.D., troops of the Sunni caliph, soldiers of the second Umayyad caliph Yazid I, assassinated Ali's son Hussein along with the the most famous of the martyred imams in a battle near Karbala in Iraq on October, 680 (Nasr, 2007, p. 40; Mallon, 2006, p. 19). As Fuller and Francke (1999) stated, "[t]he 'martyrdom' of Hussein, which Fuad Ajami calls the 'Karbala paradigm' has become the leitmotif of Shi'ite interpretation of the world, around which much of Shi'ite ritual and iconography revolves" (p. 13).

Today, Shiite Muslims observe the date, which Hussein was killed to commemorate the day of Ashura on the tenth day of Muharram in the Islamic calendar annually since the death of Hussein (Mallon, 2006, p. 19). Every year, Shi'is commemorates his martyrdom with mournings, the 10th of Muharram. As Mallon stated, "Shiites throughout the world mourn his death, and many perform the *ta'aziyah*, a type of passion plays, recounting the killing of the imam" (Mallon, 2006, p. 19). According to Nasr, anniversary of the death of Imam Husein is a gripping ritual which reminds Shias their bond to their faith and community. Moreover, it emphasizes Shi'a distinctiveness and draws attention to Sunni opprobrium (Nasr, 2007, p. 32-33). As Fuller and Francke explained this opprobrium stated, throughout the commemoration of Imam Hussein death is revived by plays, dramas and musics which depicts the story of

Hussein's martyrdom- despite the fact that human representation is forbidden in Islam (Fuller & Francke, 1999, p. 14).

Shiites vary in terms of the number of imams. While some believe "Seveners," majority of them believe the twelve imams and are called "Twelvers" (also called *Ja-fari*) (Mallon, 2006, p. 19). Twelvers are the largest, the most important, and the most politically active sect in the politics of Shi'ism (Fuller & Francke, 1999, p. 2). As Fuller and Francke pointed out,

> [a]s twelver Shi'ism took shape and crystallized, twelve descendants in particular were regarded as Imams and by right were owed allegiance as the leaders of the community in their life time and veneration after their death. The Shi'a believe in the infallibility of the twelve Imams and in their direct divine inspiration – doctrines that the Sunnis view as contrary to the teachings of Islam, […]. In the absence of Twelfth Imam, the affairs of the faithful are referred to surrogates, learned ulama, maraji al-taqlid (literally, "sources of emulation", singular marji), wha have mastered Islamic jurisprudence and have the authority of interpreteing Islam's texts and dicta in terms of contemporary life. (Fuller & Francke, 1999, p. 13).

Twelvers believe that Muhammad al Mahdi, who is the twelfth imam, will come back to the earth as a messiah to show the truth and reconstruct the order by removing the old one which was based on tyranny and oppression. As Savory pointed out, "[t]he consensus of the Shi'i community was that the Hidden Imam should be represented on earth by the Shi'i mujtahids, that is, the most eminent theologians and jurists of the time, who hold the title of 'Ayatullah,' or 'Miraculous sign of God.'" (Savory, 1981, p. 133).

Making up around ninety percent of Iranians, Shiism is enunciated with Iran so strong today (Savory, 1981, p. 131). Construction the national identity of Iran within the terms of Shiite Islam dates back to the Safavid Empire between 1502 and 1736. As Savory explained, under the Safavid Empire, Shi'ism gained its first and ultimate victory in Iran. By adopting the Shi'a branch of Islam, the Safavid Shahs benefited from the Shi'a appeal to the oppressed masses in order to generalize Shi'ism at grassroots level. Thereby, Shi'a clergy gained strength

dramatically and religious leaders started to rebuke the shahs and claimed that they had a pronounced superiority to rule (Fuller & Francke, 1999, p. 72; Savory, 1981, p. 134).

After the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini perpetuated the Shi'a propaganda of Safavid Empire opposed to Pahlevi secularism and he augmented it to reconstruct the national identity of Iran within the terms of Shiite Islam (Cole, 2002, p. 10). In this respect, Yann Richard (1995) underscored that Shiism is not an Iranian version of Islam; nevertheless it was subjected to Iranization with installation a repressive theocracy and development of celebration of martyrdom of the Imams (p. 77-78). He tried to substantiate his argument by indicating the Arabic origin of the Shiite prayers and theological texts, locating the holy cities of Shiites such as Najaf and Qom in Iraq, and marking that Aly and the descendant of the Prophet's daughter, the Imams were of Arab blood (Richard, 1995, p. 77).

Shi'i Iranian asylum-seekers ran away from the pressures which grow out of politic views of the individuals. After transformation of Iran from a monarchy to an Islamic Republic by Ayatollah Khomeini, Shi'a clergy emerged with increased strength in Iran. Especially, Ahmedinejad's election to the presidency of the Islamic Republic in 2005, political pressures have grown over the entire population; so, adherents of anti-Islamic regime could not raise their voices and could not criticize the policies of the government. The people, who have been affected adversely by the repressive government and its implementations which are based on religious reflexes therefore, and who could not resist the excessive repressions found the permanent solution on migrating from Iran.

Turkey is hosting the most of the Iranian Shi'i asylum-seekers provisionally who were displaced by the religious and politic repressions. The Shi'i asylum-seekers are coming up against various social and economic challenges. As Akçapar implied, conversion from Shi'a Islam to Christianity is used as a migration strategy to live on in Turkey (Akçapar, 2006, p. 817). With this

remarkable apostasy, Iranian Shi'i asylum-seekers constitute a social network by participation of family members and close friends to this religious wheel. As I learnt from a social worker in ASAM, some of the Protestant and Catholic churches in Ankara have become a congregation place for Shiite Iranians. Moreover, this churches and church-related organizations present a new institutional role to Iranian asylum-seekers in terms of providing them with financial, legal, and medical assistance as well as spiritual theory because Iranians converted to Christianity attended church activities regularly. According to Akçapar, "[…], this unique situation can be explained by the *social capital theory* enhanced by an institutional component" (2006, p. 817). Thus, with this strategic apostasy, Shiite asylum-seekers fall under a fictive-kin system such as Baha'is. As Akçapar stated, fictive-kin is a family-type relationship, which is not based on blood or marriage but rather on religious rituals and close friendship ties. People with this relationship are known as fictive kin (Akçapar, 2006, p. 819).

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter will present a comprehensive accounting of the research. I have envisioned presenting the results of the research in a thematic manner in the framework of the primary research question. Firstly, I will take up the issues one by one such as the construction of national and religious identity and examination of childhood experiences. In this regard, the identity will be addressed on three fronts. Secondly, I will throw to light on the interplay among those identities. The ensuing section will be analysed by employing hermeneutics which lays the theoretical foundation of the thesis. In addition, I will also cite the interviewees' in order to reveal the unique perceptions in their narratives; therefore, the research measures offer a qualitative assessment. To be commited to the research ethics, I used pseudonyms in lieu of their real names.

The findings of this research provide a significant resource to the means of children of Iranian asylum-seekers' identity construction in Turkey. The asylum-seeker children's voiced perceptions, feelings and attitudes on their asylum-seeking experience will conduce to understand how they construct their national and religious identity. Discussion of the research findings are revealed within the framework of the overall research question. First and foremost, it would be benefical to display background information of the interviewees in the context of the demographic questions which were addressed to the intervieewes initially before in-depth interviewing.

4.1 The Profile of the Intervieewes

The interviews were held between the dates of 16.09.2007 and 01.10.2007 in ASAM office with the selected children individually. The interviewees comprised of eight children of Iranian asylum-seekers (five females and three males). Participants were divided according to their religion into two groups (four Baha'i and four Shi'i). Among the eight interviewees, target equality was provided in terms of religious group. Four Baha'is and four Shi'is were interviewed delicately. While I interviewed with three girls and one boy among the Shi'is, I interviewed with two girls and two boys among the Baha'is. Even though, I paid attention to divide equally into boys and girls, I was able to make interview with just one Shi'i boy because Miss. Hilal could not find any Shi'i boy who was fitting in to the specified age group. The gender distribution among the intervieewes converts is five females and three males. Even though gender ratio seems uneven at first glimpse, it is virtually a close represeantation of the male-female composition of group itself. Each religious group consisted of an approximately equal number of male and female participants (one Shi'i boy, three Shi'i girls; two Baha'i boys, two Baha'i girls) from regions of Shiraz, Isfahan, Urumiye, Tebriz, Kerec and Tahran. Only two of them came to Turkey from different cities rather than their palaces of birth. All children were between the ages of 10-16 years and currently residing with their families. I took notice of selecting children from different regions as much as I could.

All the interviewees have immigrated to Turkey within the last five years but most of them arrived between 2005 and 2006. All of the intervieews came directly to Turkey from Iran and all of them settled directly in Kayseri. Six of them arrived in Kayseri in 2005, one of them arrived in 2001 and the other arrived in 2006. Five intervieews declared the reasons for choosing Kayseri depended on already existing social networks such as relatives and close friends. The other three stated that they had come to Kayseri because UN requested. All participants were attending school in Kayseri. Just one Baha'i boy out of eight

stated that he had visited school just for four months than he left because he could not bear some of the Turkish children's insults in his class.

Regarding the ethnic background of the participants, I should point out that five participants out of eight are Azerbaijani and three Azerbaijani participants are Baha'i. Almost all the participants in the research felt most comfortable speaking in Farsi, while two of them felt equally comfortable speaking in Turkish.

Table 4

Socio-Demographic Features of the Interviewees

Gender	Age	Religion	Ethnic Background	Place of Last Residence
M	13	Shi'i	Azerbaijani	Urumiye
F	10	Shi'i	Persian	Shiraz
F	10	Shi'i	Persian	Kerec
F	16	Shi'i	Azerbaijani	Tebriz
M	12	Baha'i	Azerbaijani	Isfahan
M	16	Baha'i	Azerbaijani	Kerec
F	15	Baha'i	Persian	Shiraz
F	14	Baha'i	Persian	Tahran

Note: The cities that I wrote down above indicated the cities, which the participants were living in right before they left Iran.

Most of them were able to remember their parents' year of birth and place of birth. Their parents' ages are around 33-50. While parents of the six interviewees were born in big cities of Iran, only parents of two interviewees among the participants were born in a borough. Most of the intervieews have siblings but they are living with their parents in Turkey because elder siblings immigrated to a third country. These are all Baha'i and living in Australia.

When it comes to the educational background, very few of their parents were able to study a department in a college. Most of them were earning money from marketing and commerce in Iran. Only one out of eight was employed in marginal sector. Most of their mothers did not work in Iran. They were housewifes. Their parents' could not work in Turkey bacuse they do not have the right to obtain work permit. As cited to Akçapar, "compared with the initial flow of Iranian migrants just after the Islamic Revolution, today's Iranian asylum-seekers in Turkey usually have lower economic status" (2006, p. 822).

Table 5

Socio-Demographic Features of the Interviewees' Parents

Pseudonyms	Gender	Age	The Place of Origin	Occupation in Iran
A	M	-	-	Self-employed
A	F	38	Tahran	Nurse
B	M	43	-	Self-employed
B	F	-	Kalibar	Self-employed
C	M	-	Sher-i Kurd	Self-employed
C	F	-	Ahvaz	Housewife
D	M	-	-	Chapman
D	F	36	-	Housewife
E	M	46	Bostanabad	Self-employed
E	F	41	-	Housewife
H	M	49	Abadan	Self-employed
H	F	49	Abadan	Housewife
F	M	43	Tebriz	Self-employed
F	F	33	Urumiye	Housewife

"Table 5 (continued)"

G	M	-	-	Doctor
G	F	34	-	Self-employed

Note: I used the sign of '- when the interviewees do not have any idea about their parents' socio-demographic features.

Most of the intervieews' highest level of education that was completed are Primary, Secondary and High School in Iran. All of the children are going to school in Turkey among the interviewees, except one. He explained that he was going to school but he was put down and harassed by the Turkish students just because he is a Baha'i. The intervieews are attending school in Turkey from six months to five years. Even though these time periods are seem quite different from each other, ASAM officers told me that almost all of the children are able to adapt to their new school in three months; therefore, this time interval could be disregarded in the research. What striked me profoundly during the interview, while all Shi'i asylum-seeker children are going to different schools, all Baha'is are going to the same school because their social network is more stronger than Shi'i network in Kayseri.

All the intervieews are living in different town quarters in Kayseri. In addition, in terms of type of housing, they are all living in an apartment. All of the interviewees are living in a rented flat with their families. Flats are mostly old and usually smaller than the interviewees' flats in Iran. They were not officially assigned homes either by state or UNHCR in Kayseri. In addition, they have to find money to pay the rent and other expenses of flat. Therefore, they benefited from their social network such as kin, friend and asylum-seeker to find a place to settle in Kayseri. All the interviewees stated that their economic standarts

were much better in Iran but they have to live on a limited budget and they have to stand up to socio-seconomic bereavement in Kayseri. All of the interviewees noted that they spended their piravate savings that they brought from Iran on their first days in Kayseri. Currently, they get help from locals, other asylum-seekers or remaining relatives in Iran. Additionally, if they have a financial interview in UNHCR Branch Office in Ankara, they can receive a monthly financial help which is very limited from UNHCR as well. If their situation is 'pending' or they are accepted as an 'asylum-seeker' by UNHCR, they could receive money only for one month, but if their situation is determined as a 'refugee', they could receive financial help every month during their stay in Turkey. Nevertheless, Baha'i asylum-seekers do not have financial problems as Shi'i asylum-seeers have because they have an organized network in Kayseri in order to help each other in a discriminatory manner.

4.2 Analysing In-Depth Interviews

For a deeper understanding of the asylum-seeker children's identity construction in the host society, eight in-depth interviews were conducted with selected children in Kayseri. The sub-titles of the examined identities are called national and religious identity in turn and one should navigate between national and religious identity in order to capture "intersectionality" (Sporton, Valentine, & Nielsen, 2006) among those identities. In that respect, intersectionality makes identities fluid, fluctuating and malleable. In this research, ambivalent face of asylum-seeker children's identities are based on a slippery floor which are constantly being negotiated and changed over the time and social context during the insertion into host society. They are mostly brewed by the 'primary relations' in family members, neigbourhood and peer groups in the host society but 'memory negotiation' also shapes their identities by referring to both past memory and current situation of uprootdness in the mainstream society. In the wake of the foregoing brief explanations, construction of national, religious and child identities will be analysed comprehensively by examining the 'interruption' and 'maintenance' of identities. Revealing the interplay between

the works of Smith, Hall, Christopoulou and Leeuw, Bauman and Simmel will lay the groundwork for this research. Therefore, in-depth interviews were analysed through the terms of "situational identities" (Smith, 2001), "substituted identities" (Christopoulou & Leeuw, 2005), "fragmented identities" (Hall, 1996), "ambivalent identities" (Bauman, 2004), "stranger" (Simmel, 1950) and "memory negotiation" (Christopoulou & Leeuw, 2005).

4.2.1 National Identity

In this section, it is significant to understand what kind of values bound Iranians to bolster a strong sense of national unity, what makes them an Iranian, how they construct their national identity in exile and most importantly are they able to carry on their sense of belonging to national identitiy in Kayseri without any 'interruption'.

National identity analysis of Smith will be the mainstay of this section in order to enlighten how the children of Iranian asylum-seekers construct their national identity in Kayseri. Therefore, the questions comprise both objective factors such as language, customs, territory and subjective factors such as sentiments, symbols, myths, memories and traditions to shed light into construction of national identity in Kayseri. For Smith, national identity subsumes both cultural identity with its emphasizes on common culture, common historical myths and memories and political identity with its emphasizes on the existence of a homeland and reciprocal legal rights for all members of a nation. In this framework, I took up the issue under three basic titles which are called 'Life in Iran', 'Future Expectations', 'Life in Kayseri' and 'Cultural Identity'. These titles will be addressed to the issues such as acculturation attitudes, language usage, school, and peer contact, means of communication habits, eating habits, music and literature.

4.2.1.1 Life in Iran

Within the scope of this sub-title, it is significant to examine that how Iran is remembered and reconstructed in Kayseri where a new social context is for the asylum-seeker children. In an advanced state, the questions helped to gain insight into what Iran means as a homeland for the children. Therefore, this title subsumes 'political identity' indirectly. In this section, validity of implementation of reciprocal legal rights for all members of a nation will be questioned related to political identity as well.

Majority of the interviewees miss their daily life in Iran in spite of the hurdles. Almost all of the children prefer going to school in Iran. While, some of them legitimized this choice to use their mother tongue, others pointed out the significance of their home country and their own culture in the following manner:

> In Iran I was attending the religion courses and I was going to school. I prefer going to school in Iran because I was speaking my mother tongue and I was living in my culture. It was very difficult to leave Iran. I miss our relatives. Educational level is higher in Iran than Turkey. Besides, beating was forbidden after the revolution but teachers are beating children at my school. I do not like this…Anyway, a person's own homeland and home is the best place to live. (H, 15-year-old girl, Baha'i)

> I am thinking about Iran time and time again. Our home, our food and everything is better in Iran. I miss my family atmosphere. I know nothing will be like in Iran henceforth. If I had a choice, I would like to go to Iran. I want to get rid of my sorrow. I am praying God every single day. (A, 10-year-old girl, Shi'i)

Two Shi'is complained of about life in Iran considerably rather than other interviewees. All of the complaints denote the effects of Islamic revolution in Iran directly. When the asylum-seeker children look back on their old days in Iran and negotiate their memories, they reconstruct their national identities by re-membering and passing their lives in review. These children are too far from feeling like an Iranian; therefore, they do not feel themselves belong to Iran and Iranian culture. At this point, they disavowed their national identity and directed

towards to identification with the host society or marginalization. The Shi'i boy's thoughts about himself justify these connotations about identity construction in the follwing passage:

> Actually I miss Iran's natural beauties and sightseeing with my parents but that is all! I have got used to living in Kayseri. Therefore, I forgot Iran. I have to be acquainted with Iran's culture again. It is like to be born again. Eventhough we have relatives in Iran, we do not talk much about Iran with my parents. In the future, I would like to be in the USA because I want to be an astronaut. If I did not want to be an astronaut, I would like to stay in Turkey. My Turkish friends at school forgot that I am an Iranian. They assume me as a Turk. I feel myself Turk at the same time. Actually, I am an Iranian at home but I am a Turk at school. I am one of the most popular students in my class. I forgot about my life and my friends in Iran. I do not mind Iran at all. I love being in Turkey. (F, 13-year-old boy, Shi'i, Azerbaijani)

Apperantly, he subordinated of his national impulses to feel like a Turk. Moreover, he is striving to efface the memory of the time in Iran. Therefore, his national identity has been subjected to a serious 'interruption' in Kayseri. As a matter of fact, his situation is a quandary. He vacillates between being an Iranian and being a Turk but it seems he prefers to come to terms with 'being a Turk'. His identity notion is based on an intricate backdrop. Actually, having erased all the memories belongs to Iran may expediate his identity construction but it seems that he is caught in the middle because he has to speak Farsi at home with his parents. In this situation, his parents act as a reminder of old days and being an Iranian; therefore he has an 'ambivalent', 'fragmented', and 'substituted' and 'situational' identity. His identity is ambivalent because it has not been shaped yet. His identity is fragmented because he considers himself to be about equally Turkish and Iranian. His identity is substituted because while he is an Iranian boy at home, he turns into a Turkish boy at school. His identity is situational because he is living in Turkey; therefore, he feels like a Turk. He wants to move to the USA after Tukey. It seems that if he moves to the USA, he feels like an American this time.

The Shi'i girl whom I made interview directed towards 'marginalization' which results from what Cummins called "bicultural ambivalence" (as cited in Vargas,

1999, p. 287). She declared her rejection of both native culture and host society culture in her own sentences below:

> Being an Iranian is not a thing that I am proud of. When I think about Iran, I always remember the things which make me sad. The authorities in Iran repress students who receive education in state schools. Everyday, they make protestation 'death to USA!' and it is forced. I can unveil my headscarf at class but during the breaks it is forbidden. If a student champions another country, teachers call their parents to complain about it. I hate Iran. I feel discomfort about Iran's government and society. The Iranian people are not objective. They are too conservative. When it comes to Kayseri, local people hate all foreign people. Iranian or American it does not matter. There is a prejudice against foreigners. My school mates are making fun of me by calling me Arab, Arab! Is this my fault to be an Iranian? Moreover, I can not see any difference between Iran and Kayseri. Local people are so bigoted. I do not make any plan to stay in Kayseri until the end of my life. Besides, someone who stays in Kayseri more than ten days goes mad. (B, 16-year-old girl, Shi'i, Azerbaijani)

In her case, she does not feel longing for home. She does not feel herself belong to Iran. She is striving to efface all the memories in Iran but she is not receptive of the Turkish society as well. In short, she belongs to nowhere; therefore she has an 'ambivalent' and 'interrupted' national identity. She feels herself as a 'stranger' in the host society. Even though she has been living in Kayseri for six years and this period of habitancy is long enough to insert herself into the host society, she evades from any identification. For these very reasons, this unsettling inversion of her identity leads to marginalization.

Except these two above-mentioned interviewees, almost all of the interviewees maintain a longing for their homelands and desire to either return or preserve their nostalgia as a form of identification. The remaining interviewees' national identity was not subjected to such a serious interruption. The most surprisingly, eventhough reciprocal legal rights are not valid for Baha'i cohort in Iran, the Baha'i participants feel themselves more Iranian than Shi'i cohorts. The Baha'i participants gave utterance to their feelings in the succeeding passages:

> School director and my class mates did not want me to join any activity at school in Iran. I was sidelined and they did not see me as a student at all. Once, when we [with his family] went to shopping, they did not

> want to sell anything; therefore, I do not like anything in Iran. Nonetheless, I miss our home and Iran so much. I miss our relatives. (D, 16-year-old boy, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

> I miss Iran. When I am alone, I am thinking about Iran. I missed mostly my friends and the games I played. Sometimes, I remember the persecutions and bad events which my family was subjected to. On the one hand, I would like to be in Canada because I want to receive quality education; on the other hand, I would like to be in Iran because I miss the games I played. (C, 12-year-old boy, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

> I had great time in Iran but we had to veil. Anyway, I was happy in Iran. Some people deranged us just because we are Baha'i. For instance, they said 'you are so dirty'. We did not talk to this kind of people in Iran. If I had a chance, I want to be in Iran but I love Turkey also. If the Islamic Regime did not exist, I would like go to Iran. (E, 14-year-old girl, Baha'i, Azarbaijani)

In this section, I tried to clarify that the asylum-seeking experience is not based on just violence and persecution, but also based on loss of home. According to Hadjianni (2002), asylum-seeker children ground their identity in the feeling of loss which is called "an identity grounded in loss" (p. 90). During the absence of a physical homeland, asylum-seeker children tend to construct and re-construct their national identities by remembering their memories in Iran. As Rushdie argued out, "[immigrants] refuse to become totally assimilated into the host society, but they do not return to their homelands […]. In the mean time, they construct an imaginary nation both of the homeland and of their new presence in exile" (as cited in Mostofi, 2003, p. 689). According to Bagnoli, by straddling betwixt and between a 'here' and a 'there', immigrants embark on a process of reconstructing home in the mainstream society by cherishing of the lost homeland. A dream of returning home is always in the foreground for the immigrants even when it can not come true but this vivid dream is considerably important for the construction of immigrant identities (Bagnoli, 2007, p. 34). On the basis of the preceding analysis, homeland comprises 'political identity' and it is one of the significant parts that shape national identity according to Smith's theory.

In the wake of description of interviewees's social lives in Iran, 'future expectations' will be analysed in order to make meaning out of their present

perceptions, understanding, attitudes and actions in the light of the past and in expectation of the future.

4.2.1.2 Future Expectations

Asylum-seeker children construct their identities according to their future expectations as well. Hadjiyanni denominated it as "an identity of the future" (Hadjiyanni, 2002, p. 212).

Almost all of interviewees are longing for home and they are thinking about Iran very often. They miss mostly their home, relatives and school mates. There were not any professed differences between the Baha'is and Shi'is in terms of making telephone and e-mail contact. Nearly all of the interviewees perpetuate communicating with their relatives and remaining family members who are living in Iran but they could not call up them ever so often. Suprisingly, in spite of the extended period of religious subjugation for Baha'is, the Baha'i asylum-seeker interviewees do not have any ambivalent attachment to Iran as the homeland. In addition, apart from the Shi'i asylum-seeker children, the Baha'is are also dreaming of possible return to Iran when if it could be lived safely. The Baha'i asylum-seeker children remembered Iran with both good and bitter memories. See, for instance, the succeeding excerpts:

> My worst memory in Iran is saying farewell and persecutions at school. I miss my home and my friends so much. I think about Iran every day. When we gather with my family, we talk about the future of Iran. We wish for returning Iran to serve our community. (H, 15-year-old girl, Baha'i)

> I am thinking about Iran very often. I miss my grandparents, my uncle and my friends. At times we talk on the phone with my grandparents. I do not like Islamic regime. If I get to choose, I want to be in Iran. (E, 14-year-old girl, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

Among the interviewees none of the participants contemplated staying in Turkey forever "because of high costs of living, economic difficulties and lack of social services available for asylum seekers and refugees" (Akçapar, 2006, p. 832). In addition, their parents are not allowed to obtain work permission. The

children and their parents could not benefit from health services unless they earn money. Related to this exclusion, they could not involve in social life profoundly. This remoteness makes them a withdrawn 'stranger' within the mainstream society; therefore, during their stay in Kayseri, they could just construct 'ambivalent' identities because they do not have the reciprocal legal rights as Turkish citizens have. The interviewees noted their scant economic opportunities below:

> I do not want to live in Turkey for a long time. Here, everything is 'old'. Armchairs, carpets, clothes, our home…but in Iran everything that we have was 'new'. I can not tell my complaints to my mother. We have to live on such a little money. I am aware of everything. I have to be contented with my present life. (A, 10-years-old girl, Shi'i)

> I would like to stay in Turkey lesser because Turkey is so expensive comparing to Iran. (C, 12-year-old boy, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

Most of the interviewees stated that if they had a choice, they would like to live in Canada, the USA and Australia for numerous reasons. Almost all the interviewees propounded receiving good education as the most significant reason but all of the Baha'is also supplemented that they would like to be useful for humanity. The secondary reason is presence of relatives and close friends in the destination countries. In an advanced sentence, the prospect of going in quest of a better future in terms of standarts of education, religious freedoms, job opportunities impelled the asylum-seekers to reach Canada, the USA, Australia or some Western European countries.

Iran illuminates their dreams for future prospect. They assume their asylum-seeking experience as a finite journey. At the end of the road, almost all of them see themselves in Iran. They can not disengage from Iran at ease throughout this journey because Iran shields their memories, hopes, dreams, happiness, sarrows but most importantly their 'future'. As a Baha'i interviewee pointed out explicitly:

> In the future, I see myself in the middle of Shiraz. (H, 15-year-old girl, Baha'i)

4.2.1.3 Life in Kayseri

As it could be understood from 'Life in Iran' and 'Future Expectations' perspicuously, it is obvious that "[t]he homeland is the place of origin, the place from which migrants come, and it can be thought of as part of the discourse of migrant identity" (McAuliffe, 207, p. 310). It will be also benefical to analyse 'Life in Kayseri' after 'Future Expectations' consecutively in order to understand the children of Iranian asylum-seekers' present perceptions in the light of 'past experiences' and 'future expectations'.

Nearly all the interviewees are contented with living in Kayseri. While all the Baha'is love Kayseri very much, only two Shi'i interviewees expressed that they love Kayseri. Eventhough the majority of the interviewees emphasized their pleasure being in Kayseri, not every participant feels like home in Kayseri. In this regard, 'maintenance'of their national identity is obvious. When they enumerated the advantages of being in Kayseri, they also highlighted the financial problems that they have. Therefore, they do not feel themselves as at their home. See, for example, the following passages:

> Kayseri is much better than Iran. I can go to school in Kayseri. There is nothing that I dislike. We have just financial problems. Electricity and water expenses are higher than in Iran. We have difficulties in paying the bills on time; therefore, I do not feel myself as at my home. (D, 16-year-old boy, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

> I love Kayseri. I do not have any problems with my friends. Our financial status was much better in Iran. Sometimes, when my teacher asks me to buy something, we could not buy. (F, 13-year-old boy, Shi'i, Azerbaijani)

Two Shi'i girls had this to share their discontent living in Kayseri with their sentences below:

> I do not want to live in Turkey. Some day I will get rid of Kayseri. The local people in Kayseri are so bigoted. Actually, if I have a chance, I prefer living in İstanbul because this metropole city covers the differences. Here, some of the men can not walk without passing a word to women. It is so irritating. (B, 16-year-old girl, Shi'i, Azerbaijani)

> It is very difficult to keep away from my homeland; therefore, there is nothing I like in Kayseri. Actually, for me everywhere is the same other than Iran. Just being with my family is enough for me. Kayseri is much more expensive than Iran. My family can hardly meet the expenses. My only wish is to acquire our acceptance letter from UNHCR to pass to a third country. I am looking forward to UNHCR's reply. (A, 10-year-old girl, Shi'i)

According to Simmel, local people's attitudes are distinctive in terms of immigrants' identity construction. As Simmel noted, the unknown or stranger always intimidates the individuals in the mainstream society. On this account, immigrants construct their identities according to 'remoteness' and 'nearness' as it was noted in the second chapter. Bearing these in mind, it will be a felicitious attempt to gain insight into ethnic composition of their neigbourhood and neighbours' attitudes towards the Iranian asylum-seekers. Their relations with neigbours split evenly on the notion of 'getting along well'. While one half of the interviewees implied that they have good relations with their neigbours, the other half told the situation conversely:

> We have mostly Baha'i neighbours but there are Turkish as well. Some of the neigbours mistreat us, but some of them do not. They mistreat us just because we are Iranian and Baha'i. When I want to play with their children, they do not allow because I am an Iranian. They accuse us of having nuclear bomb. They blasphemed us when they learnt we are Baha'i and shouted: 'You are impious!' (D, 16-year-old boy, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

Both the Baha'i and the Shi'i asylum-seeker children are being subjected to pejorative conduct by their neighbours. Particularly, the Baha'is are charged with impiety. It seems that as an 'unknown' or 'stranger', some of the local people especially conservative ones do not indulge the Iranian asylum-seekers in Kayseri. They prefer erecting a social wall between themselves and the asylum-seekers by using 'verbal violance'.

Even though the ethnic composition of the asylum-seekers' neigbourhood is mixed, I realized that Baha'is have a propensity for dwelling in the same neighbourhood. In addition, the Baha'is have constituted a 'secluded' community and they exclude the Shi'i asylum-seekers from this community as a

kind of revenge because Baha'is are repressed, persecuted and precluded from their basic human rights in Iran by Shi'is. The Baha'i asylum-seeker children expressed that they participate in religious courses in their gathering places, *mahfil*[28]. They also participate in English courses in this place of worship. In addition, all of the Baha'is told me that they like going to mahfil very much in their spare times. Two of the Shi'i asylum-seekers underlined that they are not allowed to participate in social activities in Baha'i mahfil in Kayseri. Being such a closed community, the Baha'i asylum-seekers have a tendency to stay grounded within the community in which they receive peer support. Among the Baha'is whom I interviewed, I encountered a boy who does not go to school in Kayseri because he told me that he receives enough education in mahfil. With all these in mind, by supersiding the schools, mahfil educate children compatible with their future expectations because the children could receive English course in mahfil to prepare for departure to the USA, Canada or Australia. With this professed self-sufficiency and self-reliance, the Baha'is prevent their children from developing any identification and interaction with the broader culture in which they are resettling. Obviously, the Baha'is construct their identities according to 'remoteness' towards the host society.

Acculturation attitudes or socio-cultural adaptation is also significant in construction of national identity. In that respect, 'what strategies do the asylum-seeker children employ in navigating the social world and surrounding individuals?' is a significant question. Therefore, language, school, peer contact are considerable within the acculturation attitudes. Child asylum-seekers are faced with plethora of challenges in the host society. According to Couch and Francis, young[29] refugees [child asylum-seekers and refugees] cope with the acquisition of a new language, adjusting to a new school, forming new

[28] I will expand on 'mahfil' and Baha'i worship in the section of religious identity comprehensively.

[29] There are miscellaneous age categorizations about the terms of "child" and "youth". According to United Nations General Assembly, while "youth" falls between the ages of 16-25 years, "child" falls between the ages of 6-15 (General Assembly of the United Nations, "Youth", n.d.). The two interviewees fall into the youth category according to above-mentined definition in this reserach

friendships and social connections, negotiating interaction with the mainstream culture, worrying about relatives and friends left behind, while they contend with the multiple traumatic impacts of the asylum-seeking experience itself (Couch & Francis, 2006, p. 276-278). Their new identities are framed within the broader culture which they have resettled.

For child asylum-seekers experiencing language barriers often creates a great anxiety and impedes social participation (Couch & Francis, 2006, p. 278-282). According to Christopoulou and Leeuw (2005), continuity in family life is ensured through language whereby being a strong bearer of cultural identity it involves the family stories and histories. In this regard, language shapes national identity which embraces cultural identity as well. It is a clear-cut marker of 'maintenance' of national identity. With this considerable role, language is a medium which helps people to remain connected to a homeland (p. 130). As Trisielotis implied, "[…] learning the language of the other may correspond to becoming an active and full member of the host society: that is when the new language successfully becomes a medium for the expression of emotions" (as cited in Bagnoli, 2007, p. 36). In this regard, language also sustains immigrants to develop new codes to construct fledging sense of identities in the mainstream society. Among the interviewees only two of them had considerable difficulties in speaking, reading and writing Turkish. The other interviewees could understand and read Turkish easily but some of them preferred to speak Farsi throughout the interview. All of the interviewees underscored the difficulties in acquisition of a new language. The interviewees who are Azarbaijani noted that they learnt Turkish easily beause their parents know Azerbaijani Turkish. Therefore, they are familiar with the sounds and letters of Turkish. In addition, all of the interviewees are eager for learning Turkish. Moreover, two Azerbaijani children speak Azerbaijani Turkish in their home. Even though all of the children speak their mother tongue with their parents and Iranian friends, two children told me that they have set out to forget Farsi in the succeeding passages:

> I learnt Farsi hardly in Iran; therefore, I forgot. If I strive to read, I can only read only one letter in thirty minutes. My Turkish is better than my Farsi. (F, 13-year-old boy, Shi'i, Azerbaijani)
>
> I speak Farsi with my mother at home but I forgot some of the letters. (G, 10-year-old girl, Shi'i)

These two children are on the verge of effacement the memories of the time in Iran. This conspicuous severance from their memories, culture and homeland occurred when they have lost their mother tongue rather slowly. In a similar vein, their national identity has been subjected to a relative 'interruption'. They have preferred to attach to the host society, rather than safeguarding their culture. From now onward, they are able to build up healthy relationships with local people. In parallel with the discourse of Christopoulou and Leeuw in advance, as the asylum-seeker children's identity notion undermines, they start to search for a stabilizing identity in order to fell 'at home'again. Throughout this period, while some of the children relate themselves to the past, some of them immerse themselves deeper in the host society. In the light of the preceding analysis, as Smith predicated, even the components of national identity are exposed to process of change and dissolution and these changes may be gradual or sudden. For these children, construction of identity does not come true through 'memory negotiation' but searching for a stabilizing identity. Therefore, their fledging identities are 'situational' and 'fragmented' by their very nature.

In short, supposedly while all the children speak their mother tongue with their parents and their Iranian friends to reassert a threatened cultural heritage, they speak the local language in the public space which denotes a 'cross-cultural' adaptation. By having a command of the local language, they are able to socialize and "serve as cultural intermediaries in the family's drive for upward mobility" in the mainstream society (Christopoulou & Leeuw, 2005, p. 130).

Adjusting to a new school and education system with a language barrier is a great handicap for asylum-seeker children. As Couch and Francis stressed out, "many find it [education] difficult to succeed, owing to a lack of schooling or a

disrupted education prior to arrival in the new country" (2006, p. 278). In addition, they are most likely learning to write and speak the local language for the first time.

Nearly all the inteviewees prefer going to school in Iran for various reasons. Two of the interviewees complained about low education level in Kayseri. They claimed that they have already known contents of the lessons from their school in Iran. Majority of the children are being subjected to outrageous insult owing to the fact that they are Iranian. The Baha'i boy, who left the school in Kayseri, gave voice to his feeling as such:

> I liked going to school in Iran but in Kayseri I do not. Children spitted my food and asked 'why do you have such a different food? It is disguisting'. Sometimes they called me as 'terrorist!' Once they threw my bag to the floor and than kicked it. I can not bear with their disdain any more. (C, 12-year-old boy, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

Related with the declared bothers and disturbances above, five of the participants stated that their teachers are helpful to deal with their problems at school. On the other hand, three participants stated that when they are insulted by Turkish pupils, their teachers are not interested. In other words, presence of two different institutional approaches towards asylum-seeker children prevents any generalization about position of teachers.

In this regard, the word 'different' emphasizes something more than contempt and intolerance. This word reveals how the 'unknown' or 'stranger' always intimidates the individuals. Likewise, all asylum-seekers and refugees are more than a tourist in the eyes of mainstream society because a tourist is on the point of departure but asylum seekers and refugees are in an ambiguity. Moreover, they share the public places with the locals more than a tourist. This ceaseless sharing does not please the locals. They feel inferior for being an asylum-seeker or refugee. Stigmatization as inferiors paves the way for the development of a sense of alienation towards host society. They hopelessly attach to their community and culture with feelings of loneliness and lost. This remoteness prevents them developing new codes and new identities in the host society.

On the point of forming new a peer contact in a new social context, asylum-seeker children have considerable difficulties (Couch & Francis, 2006, p. 278). Among the interviewees, while all of the Baha'is spend their most of the time with Baha'i peers, Shi'i asylum-seeker children spend their time with both Iranian and Turkish peers. See, for instance, the following excerpts below:

> My most closed friend is an Iranian and she is a Baha'i. We get together in Mahfil and talked about our memories in Iran. Sometimes, we talk about our future and sometimes we talk about our religion. (H, 15-year-old girl, Baha'i)

> Early on, it was rather difficult for me to make friends with Turkish students because I could not talk to them. Now, I can speak Turkish; therefore, making friendship is not difficult anymore. Now, my most sincere friend is a Turk. I have also Iranian friends but I love all of them. (G, 10-year-old girl, Shi'i)

> Once, I had a Turkish friend but her family was bigoted. They did not let me to talk to her when they learnt I am a Shi'i. Now we do not see each other. (B, 16-year-old girl, Shi'i, Azerbaijani)

In summary, all the interviewees passed through difficult times quite a while in terms of conducting peer contact in a new social context. When they learnt to speak Turkish, they felt more comfortable among their Turkish peers at school. However, some of them were confronted with pejorative attitudes. By way of expedient, they turned a blind eye to those who behaved them in a rude way. Only one among the interviewees preferred to leave the school. Whatsoever way they choose, there is a fact that school and peer contact is rather significant in terms of formulating identity and developing values in the new context for the asylum-seeker children. Asylum-seeker children who attend school get out of being socially isolated in the host society and they gain opportunity for recreational activities and other ways to form new friendships.

According to Smith, cultural identity with its emphasizes on common culture, common historical myths and memories is inseparable part of national identity. Among the interviewees six out of eight stated that they feel themselves as part of the Iranian culture. Suprisingly, in spite of having been maltreated in Iran, all of the Baha'i interviewees are devotedly bound up with the Iranian culture. Two

Shi'i interviewees do not feel themselves as part of the Iranian culture. When the interviewees thought about Iran, they brought back memories of school days, their grandparents and their festival. The Baha'i participant expressed her sorrow to lose her mother referring to the old days in Iran noted hereafter:

> When I thought about Iran, I remembered my school and my mother. She died six years ago. My memories are still fresh in my mind. I remembered the last Newroz that we were together. (E, 14-year-old girl, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

When the interviewees thought about the feast, all of them firstly remembered the Newroz. Two of the Baha'is also remembered the Baha'is religious feast as well.

> Newroz is very significant feast in Iranian culture. It represents our New Year; therefore, it is the biggest feast in Iran. When we were in Iran, we presented gifts each other and my parents feasted their friends. (A, 10-year-old girl, Shi'i)

> When I though about the feasts in Iran firstly I remember Newroz and than Rızvan feast. Rızvan is Baha'is Ramazan feast. This feast symbolizes the day which our prophet avowed his prophethood. (H, 15-year-old girl, Baha'i)

While for the two of the Baha'i children the religious festivals is also in the forefront with Newroz, for the Shi'i children religious festivals are not as important as for the Baha'is. Remembering their festivals is considerable in constructing their national identity in the host society. The feasts reinforce the unity and integrity of their community. When the children celebrate festivals, they remember their old celebrations with their all family in Iran. Hence, they also remember their national identity and who they are. In other words, celebration of significant cultural and religious festivals helps to maintanace of home country culture. At this point 'memory negotiation' serves them to reconstruct their national identity within the host society. Most of the interviewees told me that they gathered at Newroz and Rızvan feast in an immigrant's home to celebrate but Baha'is and Shi'is organized their celebrations separately. For example, Shi'i asylum-seeker children could not participate in Rızvan feasts. Appearently, apart from the distinct discrimination

between locals and asylum-seekers, there is an inter-group discrimination between Baha'is and Shi'is markedly. Throughout the interviews, especially Baha'i participants emphasized explicit spatial disparity in terms of sharing recreation grounds and celebrating their feast. It seems that they demarcated their social physical sphere in Kayseri. One of the Shi'i interviewee told me that when they arrived Kayseri early on, Shi'i immigrants community was tied together enough to organize meetings every week to consolidate the Iranian's cohesiveness but for last two years they gathered only once. According to his narratives, Baha'is are different. They gather together every week and organize courses for their children. Bearing these aforementioned knowledge in mind, Baha'is safeguard their cultural heritage more than Shi'i asylum-seekers; therefore, their children are devotedly attached to traditions in which they adopted Iran. It seems that their sense of national identity is stronger than Shi'i asylum-seeker children.

Almost all of the interviewees' television watch habits change in Kayseri due to the fact that they fed up with watching mullahs on TV. They can watch Iranian music channels and films in Kayseri which are broadcasted from the USA. According to Christopoulou and Leeuw (2005), "[…] satellite TV is a link between the "there" and "here". Tuned to programs in the country of origin, it stood as a constant reminder and a permanent link" (p. 132-133). The interviewees who watch TV prefer watching music channels and TV series in Kayseri. They watch both Farsi and Turkish broadcast. Among the Baha'i interviewees two of them like watching the programs which are with religious contents. Two of the interviewees stated that they quited watching TV in Kayseri because they prefer usuing internet to chat with their friends who are living in the USA. One of the interviewee expressed her pleasure watching Turkish TV channels in the following manner:

> I was fed up with seeing mullahs on TVs in Iran. I can watch TV in Kayseri happily. I mostly prefer watching cultural programs. Sometimes my mother changes the channel and watches Iranian programes. I can hardly calm my nerves. When I see Iranian channels, I remember the mullahs. (B, 16-year-old girl, Shi'i, Azerbaijani)

All of the interviewees like listening both Farsi and Turkish music. Only one out of eight could not remember the Iranian singers and music; therefore, he prefers listening to Turkish music. One of them do not listen Farsi music intentionally. See, the following excerpt:

> I did not listen to Farsi music even in Iran. I prefer listening to hard rock, blues and mostly west music. (B, 16-year-old girl, Shi'i, Azerbaijani)

Among the interviewees almost all of the Baha'is prefer reading Farsi books with religious content. They can warrant these books from the Baha'i library in Kayseri within the mahfil but they like reading Turkish books at the same time. The Shi'i participants prefer reading both Turkish and Farsi books.

Their eating habits are not subjected to change in Turkey markedly bacuse they can eat Iranian food at their home. According to Christopoulou and Leeuw (2005),

> [e]ating is an important everyday ritual for most families, and lot of time and energy is invested in this. The family table is the "hearth" around which the familial bonds are nurtured and sustained, and the time spent with family members and friends around eating is valuable for reasserting the unity of the family, a unity often threatened by the shift in circumstances. Although the children were exposed to local dietary habits (such as fast food), they often expressed their preference for the diet of the country of origin. (p. 129)

Even though the interviewees prefer eating the Iranian foods, almost all of them are keen on Turkish foods as well. As Christopoulou and Leeuw noted, for the asylum-seeker children eating habits have "emotional ingredients" which reminds the children the memories in their country of origin. As G expressed in her sentences hereafter:

> When my mother cooks pilaf for me, I remember my grandmother cooking our traditional pilaf in Iran. I missed my grandmother. (G, 10-year-old girl, Shi'i)

As Christopoulou and Leeuw (2005) underlined, eating habits are indispensable part of cultural identity and traditional belongings. In addition, it is a kind of "family ritual" (p. 129).

In this section, construction of national identity by and large was explained through 'hermeneutic circle' within this section. According to this principle, the whole is defined by its parts and the parts are defined by whole. The meaning takes place when understanding grabs the mutual interaction of whole and parts. In this section, I tried to make meaning of their asylum-seeking experiences to understand how they construct national identity in the host society. On this account, their old lives in Iran and their relations with the home society was questioned before all else. I examined how they defined their home society as a 'part' and how their home society defined them as a 'whole'. I addressed their narratives and perceptions at this point. First and foremost, I took up their home society and examined their miscellaneous life patterns within various social contexts. Islamic regime and the political and religious pressures are the major reasons for immigrating from Iran. This can be construed as their home society excluded the 'sidelinded' parts by stigmatizing them. Outrageous repression squelched these parts and they found a way through impasse. They decided to leave their country. At this point, it is significant to ascertain that how these excluded parts define their home society. 'Life in Iran' gave the answer to this question. Analysing their memories in Iran conduced to the understanding of their perceptions about Iran and meaning of home. Almost all the interviewees could remember their memories. In spite of being subjected to repression and persecution, they miss Iran because Iran embraces their childhood, their games, their relatives, their friends, their memories and their future. In this regard, 'memory negotiation' helps maintain of home country culture. While some of the interviewees remember Iran with good memories some also have bad memories. For instance, I only encountered one Shi'i girl who remembered Iran merely with dark memories and I met with only one Shi'i boy who has difficulties in remembering Iran and his memories. However, all of them have offended the Islamic radicals in their home society. In the section of 'Future

Expectations' nearly all of the children I interviewed stated that they want to return Iran some day. This dream of return illuminates their dreams. They stand up to the hurdles by embracing their memories and hanging up on their dreams. In other words, they construct their national identity in the light of the past experiences and future expectations. Especially those who construct national identity according to their memories and dreams are able to carry on their sense of belonging to Iran in Kayseri because their memories and dreams are all belong to Iran. One of the interviewees who do not remember Iran and the other one who wants to efface the bad memories of Iran have difficulties in constructing their 'interrupted' national identities in Kayseri because they belong to nowhere for eradicating their memories.

In the section of 'Life in Kayseri', I questioned how the host society defines the children of Iranian asylum-seekers as a 'whole' and how the children of Iranian asylum-seekers define Kayseri as 'parts'. I examined this mutual interaction between the whole and parts according to Simmel's term 'stranger'. According to Thomassen (2005), "the refugees occupy a position in between, neither inside nor outside the community" (p. 389). The asylum-seeker children that I interviewed occupy a place neither inside nor outside the host society. Unquestionably, the host society's attitudes towards the children of Iranian asylum-seekers trigger this ambivalent situation. In addition, the host society's attitudes shape the acculturation patterns which engender the children to construct their national identity. Taking into consideration of the social context in which they have to live, Berry's acculturation model[30] could not be applied to children of Iranian asylum-seekers who are living in Kayseri. They could not assimilate because they are precluded from various legal rights. They do not share the reciprocal legal rights with all members of the host society. I encountered only one example of limited assimilation. His national identity is 'ambivalent', 'fragmented', 'substituted' and 'situational'. While the

[30] Berry's acculturation model could not be applied to the asylum-seekers who come from the Middle Eastern countries to Turkey in general because as it was underscored in the first chapter, they are not accepted as a 'refugee' in the Turkish legislation. Therefore, they do not have a chance to be assimilated or to be integrated into the mainstream society.

interviewee disavowed his national and cultural identity, he was receptive of the Turkish culture. They could integrate limitedly because they are not tolerated by the members of the host society but they are sharing with them the same public space. Especially the Baha'i asylum-seeker children they have a tendency to stay grounded within the community in which they can receive peer support, instead of developing interaction with the broader culture. Disavowing the culture of the host society brings on separation but the interviwees could not separate totally as well because all of the children [except one] are going to school with Turkish pupils. I encountered only one interviewee as a paragon of marginalization who disawoves both the culture of home society and host society together. The majority of the interviewees, especially the Baha'i children have a propensity for constructing their national identity according to 'remoteness'. Only one child who is on the verge of a limited assimilation is constructing his national identity according to 'nearness' to the host society.

In the section of 'Cultural Identity', I shed light on what kind of values congregate Iranians to bolster a strong sense of national unity. In other words, the question of what makes them an Iranian was analysed. Existence of a common homeland, common language, national feast Nowruz, traditional food and Farsi music serve as the 'glue'to maintain national and family unity. These elements are overriding in terms of constructing a national identity as 'Iranians' for the asylum-seeker children. Suprisingly, in spite of their concrete aspirations for global society and global citizenship, they do not have any difficulties of claming Iranian national identity. In summary, the reconstruction of their national identiy was nourished from the absence of homeland, memory negotiation and synthesis of remoteness and nearness.

4.2.2 Religious Identity

In this section, I contrasted the experiences of Muslims against those of the Baha'is in order to reveal their distinct religious identity construction by taking into consideration of both 'religious norm adherence' and 'religious identity

saliance'. As Mcauliffe (2007) pointed out, "religious identities, like national identities, are neither chorent nor dominant in many individuals. They are complex and manifest differently in individuals and groups" (p. 313). For instance, while for the Baha'i interviewees religion plays an important role for identification and expression of community, for the Shi'i asylum-seeker children religion does not have such a significant role.

According to Christopoulou and Leeuw (2005) "[o]ften religion plays the role of sustaining cultural identity and serves as a reminder and fortifier of habits and traditions which were forcibly left behind" (p. 130). Therefore, religion has a significant function for the immigrants as a medium for asserting original culture, as an institutional conveyor of ethno-cultural bridging, as a medium of socio-cultural integration, as a celebration of cultural and religious syncretism and as an engine of (non-) adaptation as Leman pronounced. Within the scope of this section, I will also examine that which of these functions is being used by the child participants in Kayseri.

Among the interviewees while the Shi'i asylum-seeker children's families fled Iran for being subjected to excessive repression of normative orthodox Islam, the Baha'i asylum-seeker children's families fled Iran for being a persecuted for being a deviant by normative orthodox Islam. As Varzi noted, after the Islamic Revlolution, orthodox Shi'i Islam has been propounded as the primary stipulation for being a good Iranian (as cited in Mcauliffe, 2007, p. 318). Hence, differentiation along the lines of ethnicity, religion, language, class or education were elided to construct a monolithic and homegenous Iran (Mcauliffe, 2007, p. 317-318). This normative branch of Shi'i Islam does not accept the Bahaism as an official religion and objects to the defining of Iranian national identity other than Shi'ite symbols and narratives by non-othodox Shi'is. At this crucial point, the Baha'i and Shi'i asylum-seekers have a common denominator: They are all fierily opposed to the mullahs because they were expelled from Iran by fervent mullahs of orthodox Islam.

Within the scope of this section, I will examine 'religious engagement & religious knowledge', 'devotionalism'and 'ritual involvement' as groundwork in order to understand how the asylum-seeker children construct their religious identity in the host society. I will also analyse 'interruption' and 'maintanance' of their religious identity.

4.2.2.1 Religious Engagement & Religious Knowledge

Within the scope of this sub-title, adherence to set of beliefs associated with the asylum-seeker children's religion will be analysed. While the religion is extremely important for the Baha'i asylum-seeker children, only two Shi'i interviewee enumareted the significance of religion for herself. Nearly all of interviewees know about their religion's basic principles, rules, rituals, holidays, festivals and commemerations. They mostly came to know their religion firstly from their parents and secondly from schools but Baha'i asylum-seeker children learnt religion firstly from their parents and secondly special religious courses for Baha'is in Iran. They are all still willing for learning the rules of their religion and implementing the teachings in Kayseri except two Shi'i interviewees. Nearly all the interviewees implement the rules of their religion. Six out of eight perform the namaz but only three of them fast additionally due to the fact that they exempt from fasting on account of their age. They pointed out that they do not have to participate fully in the daylight fasts because they need more nourishment due to their growth. All of the children in elementary and secondary school are told by their parents but children are delighted to be part of religious activities. A 10-year-old Shi'i girl confessed that she fasts secretly without telling her mother in Kayseri in the following passage:

> I do not fast when I go to school. My mother told me that fasting could prevent my physical and intellectual development. Nevermore, sometimes I fast and neither my father nor my mother realizes it. (A, 10-year-old girl, Shi'i)

All the interviewees who implement their religion teachings are pleased to follow the rule of their religion. In addition, their parents do not put pressure on them to fast and perform namaz. They just feel up to worship.

While almost all of the Baha'i children give priority to their religious identity rather than national identity, they seemed rather ambivalent when they were trying to make a decision between their religion and nationality. Suprisingly, two Baha'i interviewees vacilliated considerably and thougt quite a while to make a choice. Finally, they stated that being an Iranian and being a Baha'i are equally significant for them below:

> Being an Iranian Baha'i is important for me. I could not make a decision at ease. Both of them are important. (H, 15-year-old girl, Baha'i)

> As far as I am concerned, both of them are important for me. (C, 12-year-old boy, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

For two Shi'i interviwees neither being an Iranian nor being a Shi'i is important. The Shi'i girl highlighted that,

> Religion is between individual and God. All the religions are important for me. I do not worship but sometimes I speak with God. Actually, neither being an Iranian nor being a Shi'i is such a big deal for me. Nevermore, if I have to make a decision, being an Iranian is much more important for me than being a Shi'i because religion should not be interfered in politics. (B, 16-year-old girl, Shi'i, Azerbaijani)

Making a healthy analyse on account of the children's decisions between being an Iranian and being a Shi'i or Baha'i does not seem possible for this research. At least it is self-evident that the some of the Baha'i asylum-seeker children give priority to both of them, the decisions of the Shi'i asylum-seeker children are more divergent. For Shi'i participants, religion is not so important like the Baha'i participants. While one of the Shi'i asylum-seeker children seems to put religion ahead of her nationality, at the end of the interview, it was uncovered that she is using religion as a medium to go back to Iran with her sentences below:

> Being a Muslim is very important for me. My mother taught me how to perform the namaz but I pray in Kayseri more than I was in Iran because I would like to turn back to Iran in some day. (A, 10-year-old girl, Shi'i)

A Shi'i interviewee pronounced the insignificance nature of the religion for himself:

> Religion is not important for me. I accept what my father professes. It does not matter. My mother teaches me about the lives of prophets. I am fond of listening to her. Anyway, there is no difference for me between being an Iranian and being a Shi'i. (F, 13-year-old boy, Shi'i, Azerbaijani)

In short, many children follow the standarts and values connected to religion, at least to the family's way of practicing religious law and rules. It is significant to point out that while the Baha'i interviewees are brewing intense religious identity, the Shi'i asylum-seeker interviewees have 'ambivalent religious identity'.

4.2.2.2 Devotionalism

In this section, I will examine the performance of private religious practices both in Iran and Kayseri. Nearly all of the participants' parents are comply with the religious rules both in Iran and Kayseri and they are all frequent prayer and devoted follower of their religion. Still holding up their beliefs, they provide their children with moral, spiritual and values-based training in Kayseri. While all of the Shi'i participants and their parents prefer praying at home in Kayseri, the Baha'i participants and their parents prefer praying both at home and 'mağfil'. Almost all the Baha'i participants pointed out that they perform their private and public religious practices more comfortable in Kayseri than in Iran due to the fact that the Iranian government does not allow Baha'is to open local house of worship[31] in Iran because they are precluded from any religious rights

[31] As Lazich pointed out, local house of worship is called "*Mashriqu'l - Adhkar*" by Baha'is (Lazich, 2004, p. 47).

since they did not fit with the official Islamic views. As the Baha'i boy noted below,

> In Iran every Baha'i prays at home. We do not have the local house of worship; therefore, we were praying secretly at home in Iran. In Turkey we pray more than we were in Iran because we have to pray for our remaining community members in Iran who are suffering bitterly. In addition, we can pray in mağfil more freely in Turkey because Bahaism is not forbidden in Turkey. (D, 16-year-old boy, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

Either of the Baha'i and Shi'i participants prays more enthusiastically in Kayseri than they prayed in Iran because they would like get over the financial and social difficulties which they are living in Kayseri. However, the Baha'i children also pray for their remaining community members in Iran. Therefore, while the Baha'i children's religious identity was not subjected to any 'interruption', two Shi'i children's religious identities were subjected to serious 'interruption' in Kayseri.

Moreover, being peripheral actors, Baha'is does not have any public religious practices in Iran; therefore, they construct strong sense of religious identity in Turkey. As a Baha'i girl stated below,

> Once we visited the destructed house of Bab in Shiraz which was razed by the government in 1981. We prayed in our car to not draw attention. (H, 15-year-old girl, Baha'i)

The Shi'i participants did not have any difficulties in praying in Iran but they prefer praying at their home both in Iran and Kayseri. However, their religious identity is ambivalent because they are opposed to the normative orthodox Islam in Iran. As Mcauliffe (2007) underlined, "[t]heir adherence to a more secular world view, combined with their position as part of the 'Persian Muslim' majority produces what could be termed a cultural rather than a religious Muslim identity" (p. 313).

4.2.2.3 Ritual Involvement

This sub-title refers to the performance of public religious practices of the interviewees. However, lacking of a public place of worship for the Shi'i asylum-seekers in Kayseri, the Baha'i asylum-seekers will come to the fore in this section. As all of the Baha'i participants stated, the Baha'i asylum-seekers have a specific place to perform the significant festival and feasts in Kayseri which is called 'mağfil'. As the Baha'i participants told me that mağfil is a kind of worship place and it is in private home of a Baha'i adherent. Mağfil is not a specific place. Sometimes, the Baha'i families who are dwelling in the same quarter convene in home of a Baha'i and form mağfil. The Baha'i children's parents organize religious meetings[32] in mağfil in Kayseri. Children could also participate in these religious meetings which occur every nineteen days on the first day of each Baha'i month. Througout the meeting, children pray with their parents, read the Baha'i sacred scriptures and "listen to prayers and selected passages from the Baha'i scriptures recited by members of the local community" (Lazich, 2004, p. 48). However, the Shi'i asylum-seeker children are sidelined from mağfil in Kayseri. Shi'i community as the main preponderant group excludes Baha'i community and shears them from basic ways of life in Iran but Baha'i community excludes the Shi'i community from their mağfil in Kayseri by way of retaliation. According to Tajfel and Turner, both of the excluded group is faced with a "negative distinctiveness".

Living in a host society has substituted the places of parts and whole in hermeneutic circle. While the Shi'i community constituted 'majority' as the dominant religion for over ninety percent of Iranians as a 'sidelineded whole' in Iran, they turned into 'parts' in the host society. Even though some of the Iranian asylum-seekers are excluded from the mainstream society, they can get access to their religious freedom in Kayseri. For instance, in contrsast to Iran, Shi'i asylum-seekers have right to change their religion in Turkey. Likewise,

[32] As Lazich pointed out, "[r]egular gatherings of the Baha'i community are called 'feasts' […]." (Lazich, 2004, p. 48). I do not give all the details what kind of ceremonies and rituals that Baha'is have. Possibly, it could be another thesis topic.

Baha'i community's relationship with whole has shifted as well. Even though Baha'i community constitutes 'parts' of the host society, they have right to practice their religion, observe religious holidays and manifest their religion in Kayseri but they were not tolerated to practice their religion in Iran by the governmet. The Baha'i community in Kayseri draws upon the advantages of religious freedom.

Moreover, Baha'i asylum-seekers in Kayseri have a library in mağfil which includes Baha'i sacred scriptures, literature and poetry books which is written in Farsi and English. Almost all of the children participate in English courses in mağfil on the weekends. As one of the Baha'i participants noted hereafter:

> We are attending religious and English courses in mağfil in Kayseri. We are learning moral values with my parents to be a good person. (H, 15-year-old girl, Baha'i)

All of the Baha'i children are spending their spare time in mağfils for various reasons. At that point, the Baha'i participants shape their persent life by referring the past experiences and future expectations and mağfils are indispensable places for their future dreams. Attending English courses is a strong evidence of their desire to pass to a third country.

Baha'is celebtarate the Festival of Ridvan (21 April-2 May) "to commemorate Bahaullah's declaration of his prophethood […] in 1863" (Lazich, 2004, p. 47) in mağfil. They also celebrate "Nowruz" in mağfils as their national festival. A Baha'i participant enlightened the celebration of Festival of Ridvan below:

> When I think about the festivals in Iran, firstly I remember the Festival of Ridvan. We could not celebrate it in Iran because it is forbidden but in Turkey we can celebrate it freely. Besides, we can even pray in parks in Kayseri. Last year Baha'is raised money and rented a large salon to celebrate the Ridvan. Throughout the celebration, we listened to music and the particiants presented gifts to each other. Representation was demonstrated for the children. (H, 15-year-old girl, Baha'i)

Throughout the interviews, almost all of the participants observe or celebrate major mainstream secular cultural religious events such as Nowruz. Therefore,

while all the Shi'i participants remembered the Nowruz as the most significant traditional festival, the Baha'i participants remembered both the Festival of Ridvan and Nowruz. Celebration of Nowruz is not subjected to an 'interruption' in Kayseri for all the interviewees. The Festival of Ridvan turned into a constant celebration in Kayseri for the Baha'i participants. In the light of the preceding analysis, the Baha'i interviewees' religious identity merged into a dominant religious identity and gained a relative continuity in Kayseri. On the other hand, the Shi'i interviewees' religious identity was subjected to 'interruption' and their religious identity gained ambivalency in Kayseri. For instance, regardless of their religious backgrounds, all Iranians in this research celebrate Nowruz, the Iranian New Year as a significant secular traditions but neither of the Shi'i participants reported that they commemorate the death of religious figures or martyrdom of Imam Hussein.

According to the interviewees, the religion courses in Turkey are more intelligible and benefical to promote spiritual values than the religion courses in Iran. As the Baha'i girl stated in the succeeding manner:

> The teachers at Iranian schools do not attach any value to Bahaism. One day, my teacher was teaching the Quran and red a letter wrongly. I warned her kindly but she ejected me from class. It was so humiliating. I like attending religion courses in Kayseri because they are very informative. In addition, my teacher is not repressive like my ex-teacher in Iran. (E, 14-year-old girl, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

In brief, there is a large "fictive-kin" system among the Iranian asylum-seekers in Turkey. Within my sample, Baha'i asylum-seeker children epitomized a perfect example of fictive-kin system but they envisage and draw on this fictive-kin system as a medium of non-adaptation in host country. In this regard, Baha'i religious agency gains ground on secluded religious congregation, which excludes Shi'i Iranian asylum-seekers in Kayseri. On the other hand, while Baha'is draws on religion as a medium for affirming their own culture and presence, for some of the Iranian Shi'i asylum-seekers, religion and conversion are used as a means for migration. Having run away from politic and religious pressures, Shi'i Iranians could not summon around their religious identity in

Kayseri. For Shi'i Iranians religion is neither a medium for asserting orginal culture nor a medium for non-adaptation to the host society**.** They could not organize any congregations such as Baha'is do; therefore to create alternative social networks to manage to adversities that they encounter, some of the Shiite Iranians change their religion in the transit stage of migration in Turkey. That is to say, the Shi'i immigrant community in Kayseri is noticeably distinct from the Baha'i immigrant community and Baha'i participants' religious identity transpired as the most salient religious identity comparing to Shi'i participants' religious identity.

Changing of the interaction patterns between parts and whole in hermeneutic circle causes the different construction of religious identities among the asylum-seeker children. For instance, it is self-evident that Bahaism has transpired in the public sphere of Kayseri because the Baha'i community's relations with the mainstream society have changed. For instance, Baha'i children could share their religion with Turkish people and they could even pray in parks in Kayseri. Appearance of Bahaism in public sphere rather than private sphere caused the reconstruction of the Baha'i participants' religious identity in the host society. By gaining visibility of their religious identities, they obtained a strong sense of religious identity. In striking contrast to the Baha'i interviewees, the Shi'i participants' religious identity reconstructed quite differently because their weak sense of religious identity consolidated in Kayseri. For the Shi'i participants religion is not critically important like the Baha'i participants. Therefore, while religious identity is in the foreground for the Baha'is, national identity was subordinated. However, they are also able to carry on their national identity as well. On the other hand, for the Shi'i asylum-seeker children national identity is more preponderant comparing to their religious identity apperaently. The Shi'i community's relations with the mainstream society have changed as well. For instance, as Akçapar explained, in striking contrast to Iran, even religious conversion comes true through the social networks such as churches, missionraries and church-related organization among the Iranian Shi'i asylum-seekers in Turkey but I did not encounter any sample of religious conversion

among the Shi'i interviewees. In this regard, the Shi'i community gained a relative religious freedom in Kayseri as well because they were not allowed to change their religions in Iran. Changing the relations and interactions between parts and whole for both of the religious community gave rise to appearence of divergent religious identities.

Bearing the aforementioned information in mind, the concurrent cause for this two divergent identity construction is based on community coherence as well. While members of the Baha'i community have a strong religious coherence, the members of the Shi'i community have weak religious bonds. While the Baha'i children's parents are striving excessively to inculcate the tenets of Bahaism into their children, the Shi'i children's parents are laying out modicum of effort to teach their children the tenets of Shiism. In addition, the Shi'i participants' family routines and traditions are often structured by national reflexes. In striking contrast to the Shi'i participants, the Baha'i participants' family routines and traditions are often structured by religious reflexes. For the Baha'i participants "religion plays the role of sustaining cultural identity and serves as a reminder and a fortifier of habits and traditions which were forcibly left behind" (Christopoulou & Leeuw 2005, p. 129-130). While the Shi'i participants accentuated especially cultural festivals and traditions, the Baha'i participants pointed out theological premises of Bahaism such as religious festivals and feasts that were remembered vividly.

4.2.3 Childhood Experiences

In this section, I will analyse the concept of 'childhood'. Analysing social construction of childhood for the children of Iranian asylum-seekers who are living in Kayseri will shed light on childhood experiences in the host society. In this framework, I addressed the childhood experiences by taking into account of legally binding instruments and their most fundamental child rights. In this section, the overriding concern is to reveal that children are not passive receivers but they are active creators of their own life and own identities within

new socio-cultural contexts. According to Bash and Phillips, a postmodern notion of "mutiple identities" do not based on "consumerist choice" where children might be regarded as passive receivers because to the quantum metaphor, from the dialectic of cultural encounter the uncertainity arises which denotes "individuation and self creation" in identity formation (Bash & Phillips, 2006, p. 126).

Within the scope this section, I addressed questions to the interviewees which examined 'Spare time Activities', 'Child Responsibilities', and 'Family Protection and Parental Responsibilities'. I took up these sub-titles by taking into consideration of the interviewees' both post-migration and pre-migration habitus to analyse and compare their childhood experiences both in home and host society.

4.2.3.1 Spare Time Activities

Every child has right to playfulness for their intellectual and psychical development; therefore, it is considerable how and with whom the children spend their leisure time.

All of the Baha'i participants are happy with the spare time activities in Kayseri because they pointed out that their parents were loath to provide consent for playing outside home because of their overmuch concerns about safety; therefore, parents were concerned about the participation of their children in activities outside of school. Only one Baha'i participant gave utterance to his feeling conversely comparing to the other Baha'i participants in the following passage:

> I was playing when I got through with my lessons in Iran. I had enough spare time to play in Iran. Actually, I have time in Kayseri also. Besides, I can play outside in Kayseri but there are very few Iranians in our dwelling place. Therefore, I have to play with Turks most of the time but when I make a mistake during the game, they shout like "you are from Iran and you are an infidel!" I prefer playing in Iran. (C, 12-year-old boy, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

In striking contrast to the Baha'i participants, the Shi'i children prefer their outside activities and games in Iran. Only one of the children complained of about unfamiliar environment in Kayseri. She stated that their parents do not give permission them to play oustside because of unsafe pysical environment. As a Shi'i girl noted below,

> I can not play outside in Kayseri fereely because of unfamiliar environment. My mother thinks that it is unsafe. (A, 10-year-old girl, Shi'i)

Being in a melancholic mood, a Shi'i boy vacillates between Iran and Kayseri. He misses his 'lost' toys and 'lost' book from the 'lost' homeland. See, the following excerpt:

> I had a remote-control car in Iran. I loved that car more than any other toys of mine. Actually, I had a host of toys. All of them were big and they were not cheap. All of them stayed in Iran. Than, I had poetry book and I loved that book more than any other books of mine. It included child poems in it. I learnt Farsi with that poetry book. Here, I have toys but not like them. On the other hand, I have a few friends in Kayseri. I can play freely with them outside. (F, 13-year-old boy, Shi'i, Azerbaijani)

Childhood experiences of the Shi'i boy are grounded in the feeling of loss. He tries to console himself by emphasizing the advantages of the new environment in the host society.

A Baha'i girl bridged between Iran and Kayseri by playing Iran games in Kayseri with her brother. Playing Iran games constitutes a link between 'there' and 'here' such as an incessant memory negotiator. She expressed her feelings below:

> I had enough time and toy in Iran to play but I could not play in Iran, I could not skate and I could not spin my hoop as well. I can play in Kayseri freely but most of the time we play Iranian games with my brother. Sometimes, I am skating outside with my brother. (E, 14-year-old girl, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

Even though two interviewees preferred spending their leisure time in Iran, nearly all of them participate in at least school activities apart from the outdoor

games in Kayseri whereby I encountered a swimmer, a chess player, a basketballer. They can attend these courses free of charge at their school. In addition, parents do not concern about the participation of their children in school activities. In addition, the Baha'i participants benefit from the avantages of 'mağfil' in terms of spending their spare time whereby they can read books, attend English courses and paint as hobby. Among the Shi'i participants one out of four them prefers neither Iran nor Kayseri. She expressed her opinions in the succeeding passage:

> Only activity that I had in Iran is listening to music. I had enough time to participate in leisure time activities but I did not have any opportunity. I could not find any activities in Kayseri. Once I attended a guitar course. Suddenly my teacher left me alone and said 'I will come back as soon as I finish performing namaz'. I left the course on that day. (B, 16-year-old girl, Shi'i, Azerbaijani)

In short, the children who miss Iran's physical environment, in reality are longing for their lost friends, lost games, lost toys in a melancholic mood. Nevertheless, changing relations between the 'whole' and the 'parts' in the host society is useful for the children's intellectual and physical development. In Iran almost all of the Baha'i and Shi'i children could not involve outdoor recreational activities for various reasons but in Kayseri they are not socially and geographically islolated. They have miscellaneous opportunities for recreational activities and forming new friendship. For instance, most of the interviewees stated that they go to the parks to play with their both Turkish and Iranian friends.

4.2.3.2 Child Responsibilities

Every child has right to live his or her childhood without being charged with heavy and ardous responsibilities. Children have few responsibilities in their lives such as play not to work.

According to Christopoulou and Leeuw (2005), asylum-seeker and refugee children's role is rather crucial for others members of the household. Being the

main mediator between the host society and their family, they sometimes undertake great responsibilities for their family (p. 130). For example, "they assume almost a parental responsibility in situations where they must interpret" (Anderson, 2001, p. 191). They are the first who learn local language and bring the new social context into the home through the everyday use at school, in the neighbourhood and playgrounds. The parents rely on their children in contacting whether with the locals, doctors, public institutions, local authority officers, various associations, sellers or the authorities who are responsible from asylum procedures, etc (Christopoulou & Leeuw, 2005, p. 130-133). That is to say, children constitute the initial link between their family and public sphere of the host society.

All the children implied that they do not have any heavy responsibilities both in Iran and Kayseri. All of the children noted that they help their parents with the housework such as cleaning work, washing up the dishes and clothes, setting up and cleaning of table as it is the same housekeeping chores in Iran. There is one additional responsibility that they are charged with is 'interpretation' in Kayseri. All of the bilingual children help their monolingual parents to cope with the challenges stemming from their lack of Turkish. As Anderson (2001) underscored, "[a]s a psychiatrist pointed out, the parents can become increasingly apathetic, reflecting an almost infantile need for care and provision, failing to learn the language and thus signaling a longer term reliance on their increasingly self-sufficient children" (p. 192). That is to say, the only situation in which asylum-seeker children adopt adult role is that when they have to act as translator. Throughout the interpretation, inversion of the role hierarchy in family causes them to take on an adult responsibility.

Concerning language, Azerbaijani parents constitute the most advantegous families in respect to the rest of the parents owing to familiarity with Turkish. A Baha'i girl expressed her thoughts below:

> My father and mother can speak Turkish pretty well. I do not have to interpret for them. I only interpret for new comer Baha'is and Muslims.

> I am fond of making interpretation for them because they need help. (E, 14-year-old girl, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

Apart from the ever-changing relationship between the 'whole' and the 'parts', there is also a professed change between the parts which brings forth 'role changes' within the household. According to Rutter, "[p]arents can feel very disempowered by their lack of education and their lack of [local language]. They may see their roles change in the family if their children speak English and they don't" (Rutter, 2006, p. 171).

4.2.3.3 Family Protection and Parental Responsibilities

Every child has right to grow up in a secure physchial environment. In addition, all the children have the right to adequate nutrition and adequate health for their intellectual and physical development. Lack of foregoing rights may prevent them enjoying childhood experiences.

All the Baha'i participants without exception explained that their parents were not able to provide a secure physical environment for them in Iran. The Baha'i boy expressed an old event in the following manner:

> I do not feel safe in Iran. Someones troubled us with telephone. They asked "where is your father and than hung up the telephone". (C, 12-year-old boy, Baha'i, Azerbaijani)

Enroachment upon their rights, having been persecuted and insulted, sanctioning of the Baha'i faith, the Baha'i interviewees conceded that they have a safer physical environment in Kayseri. Nevertheless, all of the Shi'i participants stated that while their parents were able to provide them a safe environment in Iran, they do not feel safe in Kayseri except two participants. One of them expressed the past and present situation with her sentences below:

> My family was not able to provide a secure environment even for themselves. My brother was attempted to kidnap. Nevertheless, my mother is able to provide a secure home environment for me but Kayseri is so dangerous especially for women. When day turns into night, I have to go back home. Even though my school is rather close to

> our home, I go to the school by school service. (B, 16-year-old girl, Shi'i, Azerbaijani)

Apart from the secure physical environment, having adequate nutrition and adequate health are indispensable provisions for intellectual and physical development of children. Almost all of the children denoted that they were able to be nourished healtier in Iran and they could not benefit from the health facilities like in Iran owing to the financial problems in Kayseri. However, they did not indicate a huge gap between Iran and Kayseri in terms of nourishment and health opportunities.

In short, their childhood experiences are quiet different in Kayseri than Iran due to various recreational opportunities and relative free environment comparing to Iran. The children do not take on the roles and responsibilities of adults [except interpretation], rising families, working for wages or caring for siblings. Changing of the interaction patterns between the 'whole' and the 'part' caused to reveal different childhood experiences.

4.3 Analysing the Interplay among National and Religious Identity

This thesis is set out to explore 'intersectionality' of identities of the children of Iranian asylum-seekers in order to reveal the interplay among national and religious identity. Even though it is not the overall purpose of this research, it would be benefical to analyse the affects of the interplay between national and religious identity to their childhood experiences.

A noticeable fact in this research is continuing vigour of national identity without a shadow of doubt is an existing reality as Smith pointed out in his nationalism theory beforehand. That is to say, national identity is so pervasive and ubiquitious that other types of collective identities could not keep up with its durability and potency. National identity is sole representative of 'collective rememberance' among the asylum-seeker children. Nonetheless, one should bear in mind that this research is based on a 'two-pronged' approach which requires navigation between national and religious identity.

Througout the interviews, I observed a limited interplay between national-religious and child-religious identities. First of all, elaborating the interplay between national and religious identity would be felicitious in order to keep to the point. Even though I did not encounter any national identity which was constructed on the basis of religious identity, I noticed an obvious national identity deconstruction with regard to religion concerning the Baha'i children. In spite of their distinct statement about the superiority of national identity, when it comes to significance of religion, nearly all of them vacillated between religious and national identity. After persistent questions, they all preferred to assert their religious identity. Furthermore, when they thought about the notable festivals in their country of origin, three out of four implied 'the Festival of Rızvan' in addition to 'Nowroz' owing to the fact that the Baha'i children have immanent religious conviction. As a matter of fact, they have been instilling with religious tenets profoundly by both their parents and the Baha'i community in Iran and Kayseri. Therefore, they had a discursive expression about the saliency of their identities. Nevertheless, apart from fluctuation between the identities, their strong attachment to national identity in striking contrast to the Shi'i children is an unquestionable fact.

The Shi'i children do not have a preponderant religious identity comparing to the Baha'i children. Even though Iran adopted Shi'ite symbols and narratives to constitute a national unity after the Revolution, it seems that it is not binding for the Shi'i asylum-seeker children because they portrayed their identities on the basis of national identity which is prufied from religious reflexes. Therefore, the Shi'i children's way of adaptation of national identity does not comply with the official ideology of Iran. That is to say, there is no ostensible interplay between their national and religious identity.

There is also a distinct interplay between religious identity and childhood experiences for the Baha'i participants. They agreed upon that they are freer in Kayseri in terms of practicing and professing their religion and drawing upon outdoor playground and leisure time activities for their physical and intellectual

development in contrast to Iran due to the fact that they were precluded from their non-negotiatable rights pertaining to practicing their religion, attending school and using playgrounds. Enroachment upon their basic rights impeded to enjoy their childhood. Therefore, plethora of spare time activities and presence of relative free social environment in Kayseri led asylum-seeker children to enjoy their childhood.

In short, even though the presence of an obvious interplay between national-religious and child-religious identities, there is no overlapping among three identities. Finally, interplay is valid merely for the Baha'i children. I did not observe any interplay or overlapping among the Shi'i particpants' identities.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis has comprised an investigation of the identity construction of children of Iranian asylum-seekers in Kayseri. The research was conducted through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with selected children of Iranian asylum-seekers in order to analyse the construction of national and religious identity. In this research, identity is regarded as fluid and malleable. In this framework, to accomplish the foremost aim of the research, I questioned the presence of 'interruption' and 'maintenance' within the constructed identities as the main research question. The subordinate research question is ascertainment the interplay between national and religious identity thoroughly. Due to the presence of various identity definitions, I proposed an 'eclectic' research wich comprises related identity definitions that comprise the basic problematic of this thesis. To analyse the research questions, I mainly utilized identity approaches of Smith, Hall, Christopoulou and Leeuw, Bauman and Simmel to lay the groundwork for this research. To constitute the main anchor of this research, "situational identities" (Smith, 2001), "substituted identities" (Christopoulou & Leeuw, 2005), "fragmented identities" (Hall, 1996), "ambivalent identities" (Bauman, 2004), "stranger" (Simmel, 1950) and "memory negotiation" (Christopoulou & Leeuw, 2005) were employed.

In this research, I drew upon 'hermeneutics' as the most congruous sociological method because my first and foremost aim is to grab inner dynamics and perceptions of the participants. Hermeneutics is based on meaning and thereby subjective level of human experience. To give meaning to the way of

interpretation of their experiences, comprehensive investigation was done to ascertain how their experiences of past and anticipations of future influence their perceptions, attitudes and actions through in-depth interviews. Secondly, within the scope of hermeneutic thought, subjective level of human experience is in the forefront and this research does not aim at reaching objective knowledge. Identity formation of children was considered with a constant flux both by home and host country of the children involved in order to compare their 'pre-migration' and 'post-migration' habitus. Thirdly, I utilized 'hermeneutic circle' in order to examine 'interruption' and 'maintenace' within asylum-seeker children's identities.

In order to encapsulate the findings, it will be benefical to enumerate subjective knowledge that I acquired throughout the interviews. This thesis put forth the distinct superiority of national identity through the interviewees' other identity forms as Smith underlined in his nationalism theory previously. I reached this notable knowledge by employing 'hermeneutic circle'. In this framework, how they defined their home society as a 'part' and how their home society defined them as a 'whole' through their perceptions were examined. At this point, I draw upon 'memory negotiation' to reveal how they remember Iran in the section of 'Life in Iran'. Even though all the interviewees have offended the Islamic regime for different reasons, it is striking that even the Baha'i participants keep their good memories in Iran and they have a stronger national idenity than Shi'i interviewees. In addition, I came to realise that they would like to return their homeland if Islamic regime is over or things get better. In short, interviewees construct their national identities by embracing their memories and hanging up their dreams of return. Furthermore, the interviewees' national identity was not subject to any 'interruption' in the host society. Nevertheless, two typical examples of 'interuption' can be expressed as well. One of the interviewees does not remember Iran and other one wants to efface the memories of Iran completely. On this account, their national identity is 'fragmented' and 'ambivalent' because they are belong to nowhere for ignoring and eradicating their memories. On the other hand, host society's attitudes have

a triggery effect to shape national identity of the children. At this point, Simmel's term 'stranger' steps in due to the fact that the asylum-seeker children occupy a place neither inside nor outside the mainstream society. The Shi'i interviewee who is receptive of the Turkish culture has difficulties in accessing the host country because parents of the interviewees are precluded from basic legal rights such as lacking of work permission. Moreover, asylum-seeker children are aware of their provisional settlement in Kayseri. It is another reason of feeling like a stranger. At some points, local's prejudiced and discriminatory behaviours and attitudes towards asylum-seekers have a strong affect to consolidate the term stranger. To contend with these challenges, Baha'i asylum-seekers prefer sheltering under their secluded network in Kayseri. However, Shi'i asylum-seekers do not have such a strong and interconnected network. In addition, it is obvious that Berry's acculturation patterns are not in tune with perceptions of the interviewees because the beforementioned reasons prevent them from integrating, assimilating, and saperating in the proper sense. I only encountered with an example of marginalization.

For Shi'i asylum-seeker children religious identity was interrupted dramatically due to the fact that they left Iran to run away from the severe repression of Islamic regime. Even though both Baha'i and Shi'i children are sharing the similar reasons to leave Iran, Shi'i asylum-seeker children were exposed to excessive coercion of their own religion. Therefore, their religious identity attenuated day by day in Kayseri. Having run away from politic and religious pressures, Shi'i asylum-seekers could not summon around their religious identity in Kayseri. Examining construction of religious identity revealed that Baha'i asylum-seeker children religious identity was not subjected to an 'interruption' in the host society, but it strengthened markedly. Moreover, an 'inter-group discrimination' between Shi'is and Baha'is appeared in Kayseri. In striking contrast to Shi'i asylum-seekers, Baha'is arrange meetings in mağfils in Kayseri and they exclude Shi'i asylum-seekers from their network as a social reprisal due to the fact that they were sidelined by Shi'i islamist radicals in Iran. In brief, it is obvious that while religious identity of Shi'i interviewees is

‘ambivalent’ and ‘fragmented’, religious identity of Baha’i interviewees is in the foreground explicitly.

The participants’ interrupted childhood in Iran achived a relative maintenance in Kayseri without any fragmentation due to relative free environment comparing to Iran. Nevertheless, they only adopt an adult role in the situations when they have to interpret for their parents.

This thesis also set out to analyse ‘intersectionality’ of identities of interviewees in order to display the interplay between national and religious identity and childhood experiences even though it is not the overall purpose of this research. I found out a limited interplay between national-religious and child-religious identities for Baha’i participants. Even though Baha’i children have a strong national identity than Shi’i children, their national identity was subjected to a slight deconstruction when I asked them the saliency of national and religious identities. After a long period of hesitation, they asserted their religious identity as the most significant identity for themselves. On the other hand, their strong attachment to national identity is unassailable fact. I could not observe any ostensible interplay between national and religious identity of Shi’i participants.

I also came to realise a conspicuous interplay between child and religious identity for Baha’i interviewees owing to the fact that they are able to play in relatively free social environment in Kayseri than Iran. Having been precluded from their non-negotiable rights in Iran such as practising and declaring their religion, attending school and using playgrounds, their childhood was interrupted in Iran markedly. In contrast to Iran, they have miscellaneous recreational activities and permission from their parents to participate and enjoy them without any concerns.

Finally, this study reveals that interviewees’ identity construction comes true in a ‘hermeneutic circle’. When the asylum-seeker children go to a third country, the interaction between the ‘whole’ and the ‘parts’ would be subjected to change

once again. Their identity construction process will continue until they turn back to their country of origin.

Dwelling upon the issues of identity formation of asylum-seeker children concurrently, the study fills the gap the neglected literature surrounding asylum-seeker children. This thesis was set out to denote to the aforementioned gap in the literature which has already been well-demonstrated in the 'significance of the research'.

Throughout the research, I tried to take 'gender' issue into consideration. Nevertheless, gender did not play a significant role in construction of children's identity in the research. I did not ascertain any kind of difference while the children were answering the questions in terms of gender whereby the experiences of girls do not differ from those of boys in terms of exposure, opportunities, constraints, and responsibilities within the household and the community. Gender issue could possibly matter in the researches which includes more than eight interviewees.

Briefly, first and foremost, this research put forth that children are not passive subjects or powerless pawns but they have a strong potential in terms of shaping their lives and constructing their identities. Therefore, they could be taken account of as rational agents in researches. It is noteworthy to underline that the asylum-seeker children were not coerced to choose their identities. That is to say, identities were not imposed on them by others. Nevertheless, they shaped their identities according to the outside circumstances faced by as well as the outside community and their families. This research helps them to address their voices to largest masses throughout the world.

As a brief conclusion, I would like to share some of my own additional information and observation throughout the research. It is obvious that Iranian asylum-seekers have an economic dependence in Kayseri because their means of subsistence entirely consumed and their long-term economic security diminished. Therefore, they are living a downward mobility. Related to this

downward mobility, when I arrived in Kayseri on September 16, I encountered Iranian and Iraqi asylum-seeker children in ASAM office. Stationary goods were being distributed to the children by the ASAM officers. Meral Tamer wrote in her column about this distribution. She stated that,

> Angelina Jolie, the goodwill ambassador of the UNHCR, induced Warren Buffet, one of the richest men in the world, to hold out a helping hand to the asylum-seekers and refugees. Whereupon, Buffet's son and grandchild visited Turkey quietly and unobstrusively at the beginning of the summer 2007 and talked to asylum-seekers by meeting with Metin Çorabatır and finally he decided to subscribe fifty thousand dollars to Turkey. (Tamer, 2007)

This donated amount of money was used to buy stationary goods to the asylum-seeker children in Kayseri and Nevşehir. Throughout the distribution, happiness could be seen on children's faces. The reality is that asylum-seeker children do not receive any financial help except a limited amount of money that UNHCR gives to some of the asylum-seekers after initating a financial interview in UNHCR Branch Office in Ankara. Therefore, most of them are even deprived of the school materials. Even though I focused upon the children who are attending school, there are also few children who do not attend school in Kayseri. As I learnt from the ASAM officers, these children are working in restaurants as dishwasher or cleaner in order to boost their family financially and they have a propensity for withholding their labaouring from the ASAM officers. I should also highlight that apart from the Baha'i and Shi'i Iranian asylum-seekers, few Iranian Christian asylum-seekers and Iranian refugees ex-Iraq are residing in Kayseri as well. Nevertheless, the ASAM officers do not know the exact number of the families with children. Throughout my research, I have been also in Nevşehir which is another city in Central Anatolia that asylum-seekers are residing. I encountered a child in ASAM office who is an Iranian refugee ex-Iraq in this city. I had an opportunity to make short interview with her. A noticeable fact derived from this interview is that 'Iranian refugees ex-Iraq' constitute the most destitute and downtrodden immigrants in Turkey. She told me that her life struggle since she arrived in Turkey with her family in the following manner:

> We have been living life of misery for six years in Turkey. When we managed to approach the UNHCR Branch Office in Van, they refused assistance for resettlement. Turkish police mistreated us. We were subjected to ill-treatment. Approximately for six years, we resided in a village of Van. Life was harsh and insecure. We lived in one-room houses without bathrooms or running water and without electricity. I had to abandon my education in Van. Finally, the UNHCR authortities led us to settle in Nevşehir. Now, I am going to school but my family can not meet my school expenses. I do not know when UNHCR will send us to a third country. (14-year-old girl, Iranian refugee ex-Iraq)

According to UNHCR country operation plans, "[…], little prospect for resettlement and only temporary asylums in Turkey, […] the Iranian refugees ex-Iraq are effectively stranded. They are growing increasingly frusturated and even more dependent on UNHCR" ("UNHCR 2006 Country Operations Plans: Turkey", n.d.). Moreover, as I learnt from the UNHCR officers, in spite of coming from a Middle East country, they are the ones who are accepted as a 'refugee' according to the Turkish asylum legislation. Being in the most desperate situation, the case of 'Iranian refugees ex-Iraq children in Turkey' need further investigation in order to offer some insight into the children who are in a quandary.

In this research, I focused on merely the identity construction part. I do not claim this reserach could be generalized of the findings to all asylum-seeker and refugee children who are living in different cities in Turkey. However, it does provide a case study from which other research could come out. More wide-ranging researches are necessary in order to reach distinct results, including compatible examination with asylum-seeker children who are residing in different places and in different situations. This research would lay the groundwork to fill the huge literature gap about asylum-seeker children in Turkey. It is my hope that the above research provides some concrete directions in which further investigations could be initiated in the field.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akçapar, Ş. (2006). Conversion as a migration strategy in a transit country: Iranian Shiites becoming Christians in Turkey. *Center for Migration Studies, 40*(4), 817-853.

Alwin, F., Felson, J. L., Walker, E. T., & Tufis, P. A. (2006). Measuring religious identities in surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 70*(4), 530-564.

Anderson, P. (2001). You don't belong here in Germany: On the social situation of refugee children. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 14*(2), 187-199.

BBC Open2. (n.d.). *The invention of childhood: Cultural childhoods*. January 22, 2008 from http://open2.net/theinventionofchildhood/culturalchildhoods.html

Bagnoli, A. (2007). Between outcast and outsider: Constructing the identity of the foreigner. *European Societies, 9*(1), 23-44.

The Baha'is. (n.d.). *About the Baha'i faith*. October 20, 2007, from http://www.bahai.org/features/intro.

The Baha'is. (n.d.). *What is the Baha'i faith?* November 18, 2007, from http://www.bahai.org/faq/facts/bahai_faith.

The Baha'is. (n.d.). *The growing threat to Iran's Baha'is*. November 21, 2007, from http://www.bahai.org/persecution/iran.

Bash, L., Antle, C. M. (2006). Being unaccompanied: A search for meaning. (Master Dissertation, The University of Calgary, 2006).

Bash, L., Zezlina-Phillips E. (2006). Identity, boundary and schooling: Perspectives on the experiences and perceptions of refugee children. *Intercultural Education, 17*(1), 113-128.

Bauman, Z. (2004). *Identity conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*. UK and USA: Polity Press.

Berry, J. W., Phinney, J. S., Sam, D. L., & Vedder, P. (2006). Immigrant youth: Acculturation; identity, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology, 55*(3), 303-332.

Bessant, J. (2006). The fixed age rule: Young people, consent and research ethics. *Youth Studies Australia, 25*(4), 50-57.

Christopoulou, N. & Leeuw, S. (2005). Coming of age as "the third generation". Children of immigrants in Berlin. In J. Knörr (ed.), *Childhood and Migration from experience to agency* (pp. 113-137). USA and London: Transaction Publishers.

Chaichian, M. A. (1997). First generation Iranian immigrants and the question of cultural identity: The case of Iowa. *International Migration Review, 31*(3), 612-627.

Couch, J., Francis, S. (2006). Participation for all? Searching for marginalized voices: The case of including refugee young people. *Children, Youth ad Environments, 16*(2), 272-290.

Dona, G. (2006). Children as a research advisor. *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care, 2*(2), 22-34.

Ezzy, D. (1998). Lived experience and interpretation in narrative theory: Experiences of living with HIV/AIDS. *Qualitative Sociology, 21*(2), 169-179.

Fantino, A. M., Colak, A. (2001). Refugee children in Canada: Searching for identity. *CHILDREN & SOCIETY, 21*(5), 309-321.

Forced Migration Online. (n.d.). *What is forced migration*. November 03, 2007, from http://www.forcedmigration.org/whatisfm.htm.

Ghasemi, S. (n.d.). *History of Iran*. Iran Chamber Society. November 20, 2007, from http://www.iranchamber.com/history/safavids/safavids.php.

Hadjiyanni, T. (2002). *Making of a refugee: Children adopting refugee identity in Cyprus*. Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger.

Hall, S. (1996). Who needs identity. In S. Hall & P. Du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of cultural identity* (pp. 1-18). London: Sage Publications.

Higgins, P. J. (1988). Minority-State relations in contemporary Iran. In A. Banuazizi & M. Weiner (Eds.), *The state, religion, and ethnic politics. Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan* (pp. 167-198). USA: Syracuse University Press.

İçduygu, A. (2004). Demographic mobility and Turkey: Migration experiences and government responses. *Mediterranean Quarterly, 15*(4), 88-99.

Iranian Refugees Alliance. (1998). Unsafe haven: Iranian Kurdish refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan. *Iranian Refugees at Risk*. 1-32. November 29, 2007, from http://www.irainc.org/text/pub/NIreport.pdf.

Jones, M. (2007). Sunni, Shiite? Anyone? Anyone? Can you tell a Sunni from a Shiite? *Congressional Quarterly, 32*(2), 57-65.

Karasapan, O. (1989). Gulf War refugees in Turkey. *Middle East Report, 0*(156), 33-35.

Kayseri Sanayi Odası (n.d.). *Kayseri Ekonomisi*. October 28, 2007, from http://www.kayserito.org.tr/media/kayseri_ekonomi.ppt.

Kayseri Valiliği (n.d.). *Coğrafi Yapı*. February 17, 2008, from http://www.kayseri.gov.tr/icerix.asp?catxid=3&ekrantip=true&ayrica=listegetir&menu=genelbilgi&fx=icerik&dbx=icerik&tx=posix&asx=T.C.%20Kayseri%20Valiliği%20&basx=Coğrafi%20Yapı.

Kayseri Valiliği (n.d.). *Nüfus ve İdari Yapı*. February 17, 2008, from http://www.kayseri.gov.tr/icerix.asp?catxid=4&ekrantip=true&ayrica=listegetir&menu=genelbilgi&fx=icerik&dbx=icerik&tx=posix&asx=T.C.%20Kayseri%20Valiliği%20&basx=Nüfus%20ve%20İdari%20Yapı.

Kirişçi, K. (1996). Is Turkey lifting the 'geographical limitation' – the November 1994 regulation on asylum in Turkey. *International Journal of Refugee Law, 8*(3), 293-318.

Kirişçi, K. (2001). UNHCR and Turkey: Cooperating for improved implementation of the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees. *International Journal of Refugee Law, 13*(1/2), 71-97.

Kirişçi, K. (2003). The question of asylum and illegal migration in European-Turkish relations. *Turkish Studies, 4*(1), 79-106.

Kohli, R. K. S. (2006). The sound of silence: Listening to what unaccompanied asylum-seeking children say and do not say. *British Journal of Social Work, 36*, 707-721.

Knörr, J. & Nunes, A. (2005). Introduction. In J. Knörr (ed.), *Childhood and Migration: from experience to agency* (pp. 9-23). USA and London: Transaction Publihers.

Kutlu, Z. Ü. (2002). Turkey as a waiting room: Ezperiences of refugees in Turkey. (Master Dissertation, The Middle East Technical University, 2002).

Lazich, M. C. (2004). Baha'i. In *the encyclopedia of religious rites, rituals, and festivals* (pp. 47-48). USA: Routledge.

Maegusuku-Hewett, T., Dunkerley, D., Scourfield, J., & Smalley, N. (2007). Refugee children in wales: Coping and adaptation in the face of adversity. *CHILDREN & SOCIETY, 21*, 309-321.

Mcauliffe, C. (2007). A home far away? Religious identity and transnational relations in the Iranian diaspora. *Global Networks, 7*(3), 307-327.

Martin, S. (2002). Averting forced migration in countries in transition. *International Migration, 40*(3), 25-40.

Mallon, E. D. (2006). Shiite Muslims the party of aly. *America the National Catholic Weekly, 194*(4), 18-21.

Mitchell, C. (2006). The religious content of ethnic identities. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 40*(6), 1135-1152.

Mostofi, N. (2003). The perplexity of Iranian-American identity. *The Sociological Quarterly, 44*(4), 681-703.

Mul, J. (2004). *The Tragedy of finitude: Dilthey's Hermeneutics of life*. London: Yale University Press.

Myers, K. (1999). National identity, citizenship and education for displacement: Spanish refugee children in Cambridge. *History of Education, 28*(3), 313-325.

Nasr, V. (2006). When the Shiite rise. *Foreign Affairs, 85*(4), 58-74.

Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. USA: Pearson Education. Inc.

The Online Etymology Dictionary (n.d.). *Refugee*. October 22, 2007, from http://216.239.59.104/search?q=cache:lmyYS_WVUmkJ:www.etymonline.com/index.php%3Fterm%3Drefugee+etymology+of+refugee&hl=tr&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=t.

Özkırımlı, U. (2000). *Theories of nationalism: A critical introduction*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Palmer, R. E. (1969). *Hermeneutics. Interpretation theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer.* USA: Northwestern University Press.

Phinney, S. P. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of research. *Psychological Bulletin, 108*(3), 499-514.

Prorok, C. V. (2002). Demographic religious minority populations since the Islamic Revolution. African and Asian Studies, 1(2), 63-86.

Resnik, J. (2006). Alternative identities in multicultural schools in Israel: Emancipatory identity, mixed identity and transnational identity. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 27*(5), 585-601.

Richard, Y. (1995). *Shi'ite Islam. Polity, ideology, and creed*. USA: Blackwell Publishers.

Rippin, A. (2005). *Muslims: Their religious beliefs and practices*. USA and Canada: Routledge.

Rutter, J. (2006). *Refugee Children in the UK*. England: Open University Press.

Shaw, I. & Gould, N. (2001). *Qualitative research in social work*. London: Sage Publishers.

Smith, A. D. (1991). *National identity*. England: Penguin Books

Smith, A. D. (1994). The origins of nation. In J. Hutchinson & A. D. Smith (Eds.), *Nationalism* (pp. 147-154). Great Britain: Oxford University Press.

Smith, A. D. (2001). *Nationalism: Theory, ideology, history*. Malden, Mass: Polity Press.

Smith, A. D. (2002). When is a nation. *Geopolitics, 7*(2), 5-32.

Simmel, G. (1950). *The sociology of Georg Simmel* (K. H. Wolff, Ed.). USA: The Free Press.

Sporton, D., Valentine, G., & Nielsen, K. B. (2006). Post conflict identities: Affiliations and practices of Somali asylum seeker children. *Children's Geographies, 4*(2), 203-217.

Stein, B. N. (1981). The refugee experience: Defining the parameters of a field of study. *International Migration Review, 15*(1/2), 320-330.

Sanasarian, E. (2000). *Religious minorities in Iran*. The United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Sterling, C. M., Walco, G. A. (2003). Protection of children's rights to self-detarmination in research. *ETHICS & BEHAVIOR, 13*(3), 237-247.

Tamer, M. (2007, September 15). Kayseri'de kabus gibi bir gün. *Milliyet*, from http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/09/15/yazar/tamer.html.

Thomassen, L. (2005). Heterogenity and justice: Borders and communities in Angellopoulos's Eternity and a Day. *Contemporary Justice Review, 8*(4), 381-395.

Tolson, J. (2005). The Shiite factor. *U.S. News & World Report, 138*(4), 24-28.

Türkiye Baha'i Toplumu. (n.d.). *External Relations*. February 17, 2008, from http://www.tr.bahai.org/Haberler/2006/01ekim.htm.

Türkiye Baha'i Toplumu. (n.d.). *News*. February 17, 2008, from http://www.tr.bahai.org/disiliski/2006/12mayis.htm.

UNITED NATIONS. (n.d.). *Youth*. January 21, 2008, from http://www.un.org/issues/m-youth.html.

UNHCR. (2001). *The wall behind which refugees can shelter*. 1-31. January 10, 2008, from http://www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/3b5e90ea0.pdf.

UNHCR. (2005). *Manual on mandate RSD*, 1-99.

UNHCR. (2006a). *Asylum in Turkey. UNHCR Turkey briefing note*.

UNHCR. (2006b). *Country operation plans in Turkey*. 1-5. December 12, 2007, from http://www.unhcr.org/home/RSDCOI/433a5d7b2.pdf.

UNHCR. (2007). *2006 Global Report: Turkey*. 1-6. February 17, 2008, from http://www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/4666d2693.pdf 1.

UNHCR. (n.d.). *The 1951 Convention questions & answers*. 1-20. January 26, 2008, from http://www.unhcr.org/basics/BASICS/3c0f495f4.pdf.

UNHCR. (n.d.). *Refugee children: Guidelines on protection and care*. 1-76. November 11, 2007, from http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3b84c6c67.pdf.

UNHCR. (n.d.). *The 1951 refugee convention.* 1-20. November 03, 2007, from http://www.unhcr.org/basics/BASICS/3b6917cf4.html#title2.

UNHCR (n.d.). *Basic facts*. November 08, 2007, from http://www.unhcr.org/basics.html.

UNICEF. (n.d.). *Convention on the rights of the child*. November 09, 2007, from http://www.unicef.org/crc/.

UNICEF. (n.d.). *Convention on the rights of the child: First part, articles 21-30*. November 09, 2007, from http://www.unicef.org/turkey/crc/cr23d.html.

UNICEF. (n.d.). *Unicef in Turkey: Country profile*. January 26, 2008, from http://www.unicef.org/turkey/ut/ut2_2010.html.

Vargas, C. M. (1999). Cultural mediation for refugee children: A comparative derived model. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 12*(3), 284-306.

Wimberley, D. W. (1989). Religion and role-identity: A structural symbolic interactionist conceptualization of religiosity. *Sociological Quarterly, 30*(1), 125-142.

World Childhood Foundation. (n.d.). *About childhood*. January 22, 2008, from http://www.childhood-usa.org/.

World Refugee Day. (2007, Summer). *Refugee Voices, 2*, 1-7.

Yegidis, B. L., & Weinbach, R. W. (2005). *Research Methods for Social Workers*. USA: Pearson Education. Inc.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

I. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

1. Age (Year of birth)

2. Gender

- Male
- Female

4. Place of birth & Year of Birth

	Year of Birth	Village	Town	Borough	City
Person					
Father					
Mother					
Sibling					
Sibling					
Sibling					
Sibling					
Sibling					
Others					

Others					
Others					
Others					

5. Educational background (Highest level of education which was completed)

	Unschooled	Primary School	Secondary School	High School	College	Other
Person						
Father						
Mother						

6. Are you going to school in Turkey?

- Yes
- No

7. Since when are you attending school?

8. If yes, which school are you going?

9. Which class are you in?

10. Occupation/Job of your mother and father

	Homeland Occupation	Homeland Job (last)	Current Job in Kayseri (if there is one)
Father			
Mother			

11. From which province or city of Iran did you come to Turkey?

12. Did you come directly to Turkey from Iran?

13. If not, where did you arrive first?

14. In which year and month did you come to Turkey?

15. Did you directly settle in Kayseri?

16. In which year did you settle in Kayseri?

17. If not, where did you settle?

18. Did you have a choice?

19. In terms of town quarter where do you live in Kayseri?

20. In terms of type of housing where do you live in Kayseri?

- In a house
- In an apartment
- In a hotel
- In a dormitory
- In street
- Other

21. Whom do you live with?

- By yourself
- With your family
- With your family + a few Iranian family
- With an Iranian family
- With a foreign family
- With a Turkish family
- Other

22. What religion are you affiliated with?

- Islam
- Christianity
- Judaism
- Bahaism
- No religious affiliation
- Other

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1) NATIONAL IDENTITY

- Description of interviewee's social lives in Iran.

  - Could you tell your daily life in Iran? (Recreation activities, schooling, friends, etc…)
  - Could you tell your neighborhood? (Home, the milieu that you reside, neighbors, human relations, etc…)
  - What is your favorite place in Iran? (Home, school, outdoors)
  - With whom do you spend your time in Iran mostly?

- Leaving home

  - Why did you leave Iran?
  - Narration of leaving story (Could you tell how you came to Turkey?)

- Life in Country of Residence - Kayseri

  - Could you tell about your daily life in Kayseri?
  - Thoughts on Kayseri (What are the things that you like in Kayseri? What are the things that you don't like in Kayseri? Do you have any advantages and disadvantages living in Kayseri? If yes, which one would you say is the most serious or most difficult for you? What kind of problems do you have? (housing, school, health, shopping, bureaucracy) How do you cope with problems in Kayseri? Would you like to be in another location in Turkey? If yes, where do you like to be and why?)
  - Do you feel yourself like at your home in Kayseri?
  - Could you describe your neighborhood in Kayseri? (Home, the milieu that you reside, human relations, etc…)
  - Ethnic composition of neighborhood (Where are your neighbors from? Do you spend time with your neighbors? How often do you see each other?)

- What is your favorite place in Kayseri? (Home, school, outdoors, etc…)
- With whom do you spend your time mostly in Kayseri?
- How do local people behave you?
- Do you have any relation to the local institutions in Kayseri? (municipality, mukhtar, local police, ASAM, UNHCR)
- If yes, what kind of relation do you have?
- Is there any institution which helps you in Kayseri? (in terms of acculturation of new milieu, financial problems, learning Turkish, housing, health, school, etc…)

- Acculturation Attitudes (Sociocultural Adaptation)

Language Proficiency and Language Use

- Which language do you speak at home?
- Do you have Iranian friends in Kayseri?
- If yes, which language do you speak with your Iranian friends outside the home?
- How well do you speak Turkish?
- How well do you read Turkish?
- How well do you understand Turkish?
- How well do you write Turkish?
- With whom do you speak Turkish?
- Where do you learn Turkish?
- Do you receive any help by institutions in terms of learning Turkish (like municipality, ASAM, governorship, etc…)
- Are you willing to learn Turkish?
- Do you run into any problem which derives from using of two languages?
- Can your parents speak Turkish?
- Can your parents read Turkish?
- Can your parents understand Turkish?
- Can your parents write Turkish?
- Which language do they speak with you at home?
- Do they encourage you to learn Turkish?

School

- Do you like going to school in Iran? Why?
- Do you go to school in Kayseri?
- Do you like going to school in Kayseri?
- If not, could you describe the reasons?
- What kind of problems do you encounter at school?
- Which one is the most serious for you?
- Who helps you to deal with your problems?

- Does your teacher help you deal with your problems at school?
- Is your teacher helpful to get used to new milieu?
- Do you follow the curriculum of ministry of education at school?
- If not, which curriculum do you follow?
- Which lessons are you studying?
- Are they similar to the courses in Iran?
- If yes, could you mention about the similarities?
- Which one do you like the most?
- What kind of activities do you engage in at school?
- What is your best friend's name at your school?
- Do you see each other except school?
- What kind of things do you do when you are together?
- Do you talk about Iran to your Turkish friends?
- If yes, what kind of things do you talk?
- Is it easy for you to make Turkish friends at school?
- Can you get on well with your schoolmates?

Friends (Ethnic and National Peer Contact)

- What is your best friend's name?
- Where does she/he live?
- If he/she outside Turkey, can you contact each other?
- How do you contact each other?
- What kind of things do you speak between each other?
- Do you join any social activity in Kayseri with your peers except school?
- If yes, where are your social activity peers from?
- With whom do you want to join the social activities? (with your ethnic group or nationals)
- Do you have Iranian or Turkish friends mostly in Kayseri?
- With whom do you spend your time mostly?
- With whom would you like to spend your time mostly?

• Cultural Identity

Cultural Traditions

- How important is it for you to be an Iranian?
- What comes to your mind when you think of Iran? (something makes you happy or something that make you unhappy)?
- Do you feel that you are part of Iranian culture?
- What festival comes to your mind when you think about Iran firstly?
- Can you celebrate the festival in Kayseri?
- If yes, where do & how do you celebrate?
- Which one do you prefer in Iran or Kayseri?
- What does the festival mean to you?

- Do your parents join any activity to strive to keep the Iranians cohesive in Kayseri?
- If yes, how often do they participate in?
- What kind of activity is it?
- If yes, can children participate in?

Means of Communication Habits

- Do you watch TV in Iran?
- What kind of programs do you watch? Do you like to watch?
- Do you watch TV in Kayseri?
- If yes, do you have chance watching Iranian TV programs?
- If yes, where do you watch? (On TV, on internet)
- What kind of programs do you watch?
- Do you watch Turkish TV programs?
- If yes, can you understand?
- What kind of programs do you watch?
- Do you use the internet in Kayseri?
- What is the purpose of using the internet?

Eating Habits

- Do you like eating Iranian food?
- Do you eat Iranian food in Kayseri?
- If yes, where do you eat?
- Do you like eating Turkish food?
- Which one do you prefer to eat?

Music

- Do you like listening to music?
- What kinds of music do you like listening?
- What is the content of the music that you like to listen?
- Do you like listening Iranian music?
- What is your favorite Iranian singer?
- What is the content of his/her music?
- Do you listen to Iranian music in Kayseri?
- Do you like listening to Turkish music?
- What is your favorite singer? Why?
- Can you understand what he/she is singing?

Literature

- Do you like reading books?
- What kinds of books do you like reading?
- What is your favorite author?
- Do you read Persian books in Kayseri?

- Do you read Turkish books?
- Could you tell the name of the books that you red in Turkish?

- Iran

  - Are you longing for home?
  - How often do you think about your life in Iran?
  - What are your favorite things in Iran? What are the things that you dislike in Iran?
  - What do you miss to do mostly in Iran?
  - Do you talk with your parents about Iran?
  - If yes, what kind of things do you talk mostly?
  - Do you get into touch with remaining family members in Iran?
  - If yes, how?
  - If you had a choice, where would you like to be?
  - Would you like to stay in Turkey?
  - If yes, why? If not, why?
  - If not, where would you like to go? Why?
  - What would you like to see happen in the future?

2) RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

- Religious engagement & Religious knowledge

  - How important religion is to you?
  - Do you know about your religion's basic principles? (Rules, rituals, symbols, holidays, festivals, celebration, etc…)
  - If yes, who teaches you about religion in Iran?
  - What kind of things did you learn?
  - Are you still learning about the principles of your religion?
  - Do your parents teach you about religion?
  - If yes, what kind of things do they teach?
  - Do you implement their teachings?
  - If yes, were you pleased to implement their teachings?
  - Do you implement the teaching of your religion in Iran&Kayseri?
  - If yes, what do you do to implement the teachings?
  - Do you fast?
  - What is the most important for you? (Being Iranian, Being Shi'i & Being Iranian, Being a Baha'i?
  -

- Devotionalism

  - Does your family follow religious rules?

- (Do your parents perform private religious practices in Iran?)
- Do they pray regularly in Iran?
- If yes, where do they pray?
- Do they pray at inside or outside the home (or mosque) mostly in Iran?
- (Do they participate in the performance of public religious practices in Iran?)
- Do they go to the mosque in Iran?
- Do they pray regularly in Kayseri?
- (Do they perform private religious practices in Kayseri?)
- If yes, where do they pray in Kayseri?
- Do they pray at in Kayseri mostly?
- Do they go to the mosque in Iran?
- If yes, which mosque do they go?
- If yes, are there any specific places to perform some of the significant rituals of your religion?
- Can they organize any religious meeting in Kayseri?
- If yes, what do they do in the religious meeting?
- If yes, do you participate?

• School

- Do you have any religion courses at school in Iran?
- What do you learn about religion at these courses?
- Do you have religion courses at your school in Kayseri?
- Do you share your faith with your classmates in Kayseri?
- If not, why?

• Getting in Touch with a Different Religion (BAHAI)

- Do you have any information about the religion in Turkey?
- If yes, from whom did you learn the information?
- Do you have a desire to learn about a different religion?

2) CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE

- Spare Time

    - How do you spend your free time in Iran?
    - Do you have recreational activities in Iran?
    - If yes, what type of recreational activities do you have?
    - Do you have time for play in Iran?
    - How do you spend your free time in Kayseri?
    - If yes, what type of recreational activities do you have?
    - Do you have time for play in Kayseri?
    - Are you charged with heavy responsibilities that prevent you to play in Kayseri?

- Friends

    - Do you have friends in Kayseri?
    - If yes, where are they from?
    - Do you have enough time to play together?
    - Do your friends help you deal with your problems in Kayseri?

- Child Responsibilities

    - Did you have any responsibility for the household in Iran? (taking care of siblings, cleaning, cooking, etc)
    - If yes, what kind of responsibilities do you have?
    - Do you help your mother with the housework in Iran?
    - Did the housework interfere with your education?
    - Do you have any responsibility for the household in Kayseri?
    - Do you help your mother with the housework in Kayseri?
    - Do you work to support your family in Kayseri? (the household economy)
    - If yes, where do you work?
    - Does the work interfere with your education?
    - Do you have siblings?
    - If yes, are you responsible to take care of?

- Children as mediator

    - Do you help your parents to get used to the new environment in Turkey?
    - What kind of help you provide?
    - Can your parents speak Turkish?

- If yes, how well do they speak?
- Do you interpret for them in case of necessity?

- Family Protection and Parental Responsibilities

  - Is your family able to provide a secure physical environment for you in Iran?
  - Is your family able to create home in the family despite the violent surroundings in Iran?
  - Could your family create a new home for you in Kayseri?
  - If not, what are the shortcomings?
  - Did the relation between you and your parents change in Turkey?
  - If yes, how?
  - Did the relation to your sibling change?
  - If yes, how?
  - Do you feel safe in Iran&Turkey?
  - If not, what are the reasons?
  - Are your parents able to provide you with adequate nutritious food and clean water in Iran&Turkey?
  - Are your parents able to provide you with health care facilities in Iran &Turkey?
  - Do your parents show enough interest to take care of you in Kayseri&Iran?
  - Do your family help you deal with your problems in Kayseri?
  - Do you spend your time together mostly in Iran or Kayseri?
  - Are there other things that I have not asked about that you would like to talk?