Turkish Police Cadets' Perception towards Foreigners (İsmail Cenk Demirkol)

The geographic location of Turkey makes it a very unique country for foreign nationals to enter or transit through legally and illegally. The illegal entry into Turkey is heightened due to political and economic instability in the neighboring countries. Every year, many illegal immigrants are apprehended and deported. Between 2000 and 2007, 560,852 illegal immigrants were caught by police gendarmerie, and/or the military in Turkey (MFA, 2010). Some of the early researchers stressed the necessity of the national awareness for the foreigners (Erder & Kaska, 2003). As Turkey is in the process of becoming a member of the European Union many of the conditions common to European nations are applicable, as is the case for all of its new members. One of these conditions relates to the requirement of border police units to control and monitor all entry and exit points in the country as the flow of illegal migrants has an impact on the flow of these populations to other European destinations. Therefore, Turkish National Police will be expected to play a bigger role in handling the illegal immigrant problem in the future.

The purpose of this study is to determine how candidates perceive migrants and migration related problems and whether or not they have a bias(es) against foreign immigrants. As line officers they will be the first contact officers for the immigrants; therefore, their use of discretion or enforcing the law may be different when considering their perceptions. To measure police cadets’ perceptions and test our hypotheses, we will conduct a self administrated internet based questionnaire with the police cadets in two police vocational schools. The questionnaire will be used to gain a broader understanding of xenophobia.