

Recruitment in the Turkish Police

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This article critically examines selection methods in the Turkish Police recruitment processes, and the nature of the formal and informal arrangements therein. Semi-structured interviews and secondary data techniques were used to collect the data analyzed. It was found that while the formal selection methods involve rigorous intelligence, medical, physical and background tests, there are a number of important “invisible” variables that shape the selection process. Although all Turkish citizens who meet the specified formal requirements officially have equal rights for recruitment to the police, discrimination on the basis of gender and political affiliation was found to be present, particularly relating to the police high schools and police academy.

Keywords: Police; Police selection; Recruitment; Turkish police; Recruitment requirements

Introduction

This article investigates, explains and critically discusses recruit selection methods in the Turkish Police.¹ Recruitment is the first step into an occupation. However, recruitment in general and police recruitment in particular has been the subject of only intermittent attention. The fields of public administration, law, psychology, sociology, psychiatry, medical sciences, criminology, policing, behavioural sciences, and so on have all contributed concepts and theories to the development of the recruitment methods and processes of professions. However, it is difficult to say that these contributions are well integrated into a general theory of recruitment, particularly for the police profession.

The literature on the recruitment process of police, remains as Poland (1978: 374–393) stated, of variable quality, ranging from speculative theorizing to sophisticated testing of theory in empirical studies. Some studies (Cohen & Chaiken, 1972; Kayode, 1973; Topp & Kardash, 1986) try to find a relationship between certain background characteristics of police officers and measures of job performance, while

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others (Ross, 1964; Manyak, 1975) examine background characteristics without any attempt to relate these characteristics to measures of performance (Poland, 1978: 374).

The discussion in this article is based on two main sources of data. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten senior bureaucrats who had been involved in the recruitment process of recruits and taken part in examining boards. Additional secondary data were obtained from the departments and educational institutions of the General Directorate of Security (GDS).

It is known that as the population has expanded, so the main governmental services have grown significantly. In Turkey, this situation has contributed to law enforcement agencies using formal selection methods when recruiting new candidates. This is because they are competing with other potential employers for personnel, but also because of the necessary specialization and professionalization in policing. Given the importance of the police force for the maintenance of social and legal order and the security of the people and the state, the purpose of the police selection process is to ascertain which candidates have the highest potential for developing into successful police officers (Poland, 1978: 374). Personnel selection in law enforcement is important, therefore, not only for organizational effectiveness, but also for the protection of other police officers and the general public (Topp & Kardash, 1986: 3).

The effectiveness of a law enforcement organization rests to a large extent on its ability to adequately select, train and supervise its personnel (Colarelli & Siegel, 1964: 287). Therefore, ascertaining which applicants have the highest potential for developing into successful police officers is a common concern for all police organizations, regardless of political and bureaucratic structure. For example, a worldwide survey by the United Nations (1992: 24) shows that almost all countries specify some sort of fitness and minimum height requirements that are usually different for men and women. They also tend to specify minimum and maximum weight, a minimum educational level, require a medical/psychiatric examination, physical agility test, psychological test, background check, and so forth. Some countries also require an IQ test. Additional criteria may include citizenship, single marital status, no criminal convictions, completed military service, good vision with no glasses, no colour-blindness, driving licence, ability to swim, loyalty to the state, loyalty to socialist system, and so. Furthermore, nearly all police organizations require persons who meet these criteria to take and pass a civil service examination. These examinations are basically general intelligence (aptitude) tests and mostly biased in favour of the recruitment policy of the related organization (see DuBois & Watson, 1950; Colarelli & Siegel, 1964; Spencer & Nicholas, 1971; Kent & Eisenberg, 1972; Gray, 1975; Lefkowitz, 1977; Spielberger, 1979; Wroblewski & Hess, 2000; Habersfeld, 2003). Thus although every single police organization has its own selection methods or criteria, the ultimate aim of them all is to find the most appropriate candidate for the job. In common with other professions, recruitment has a major effect on overall effectiveness (Hunter & Schmidt, 1983). Despite this,

there has been no basic research undertaken in the field of police personnel selection in Turkey.

In the light of the importance of the police function for the maintenance of social order, the procedures employed in the recruitment and selection of police officers require evaluation in terms of their structure and consequences. This is the focus of the current article—to investigate the structure of the recruitment process in the Turkish police organization, General Directorate of Security (GDS). The article does not develop a set of recommendations about the “best” procedure for selecting police officers. Rather, it addresses the following questions: How does the Turkish police organization select new cadets? From what sources do they come? According to what criteria is the selection of recruits done? Is it possible to point out a specific internal structure and policy, if there is one, in this process? What or who determines the composition and operation of the examining board? On which subjects are the questions asked in examinations? Is there any discrimination regarding sex, race, religion or ethnic origin among the applicants?

The Sources of Recruitment

Three main routes are available to those wishing to join the Turkish police. These are police school, police high school and police academy. Police schools educate and train ordinary police officers. Police high schools train and prepare students for police academy, which educates and trains the middle- and higher-level police officers and administrators. These schools are boarding and uniformed educational and training institutions, financed and controlled by the GDS in order to educate and train new recruits. Every year, the quota and the number of new cadets or students who will be recruited to each institution are determined by the GDS.

Police School

There are 25 police schools located in different cities across Turkey. The selection procedure for new recruits is standardized across all police schools in the country. In order to apply for examination, candidates have to first complete their documents.² They can then apply to the directorates of the police schools. In order to be able to apply for the examination, an applicant has to fulfil and meet the requirements³ of application. After a general evaluation, qualifying applicants are called for examination. The types and contents of examinations are determined and prepared by the Education Department of the GDS, Ankara. The examining boards are formed by the GDS from among senior bureaucrats, such as Directors and Head Commissars, Commissars or Vice Commissars. Recently, a medical doctor or a psychologist, if available, is included in the board at the second—interview—stage of examination. However, psychological tests are not employed in the recruitment process generally (see, for details, Gultekin, 2001).

There are different stages of examination in police schools. Only those who pass the first hurdle are able to go on to the second. The first stage is the interview.

During interviews, applicants are evaluated and assessed in terms of their speech, health and physical vision, and fitness, self-confidence, comprehension and expressive ability. Successful applicants then have to take a physical fitness examination. After physical agility tests, a written examination is taken by those applicants who successfully completed the previous test. This examination includes a general intelligence (aptitude) test and questions related to the principles of Ataturk, the founder of the country, and the history of the Ataturk revolution, basic civics, the geography of Turkey, Turkish culture and civilization, Turkish composition (writing) and mathematics. Applicants are assessed as successful from the top grade down until the quota is reached.

Failed applicants have no right of appeal to the authorities regarding interview and physical agility test results. However, they may object to the written examination result with a petition (written application) made within three days following the announcement of results to applicants. Successful applicants have to get a health report, which is specified by the related bylaw. After that, the new recruits are sent to the police school nearest to their home. The two-year education and training programme, prepared and determined by the Education Department and approved by the GDS, is applied in all police schools in the country. In order to be appointed as an ordinary police officer, recruits are expected to be successful in all their examinations. Failed recruits have the right to one "make-up" examination. At the end of this examination, if the recruit is still unsuccessful, she or he is discharged. Successful recruits are eligible to hold an ordinary police officer post anywhere in Turkey.

Police High School

Police high school students are recruited after graduation from primary school (8 years of education) at the age of 14 to 15. Until the 2003–2004 school year, only boys were recruited. The length of education is four years. In the first year, students attend a preparatory course in a foreign language (English, French and German). After the first year of foreign language education, science is the dominant subject. From the second year to the end of schooling, a Turkish instruction programme, which also includes a foreign language course, is studied. There were five police high schools in 1992, but this number has steadily decreased to one in 1996, which is located in Ankara.

People meeting the requirements for application and who want to apply for entry to examinations complete the same documents as those required for police school applicants. Only a primary school diploma or its ratified copy is additionally needed. The same conditions stipulated for police schools' applicants are required of applicants to police high school.

Students who wish to pursue a career in the police force through police high school, and who meet the application requirements for examination, must first make their application to the Ministry of National Education (MNE). All applicants have to take a written examination organized by the MNE. This examination includes a

combination of questions related to Turkish language, science and foreign language aptitude. The number of successful applicants is determined according to the same quota system as used in the police schools' recruitment process. Successful applicants are called for further examination by the examining board, involving an interview and physical agility test. The examining board is formed by GDS from senior police bureaucrats and schoolteachers. Applicants who are successful attend a 15-day induction course that includes various information related to police high school and education. After that, potential new recruits have to apply with their documents to the directorate of the police high school to be registered as full-time students.

Students graduating from the police high school have to take the Police Academy Entrance Examination. This is exactly the same examination applied to students graduating from non-police high school who wish to be students of the Police Academy. The successful students have the right to be registered at the Academy. Others have four options: (1) to re-enter the academy entrance examination every year, for up to three years; (2) to repay all expenses incurred during their education and go their own way; (3) to work in the police force as an ordinary police officer; or (4) to register in a university recommended by the GDS by taking a university entrance examination. Those who prefer the last option are also financed by the GDS during their higher education. At the end, they have to work in the police organization (i.e., compulsory service to the police organization).

Police Academy

There is only one police academy in Turkey, located in Ankara. It provides four years of education and training at college level. Students of the Academy are recruited from police high school graduates (around 75 per cent) and other high school graduates. People who meet the requirements for application and want to apply for examination complete exactly the same documents as police school applicants. Furthermore, applicants also have to be Turkish citizens and, until fairly recently, male. Females were not recruited to the Academy until the 1991-1992 academic year. Applicants should not be married or living with a partner without a marriage contract; should not have been punished or imprisoned for any kind of crime; should not have been discharged from any school which she or he attended for moral and discipline reasons; should not have been sued for any crime at the time of application; and should not have any impediment to joining a security organization after investigation into the applicant or the applicant's family members.

Students who wish to pursue a career in the police force through the Police Academy make their application to the Police Academy directorate. The examining committee is formed by the GDS from senior bureaucrats such as security directors, and from among the teaching staff of the Academy. The committee consists of between four and six members, including the chairperson. After a general evaluation, appropriate applicants are called for a series of examinations, including an interview, physical agility test and written examinations. The procedure in all examinations is more or less the same as the procedure applied to the police schools' applicants.

Rights of appeal and procedures for failed applicants are the same as in the police school. Successful applicants then take an induction course where their health is examined, and all their expenses are met by the police academy. After this, the recruits are conditionally registered in the Academy. Once their security inquiries (background check) are positively completed, recruits have the right to apply to the Academy for full registration.

The Police Academy runs an education and training programme prepared and determined by the Education Department, with the intention that it be of a similar standard to other universities. This is also in line with wider plans for educating and training new recruits in a broad range of fields relevant to policing. Therefore, the contents of courses vary from sociology to law, from human rights to forensic sciences. The examination and assessment system of students is similar to the system in other universities. Students also take an applied occupational training programme (four weeks) in the summer vacation every year. The length of education and training in the Academy is four full academic years.

In order to be appointed to a post, a recruit must have graduated from the Academy. Failed recruits have a right to one "make-up" examination for each course. At the end of any examination, if the recruit is still unsuccessful, she or he has to repeat the course that was failed. Graduates are appointed to the Vice-Commissar post, which is the first rank of police administrative posts, by drawing lots. If there are any discharged or unsuccessful students, then they have to reimburse all expenses back to the GDS, or to accept work as an ordinary police officer.

Main Requirements of the Recruitment Process

The recruitment requirements for police personnel in police educational institutions in Turkey are ostensibly the same, except for differences in age and education levels. These are as follows: citizenship; education; age; height (for police school and Police Academy only); health; appearance; and successful background investigation, including the absence of a felony record and presence of good character. These are detailed below.

Citizenship

This requirement mostly reflects widespread beliefs about who should be eligible for public employment and applies to most governmental institutions and organizations (Blum, 1964: 50). In terms of police work, it may also reflect a need for loyalty to the country and political system, together with beliefs about the need to prevent conflict, protect people, provide social order and peace in society, and support equal opportunities for all citizens. In this sense, it is reasonable for a sovereign state to set conditions in its own employment policies. The nature of police work may even need more specification and restriction.

The interviews conducted with senior bureaucrats involved in examining new recruits have showed there is agreement among them about the necessity of

restrictions and of the citizenship requirement for police officers. They have stated that no citizen of another country could be as loyal to Turkey as its own citizens. They have agreed that police forces should share information on specific areas such as terror, smuggling and similar criminal activities, as well as technology and developments in policing, but recruiting non-citizens to the force was found to be unacceptable.

Age

In Turkey, like all police organizations, the age limits of ordinary (plain) police officers are consistent with the age when people acquire full legal rights and responsibilities: 18 years of age. According to the interview data, the average Turkish police applicant is relatively young, about 22 to 25 years of age.

Education

Like many other agencies, the Turkish police requires a certain level of educational attainment, which is set by law. Each police educational institution requires a different education level. According to the regulation introduced in 1984, the minimum education level required for an ordinary police officer's post was at least high school graduation. Since 2001–2002, it is now two years of college education. For administrative posts, officers have to have a university degree either from the police academy or from another university.

It is apparent that the educational standard for police recruits cannot be considered apart from the broader issues of police respectability and police image. The required level of educational attainment reflects, at least to some degree, the educational level of the general public, which is rising steadily. Police work cannot be maintained properly by officers who have low educational attainment in a society where the general educational achievement level is relatively high (see SIS, 2003b). The police officer who has to work with and for members of the community will not command respect or perform his or her task satisfactorily unless their educational achievements are at least equal to the average citizen with whom they will be in contact (Blum, 1964: 15). There has been a concerted effort by the GDS to establish a good image of the police service in Turkey. However, it is obvious that the diploma itself is not evidence that police officers will perform their daily duties and responsibilities properly. The quality of education and training is as important as educational attainment. Unfortunately, there are no scientific studies on the evaluation of educational and training programmes that have been applied and taught in the police educational institutions in Turkey.

Height

Law sets the minimum height of candidates in the Turkish police organization at 1.65m for women and 1.67m for men. There are additional restrictions on age and

weight for new recruits. However, both increasing internal and external migration, and developments in the quality and diversity of criminal activities increasingly require more flexibility in these areas. Increasing complexity and diversity of criminal activities in areas such as organized crime, financial crime, smuggling, terrorism and international crimes makes the intelligence and the ability of officers to conduct successful investigations more relevant than body measurements. This flexibility is also a consequence of the recent developments in non-discriminatory policies, equal opportunities and the necessity of recruiting people from ethnic minorities.

Health Standards and Appearance

The Turkish police requires a minimum standard of health based upon an underlying assumption that police work requires particular physical and psychological capacities. In order to be appointed to a post, the recruit must obtain a health certificate from an authorized hospital. During the recruitment process, an appointed board judges each recruit's appearance, including their expression, dress, speech and personal qualities. The senior bureaucrats interviewed stated that they concentrate on a few important points during the interview. These are: (1) whether the applicant is a person they want to employ and allow to work in the police force; (2) whether the individual is capable of doing police work; and (3) whether the applicant will give a good image of police to the public. These points may be accepted as inevitable in a selection process. However, it is easy for interviewers to err in the judgements they make. Judgements of appearance and an oral interview, as Blum (1964: 65) stated, are also affected by our own personal idiosyncrasies and problems. Preconceptions, fears and unresolved personal problems may distort the judgements made. When those judgements are part of the selection process, any such distortions weaken the selection process.

Background Investigations

The last main requirement of the Turkish police recruitment process is the background investigation of the candidate and his or her close relatives. This involves a systematic collection of facts and opinions from persons who have known the applicant, or who have custody of the records of the applicant's past performance (Blum, 1964: 157). Such an investigation features in the recruitment process of many public institutions in many countries, particularly those involved in security.

According to the interviewees in this study, the background investigation has at least four main aims. The first and main objective is to prevent the organization from recruiting a person who will prove unqualified, especially in terms of them having any criminal convictions. The interviewees were unanimously agreed that although the results of other tests and examinations are important, the most valuable part of the recruitment process is the background investigation. They justified their view on the basis that the statements of neighbours, employers, teachers and others

provided clues to the past behaviour of an applicant and are the "mirror of the applicant's personality". The second purpose of background checks is to gather similar data about the close relatives of the applicant. The third is to learn how the candidate has behaved under a wide variety of circumstances and from this to predict their future performance as a police officer. The final purpose is to verify all of the statements the applicant has made in their application.

The bureaucrats interviewed stated that the investigation of the personal history of an applicant greatly assists the examining board in selecting the best and most appropriate recruits from those who are interested and appear to be qualified, and helps to prevent the organization from making bad mistakes. However, it should be recognized that this idea presumes the unchanging nature of personal characteristics—the premise is that adult human behaviour is constant. However, it is not exactly known and proven how characteristics of human personality change across different situations. In an attempt to overcome such disadvantages, the GDS may employ specialists such as sociologists, psychologists, social workers and psychiatrists in the recruitment process. Some of the possible problems with the background investigation in the recruitment process of the organization will be discussed in the following section.

Discussion

The preceding analysis has illuminated several major problems with the Turkish police recruitment process. The first concerns the lack of a job description. Interviews show that there is no clear definition of the job that police officers are charged to do in the Turkish police force. Police have many duties to perform, including enforcing the articles and verdicts of 318 laws, 77 rules-regulations (*tuzuk*), 299 bylaws (directions—*yonetmelik*) and 42 codes (instructions, directions—*yonerge*) (Emniyet Genel Mudurlugu, 1996: 1–54; Caglar, 2003: 417). In order to produce an appropriate personnel selection method, one should know first what a police officer does (Blum, 1964: 46), what they are required to do, how they can do it, what abilities and skills are needed and the boundaries where a police officer's job starts and ends. The law provides some general descriptions and explanations, but given the fast structural changes in society, these will not be sufficient to build an appropriate recruitment standard and policy.

Although the complex rank and departmental structure of the GDS causes many problems in specifying the job description of a police officer, without it, it will be difficult to say what qualifications a police officer must have in order to do their job well. If the police officer's job is well described and explained, it is easy to determine what minimum capacities and qualifications are required to allow all recruits to work anywhere and anytime in the police organization. To solve such a problem, each department could perform an analysis of each role. The results of these can be compared and combined by a professional recruitment board, then the basic requirements, qualifications and capacities of recruits may be determined. In other words, the next step is to derive standards based upon this job description and

analysis. Such an approach may enable the selection of the most appropriate recruits for the job. The organization will definitely benefit in the long term.

The second problem in the recruitment process arises from the background investigation of applicants' relatives, a necessary and important tool in the field of police personnel selection. Most of the interviewed senior officers stated that they have doubts about the background investigation process. They reported that "night guards", a supplementary force to police officers who work at night and have just secondary school education (8 years in total), mostly do these investigations and, in some cases, write their reports in their offices without questioning the applicant's contacts.

Although police officers have to conduct investigations on a daily basis, a gap exists between this work and the recruit background investigation that is often carried out by untrained, inexperienced and non-professional officers who can and do decide most issues on the basis of their personal experience, attitudes, emotional reactions and political preferences. An officer who has not had sufficient training and knowledge, and lacks the necessary abilities and experience, may unconsciously eliminate all applicants except those who reflect his or her own concept of "the ideal" or satisfactory candidate. In addition, the officer may investigate more thoroughly some individuals who do not measure up to his or her standards until sufficient facts are available to disqualify them (Blum, 1964: 175; Ross, 1964). Therefore, it would be preferable that professionals whose loyalties to the police organization and the code of ethics of law enforcement have been adequately proven be used in the process of background investigation. Although such a process might be more expensive in comparison to the present one, the police organization and Turkish society are likely to benefit in the long term.

In the Turkish police, the background investigator is assigned to make all necessary checks and interviews to determine the qualifications of the applicant. Regardless of the results of examinations, if the background (security) investigation or oral interview of an applicant is negative, she or he has no chance to be recruited as a student to any police educational institutions, nor to re-apply for another examination. In one sense, the investigator has the power of the examining board. Therefore, she or he should clearly have the ability to understand that the facts of past behaviour will be the foundation for predicting future behaviour. They should also have the ability to discriminate between what is and what is not important according to the published criteria and unwritten standards of the organization.

While this general description of the investigator may be sufficient to establish an understanding of the need for careful selection for the task, his or her training is a matter of additional importance. As such, the investigator should receive additional training through reading, discussion and formal education if they do not have it when assigned to the task. They should also have sound fundamental knowledge concerning the nature of emotional maturity, social dynamics, and the different cultural groups and their values in society.

As a process, the background investigation has some imperfections. The most obvious being its dependence upon the exercise of subjective judgements by investi-

gators and the examining board, which gives them the ultimate verdict when recruiting a candidate. There are many issues for research in this field. One of the most important developments will be the production of a set of written standards that can be applied in evaluating the background and personal history of those interested in police employment. When developed, it will assist the police to further refine their dedicated interest in the exercise of fair employment practices in this professional field.

The content of civil service examinations and the objectivity of the oral interview procedure pose another problem in the recruitment process. First of all, the civil service examination is not directly related to the police service when its content is analyzed. Notwithstanding this, it is one of the main examinations in the recruitment process, and has an important effect on the recruitment of ordinary police officers. It eliminates a large number of applicants, and there is therefore a danger of rejecting applicants who would possibly be well qualified for police work.

The senior police officials interviewed were asked to give their opinion on the objectivity of the recruitment process, particularly the oral interview. Although police school applicants have a right to object to the results of the written examination, they do not have the right to object to the results of the oral interview; which in reality is the final verdict of the Board. This gives an unquestionable power to the Board.⁴ The following interview note explains the process:

Another problem, the senior officer who has the highest rank in the exam commission is much more influential on decision-making regarding applicants. All members of the commission do not discuss the decision in detail. The lower rank officers do not and cannot object to the decision of a higher rank officer, although they were told to do so. You know, there is a strict hierarchy in our profession. It is not easy for a lower rank officer to challenge a decision of a higher rank officer. The commission members are also forced and influenced by non-members senior officers about some candidates in order to make them successful. Yes, this is very bad, but a reality we have to accept.
(A.E.)

Although all Turkish citizens have equal rights to apply to become a police officer, questions remain about the objectivity of the recruitment process. The senior police officials interviewed claimed that recruitment is based completely on merit and the policy is to recruit the best applicant in terms of qualifications. They also agreed about the need for objectivity in all examinations, which constitute the main measurement and screening instruments for the recruitment process in the Turkish police force. However, two of them gave the following very interesting explanations:

I never trust these exams. Do you think it is possible to evaluate an applicant in terms of his or her speech, comprehension, expressive abilities and his or her vision just in 30 seconds in an interview? Yes, just in 30 seconds. ... We are fortune-tellers. We are the cleverest people, you know! So in half a minute we do all these jobs. (A.A.)

Actually, to be honest, we did something wrong. The streets show this to us. The bad image and aggressive behaviours of police officers proved that we did something wrong. We evaluate an applicant during the interview just in about 30–45 seconds. But

we have to. Because, every year almost 30,000 people apply for the job. What can we do? We cannot do anything else if the exam regulations are not changed. (A.E)

These quotations recognize the fact that candidates who are less likely to control their inner impulses or to structure their behaviour in an orderly way are not suitable for policing. A police officer, as a law enforcement agent, is expected to be capable of controlling their impulses, instincts and personal feelings when performing his or her duty. That is why many police organizations throughout the world use psychological and psychiatric tests during recruitment in an attempt to select the most appropriate candidates. In Turkey, unfortunately, no such tests are used. They were simply not seen as a necessity, and there was no external expert in the recruitment panel board until recently. This means, for example, that if a candidate is shorter by only 0.1cm than the required 1.67m, he has no chance to be recruited as a police officer, no matter how capable he is of doing the job. It is presumed that candidates who were not able to control their personal feelings, instincts and impulses, and were not suitable for the job, were nevertheless recruited. For example, the data gathered from GDS show that 39,608 police officers had a discipline inquiry held against them in the last three years because of violating occupational rules and law. At the end of the inquiry, 942 of them were discharged from their post. In 2001, 18,643 (10.8 per cent) police officers and, in 2002, 13,806 (8.1 per cent) police officers were disciplined for their non-professional and law-violating behaviour. These figures suggest there are problems in the selection of appropriate candidates.

Another problem relates to discrimination among the applicants. As explained earlier, senior bureaucrats were of the opinion that there was/is no discrimination among the applicants in terms of their religious and ethnic background, or on the basis of their gender. Despite these protestations, female students were not recruited to police high school and the Police Academy until recently. The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, and so on in the recruitment and employment practices of the organization. However, although the researcher was not able to question the interviewees about religious or ethnic discrimination, the secondary data show that there was discrimination on the basis of the ethnic background of applicants until 1995. Turkish citizens whose ethnic backgrounds were Greek, Armenian or Jewish had no right of application to join the police. This applied also to non-Turkish people who were granted full citizenship. However, increasingly close relationships with the European Community forced the former government to abolish this article and to grant every Turkish citizen the right of application in 1995. Despite this change in official policy, it seems that this tradition is not going to change in respect of background investigations and interviews in the near future.

Discrimination on the basis of the gender of applicants was raised during the research interviews. All interviewees, except one, were unclear in their opinions. Mostly they avoided the topic and did not accept the possibility of discrimination on the basis of an applicant's gender. They stated that the number of male or female recruits is determined solely according to the GDS quota number. However, one

interviewee did finally accept that they had been involved in a process where discrimination on the basis of gender had occurred. He made the following statement:

Yes, there is officially no discrimination in terms of gender of applicants. To be honest, we, the selection committee, sometimes make a discrimination between male and female applicants. Because, as you know, policing is not totally a man's job—in some areas we need policewomen. It is a dangerous and life-risky job. Women are not being sent to dangerous police work; they mostly work in offices even though they get exactly the same salary as their male colleagues. They also have the pregnancy problem. Policing is a job that you have no day or night time differentiation. You are always supposed to be on duty. Therefore, we do not want to recruit so many women. It is obvious that police work, I do not know other countries well, but in Turkey's conditions, is not an appropriate job for women. We, the selection committee, sometimes have a real problem in the interviewing of female applicants. In fact we do not want to recruit them, but officially we have no right to bar them. To make them unsuccessful, we ask some really illogical and difficult questions. However, some of them are really very intelligent and they answer our questions properly. This situation really causes problems during the recruitment process. However, if there is a definite quota, we have to recruit them. (H)

Figures from January 2004, gathered from the GDS, show that although the total number of male officers is 159,000, female officers make up only 9,000 (5.3 per cent) of the police organization. There are only 10 female students (1.6 per cent) in police high school, whereas the number of male students is 595. There are only 39 female students (3.6 per cent) versus 1,028 male students in the Police Academy⁵ and 896 female students (7.7 per cent) versus 10,724 male students in police schools.

It is clear that police work has historically been men's work, but where manpower shortages exist, developments in equal opportunities have compelled police forces to recruit women across the world. However, in the Turkish case, there remains informal resistance to allowing women to fully participate in policing. There are many aspects of policing where a woman's presence may be advantageous—for example, searching women; dealing with domestic violence, child criminals and female criminals; and working in some undercover policing duties.

It seems therefore, that there is an informal aspect to the Turkish police recruitment process that may discriminate against applicants on the basis of their political preferences and gender. Although there is a strict examination and investigation process, primary emphasis has been on the development of personnel after their entry into the force. Almost all efforts and resources of the GDS are channelled toward this goal, failing to keep in mind that a satisfactory finished product is possible only when you have sufficient raw material. However, the senior bureaucrats interviewed blamed the state for their inability to recruit high-quality personnel. They stated that it is difficult to attract the most appropriate people for the job because of the lack of economic opportunities in the profession. Many applicants apply to become police officers because they cannot find another job; not because they see police work as their first choice of career (see, for more information, Icelli, 1977, 1987; Caglar, 1994: Chapter V; Ozcan & Caglar, 1994).

One of the most important deficiencies regarding the Turkish police recruitment process concerns recruitment of the children of people who are covered by Law 2330, the Law on Giving Compensation and Paying Monthly Salary (*Nakdi Tazminat Verilmesi ve Aylık Bağlanması Hakkında Kanun*). Since 1993, the children of public servants, and police officers in particular, who were killed on duty (called "martyrs"—*shhit*), have been recruited to the police force without any examination or with a very low grade (half of that required of other candidates). No other conditions for height and weight were required, and they were given a two-year "tolerance" or advantage on the required age limit. Although this system has been partly restricted since 2000, the Law is still valid and such applicants still have the privilege of relatively lower grade requirements in comparison to other applicants. It is obvious that this is a privilege for those people identified above and a violation of equality for other Turkish citizens. In spite of restricted usage, the continuing validity of the Law means that there is always a possibility to enforce it.

In addition, from 1995 to 2001, there was another even more serious and dangerous way of recruiting incapable and unqualified candidates to the police force—a process of exempted recommendations. The Minister of Internal Affairs had three quotas for each police school, and the under-secretary and General Director of Security each had two. Each of them had the right to ask the school's directors that their recommended candidates be accepted into the school and that they be exempt from any of the normal application requirements. Seven such recommendations per police school for the 25 police schools throughout Turkey resulted in 175 potentially incapable and unqualified police recruits being accepted every single year. It should not be forgotten that these quotas are an official right granted to these three high-level administrators. This phenomenon was in addition to any "unofficial instructions" issued.

Research documents that of the people who benefit from Law 2330, approximately 800 are accepted into Turkey's police force every year by irregular channels. This amounts to 8 per cent of all recruits annually and may be seen as a form of nepotism. This process potentially encourages corruption in the policing system and is a violation of the constitutional rights of every Turkish citizen. The Turkish Constitution clearly states that "no one has right to have any kind of privileges and every Turkish citizen is equal with regards to Law".

When the regional and provincial backgrounds of police officers within the organization are reviewed, it is obvious that officers are recruited mostly from the provinces where the number of votes and political representatives (Members of Parliament) of the right-wing political parties are much higher (for more information, refer to Caglar, 1994: Chapter 5; SIS, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2003a). A weekly nationwide news magazine (*Nokta*) carried out a small-scale inquiry into police recruitment in 1990, finding that religious affiliation was the main requirement. Furthermore, religion was also very important in determining promotion prospects (*Nokta*, 1990). This approach seems to have waned during recent years, with Turkey becoming an increasingly secular country.

Taken together, these events and processes demonstrate that the Turkish police

force has a particular political disposition. For example, in a demonstration in Tunceli, police officers used the finger symbol of the extreme nationalist National Action Party and protested against the governor (who was appointed by the centre-right coalition government) accusing him of being a 'communist governor' (Duzgoren, 1996: 8). In addition, the police demonstrations that were unlawfully carried out in Istanbul on 12 December 2000, and in Adana, Gaziantep, Bursa, Mersin and Antalya provinces on 13 December 2000, also demonstrated the same occupational culture and political orientation. Overall it seems that the negative image of the Turkish police, both nationally and internationally, is an outcome of the conflict between a formal set of procedures that are in line with best practice internationally and the vestiges of a system reliant upon subjective informal procedures.

Given that this is the case, the recruitment process in the Turkish police organization seems to be inefficient and unproductive, and it might be time to reconsider recruitment policy. The quality and effectiveness of the police service starts with its recruitment. Therefore, research programmes, drawing upon the international research literature, should be established to identify the techniques and methods that will best aid the GDS in procuring recruits. As has been discussed, the selection criteria, methods and instruments used in the recruitment process have never been challenged in Turkey. In other words, the validity and reliability of recruitment method and procedures have never been subject to sustained scrutiny. By accepting and meeting this challenge, both the police organization and Turkish society will benefit.

Notes

- [1] The Republic of Turkey has a national police organization, the General Directorate of Security (GDS). A general director (the highest rank in the organization) commands the GDS from its headquarters in Ankara, and is responsible for general administration. The Turkish system of law enforcement is built on a subordinating chain of command. The overall chain of command is divided into units or sections so that different precincts or squads are immediately responsible to a localized authority. The functional divisions of the departments follow the kinds of activities they handle, such as uniformed patrol, traffic patrol, investigate work, undercover work, terrorism, foreign refugees, foreign affairs, crime prevention, data processing, archive, fiscal matters, smuggling and narcotics, and so on. This highly centralist model of hierarchy controls the organization from top to bottom. The GDS receives its funding from the general budget through the budget of Ministry of Interior Affairs. For administrative purposes, the Republic of Turkey is divided into 81 provinces. The GDS organized and established the directorate of city security in all cities (provinces) and the directorate or authority of town security (*Ilce Emniyet Mudurlugu* or *Amirliigi*) in 728 towns (Caglar, 2003: 404). The total number of police stations in Turkey, including border police points, was 1,414 in January 2004 (see also Sahin, 2001).
- [2] These documents are: petition (written application), national identity card or its ratified copy, high school or equivalent diploma or its ratified copy, the document that details the military service situation, the document that contains biographical information, six photographs pictured from the front and the document certifying the grade obtained on the University Entrance Examination.

- [3] These requirements are: Turkish citizenship; graduation from high school or equivalent; aged 18 to 23 on 1 January of the examination year (the age limitation is 25 for university graduates); at least 1.65m tall for women and 1.67m for men; the standard of health stipulated in the bylaw; not known to indulge in drunkenness and gambling; not engaged in socioculturally low and inferior jobs; not married or living with a foreigner (non-Turkish citizen); not engaged in illegal political activities, anarchy and terrorist events; although negligence crimes are excluded, not previously imprisoned with hard labour (*agir hapis*) or more than 6 months or not punished or sued for any criminal events such as crimes against the state or embezzlement (*zimmet*), pilferage (*ihtilas*), corruption (*irtikap*), bribery (*rusvet*), theft (*hirsizlik*), swindling/fraud (*dolandiricilik*), falsification (*sahtekarlik*), misuse of religious faith, fraudulent bankruptcy (*dolayli iflas*), smuggling excluding using and consuming smuggling (*istimal ve istihlak kacakciligi*), depravity in official (state) adjudication (*ihale*) and purchase-sale; no impediments to joining a security organization according to investigation (background check) of family members; and no military service problem at the starting date of education programme. Almost all these criteria are also required for the applicants of police high schools and the Police Academy.
- [4] The Board is composed of at least five members: one four-star Security Director, who is generally the Director of the School where the examination takes place; one Personnel Office staff member, being in charge and sent by GDS from Ankara; and three Commissars, of head, commissar and assistant commissar rank, from the local office. If any GDS staff member who is a psychologist is available, they may be asked to be a member of the Board. The Board is called the "Examination Board". The four-star Security Director, who is the highest in rank of the Board members, chairs the Board. Members of commissions may be changed for the next examination period, but again they have to be GDS staff. Theoretically, all members have one vote and are equal in taking decisions. However, the highest ranked person may informally overrule the others because of the hierarchical structure of the organization.
- [5] There were also 195 male and one female foreign students attending the Turkish Police Academy full-time in 2004.

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