

## THE POLICE SELECTION PROCESS IN THE TURKISH POLICE

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### *Abstract*

The main aim of this paper is to explain, investigate and discuss critically the police selection method in the Turkish Police Force, focusing particularly on the sources and main requirements of the recruitment process, and on the nature of formal and informal arrangements. A semi-structured interview and secondary data techniques were used to collect the data needed. It is found that the Turkish Police Organization has a standard and strict selection method all over the country. The applicants are subjected to rigorous intelligence, psychological, medical, physical and background investigation tests. Although all Turkish citizens who meet the specified requirements officially have equal rights for recruitment, there is a clear cut discrimination in the recruitment of women to police force, particularly to police high school and police academy. Therefore, it is possible to say that there is also an informal process of recruitment in the Turkish Police, in respect of the discrimination against females. It is also remarkable that the background investigation, which is the most important issue on the recruitment of candidates is carried out by non-professional investigators.

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## Özet

### Türk Polis Teşkilatında Polis Seçme Süreci

Bu makalenin amacı, Türk Polisinin, polis seçme metodunu incelemek ve eleştirel bir yaklaşımla tartışmaktır. Özellikle, mesleğe alınma sürecinde aranılan koşullar ve mesleğe alınma kaynakları üzerinde odaklaşarak, mesleğe alınmanın formel ve informal düzenlemelerinin doğası da konu edinilmiştir. Gereklenen verilerin toplanması için yarı-standart mülakat ile ikincil veriler kullanılmıştır. Türk Polis Teşkilatı'nın tüm ülkede aynı ve standart bir mesleğe alınma politikası ve eleman seçme sistemi uyguladığı tespit edilmiştir. Adaylar, zeka düzeylerini tespite yarayan genel yetenek, psikoloji, sağlık, fiziksel durum ve geldiği köken açısından test ve incelemelerden geçirilmektedirler. Ek olarak, koşulları yerine getiren her Türk vatandaşının resmi olarak mesleğe başvuru hakkı olmasına karşın kadınlara karşı, özellikle polis koleji ve polis akademisine öğrenci alınlarında, bir ayrımcılık yapıldığı görülmüştür. Dolayısıyla, mesleğe alınma sürecinde Türk Polisi'nde formel ve informal iki süreçten söz etmek olanaklıdır. Adayların mesleğe kabulünde oldukça önemli olan güvenlik soruşturmasının da profesyonel olmayan kişilerce yapıldığı tespit edilmiştir.

In this paper, the main aim is to investigate, explain and then discuss the police selection method in the Turkish Police Organization. Firstly, the institutional sources, and the general and specific requirements of the police selection process are explained. The related data were mainly gathered from the interviews conducted with senior bureaucrats who are engaged with the recruitment process of recruits. Here, a systematic interview schedule which contained a core of standard questions (semi-structured interview) was used. The secondary data which are related to the subject were obtained from the departments and educational institutions of the General Directorate of Security (GDS). Secondly, an explanation and discussion of the main requirements for the recruitment process is given. Finally, an overall discussion of the recruitment process in the organization which is supported by the interviews conducted with senior bureaucrats who took part in the examination boards is presented.

Recruitment can be accepted as the very first step into an occupation. The literature on the recruitment process derives from a wide

variety of sources. With some exceptions, the quality and quantity of research which has been performed in the area of recruitment in general and police recruitment in particular are both poor and very old. On the other side, the fields of public administration, law, psychology, sociology, psychiatry, medical sciences, criminology, policing, behavioral sciences, etc. have all contributed to the main and basic concepts and theories for 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, as Poland (1978:374-393) states, varies in quality from speculative theorizing to sophisticated testing of theory in empirical studies. Some of them (Cohen and Chaiken, 1972; Kayode, 1973; Topp and Kardash, 1986) try to find a relationship between certain background characteristics of police officers and actual measures of the job performance, while others (Ross, 1964; Manyak, 1975) examine background characteristics without any attempt to relate these characteristics to measures of performance (Poland, 1978:374).

It is known that as the population has grown, the main governmental services have grown at a disproportionate huge rate. This situation forced the Police to use a selective method for recruiting the new candidates because of being an employer competing at the open labor market on the one hand, and specialization and professionalization in policing on the other. Given the importance of the police force for the maintenance of the social and law order, and the security of the people and the state, the purpose of the police selection process (recruitment) is to seek for the candidates that might have the highest potential for developing into successful police officers (Poland, 1978:374). Personnel selection in law enforcement is, therefore, equally important, not only for organizational effectiveness, but also for the protection of other police officers and the general public. (Topp and Kardash, 1986:3). In other words, a most appropriate personnel selection is the '*sine qua non*' to the future of a law enforcement service, because the effectiveness of a law enforcement organization rests to a large degree on its ability to adequately select, train and supervise its personnel (Colarelli and Siegel, 1964:287). Therefore, to ascertain which applicants have the highest potential for developing into successful police officers can be accepted as

a common point for all police organizations regardless of the political structure of countries and bureaucratic structure of police organizations. For example, a worldwide survey done by United Nations (UN) (1992:24) shows that almost all countries require some sort of fitness, minimum height, which usually is different for men and women, minimum and maximum weight, minimum education level, medical-psychiatric examination, physical agility test, psychological test, background check, etc.. Some countries also require an IQ test. Further reported criteria include citizenship, single marital status, no criminal convictions, military service completed, good vision, no glasses, no colour-blindness, driving licence, ability to swim, loyalty to state, loyalty to socialist system, etc.. Additionally, nearly all police organizations require persons who meet these criteria in order to take and pass a civil service examination. These exams are basically general intelligence (aptitude) tests, and they are mostly biased in favour of the recruitment policy of the related organization. (See for recruitment criteria and selection procedures in different police forces also DuBois and Watson, 1950; Colarelli and Siegel, 1964; Spencer and Nichols, 1971; Kent and Eisenberg, 1972; Gray, 1975; Lefkowitz, 1977; Spielberger, 1979). These explanations show that although every single police organization has its own selection methods or criteria, the ultimate aim of all organizations is to find the most appropriate candidate for the job. This is actually not valid only for the police profession. All other professions also have a set of minimum requirements for applicants. The profound impact of personnel selection on industrial productivity has become increasingly evident in the light of new techniques for estimating economic utility (Hunter and Schmidt, 1983). Therefore, it is possible to establish, and mention a direct relationship between professions and the recruitment as a process.

When the crucial and sensitive duty of the police organization in terms of both state and public is considered, the recruitment policy and practices occupy an important place to be discussed and investigated. 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 the society, the procedures employed in the recruitment and selection of police officers require a validation in terms of their structure and consequences. Therefore, the investigation of

the structure of the recruitment process in the Turkish Police Organization (GDS) is the main concern of this paper. It does not mainly and specifically aim to develop a set of recommendations about what the 'best' procedure might be for selecting police officers. Briefly, the main research points in this study can be summarized as follows: How does the Turkish Police Organization select new cadets? From which sources do they come? According to which 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 exams? Is there any discrimination regarding sex, race, religion or ethnic origin among the applicants?, etc..

## 1. The Sources of Recruitment

When the ways of becoming a member of the police profession in Turkey are considered, it is necessary to mention three different sources. These are 'police school', 'police high school' and 'police academy'. Police schools educate and train ordinary police officers. Police high schools educate, 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 which are accountable and totally established, financed and controlled by the GDS in order to educate and train the new recruits of the organization. Every year, the quota and the number of new cadets or students who will be recruited to each institution are determined by the GDS. The related information and application requirements of each institution are sent to all city and town directorates of security and to all directorates of police schools, police high schools, police academy, junior high, high and equivalent schools for announcement to public. This information is also broadcast by the 'radio police' in Ankara and Istanbul, which are the biggest provinces of the country.

### 1.1. Police School:

There are already 22 police schools which are located in different cities across the country. The selection procedure of new recruits is standard and exactly the same for all police schools in the country.

The people who meet the requirements and want to apply to examination have to complete their documents<sup>1</sup> first. Then, they can apply to their local city directorates of security. In order to be able to apply for the examination, an applicant has to fulfil and meet the requirements<sup>2</sup> for applicants.

Applications are checked first at the local city directorate of security. After the general evaluation here, the appropriate applicants who completed their documents are called for examinations. The types and contents of examinations are determined and prepared by the Chairmanship of Education Department of the GDS, in Ankara, the capital of the country. The examining boards are formed by the GDS (with collaboration of the Chairmanship of Education Department and the Chairmanship of Personnel Department) among the senior bureaucrats such as directors and Head Commissar, Commissar or Vice Commissar.

There are three different stages of examination in police school. The selection steps are arranged in the same order. Only those who pass the first hurdle are able to go on to the second. The first one is the 'interview'. During the interviews, the applicants are evaluated and assessed in terms of speech skill (ability), health and physical vision and fitness, self-confidence, comprehension (understanding) and expressive ability. The applicants who are seen as successful, then, have to take a physical fitness examination. After physical agility tests, a written examination is taken by applicants who completed the previous test. This examination includes a general intelligence (aptitude) test and questions related to the principles of Atatürk (who is the founder of the country) and the history of revolution, basic civics, the geography of Turkey, Turkish culture and civilization, Turkish composition (writing), and mathematics. According to the quota determined, applicants are assessed as successful from the top grade to the quota number.

The failed applicants have no objection rights to authorities regarding interview and physical agility tests results. However, they may object to the written examination result with a petition (written application) in three days following the announcement of all results to applicants. An examination committee processes the application, and informs the applicant of the result in three days following the day of application. The successful applicants have to get a health report which is specified by the related Byelaw. After that, the new recruits are sent to the nearest police school of their residential area. An education and training programme which is prepared and determined by the Chairmanship of Educational Department and approved by the GDS is applied in all police schools in the country. This is in line with wider plans for educating and training new recruits in virtually all areas of policing. The length of education and training in these schools is 9 months. At the end of the programme, all recruits have to take a written exam for each course which they are taught. The assessment and examination of each course is done by a course tutor. In order to be appointed to the ordinary police officer post every recruit is expected to be successful from all examinations. Failed recruits have one make-up examination right. At the end of this examination, if the recruit is still unsuccessful, s/he is discharged. The successful recruits are appointed to the ordinary police officer posts by drawing lots.

### **1.2. Police High School:**

Students of these schools are recruited after graduation from secondary school (junior high school), at the age of 14-15. Only boys are recruited to this school. The length of education is four years. In the first year, students attend a preparatory course in a foreign language (out of English, French and German). The language classes that they have to attend are determined according to their secondary school foreign languages' courses. After the first year of foreign language education, a science dominant curriculum is instructed in these schools. From the second year to the end of school, a Turkish instruction programme which also includes a foreign language course is applied. There were five police high schools in 1992, but this number has steadily decreased to one in 1996, which is located in Ankara.

The people who meet the requirements for application and want to apply for entry to examinations have to complete their documents first. These documents are exactly the same as the documents required for police schools' applicants. Only a secondary school diploma or its ratified copy is additionally needed. The applicants also have to be Turkish citizens, male, not older than 15 years, and should have good vision. Besides this, except the military service, the same conditions stated in note 2, which are stipulated for the police schools' applicants are also required.

The students who wish to pursue a career in the police force through police high school, and meet the application requirements for examination should make their application to the directorate of police high school. After a general evaluation here, the appropriate applicants are called for examinations. There are three different stages of examination for applicants. These are 'interview', 'physical agility' and 'written' examinations. There are also two examining boards in the recruitment process of police high school. The first one is formed by the GDS (with the collaboration of the Chairmanships of Education and Personnel Departments) among the senior bureaucrats who are directors and head commissar, commissar or vice commissar. This board is responsible for the examination stages of interview and physical agility tests. The other board is formatted by the Chairmanship of Education Department with the approval of GDS among the teachers of Ankara police high school, and is responsible for the assessment of written examination.

An important point before taking exams is the background (security) investigation about the candidate and his first degree family members. This inquiry is done by the local police forces of the place where the candidate resides. It begins with the application of the candidate, and is completed by the first exam date. The investigation should certify that the candidate and his first degree family members are fit in terms of the security requirements which are given in note 2. The applicants who do not meet these requirements are eliminated, and have no right to take exams.

During the interviews, the applicants are evaluated and assessed in terms of speech skills, health and physical appearance and fitness, self-



confidence, comprehension (perception and understanding) and expressive ability. The applicants who are seen as successful, then, have to take a physical fitness examination. Applicants are graded in two different physical agility tests which consist of athleticism and gymnastics. All applicants have to have a physical agility examination. Assessment is done according to the performance of applicants.

After physical agility tests, a written examination is taken by applicants who completed the previous test, and were accepted as successful at the end of it. The written examination is carried out in Ankara only, usually in August. It includes a total of 100 questions which are a combination of questions related to Turkish language, science and foreign language aptitude. Determining the number of successful applicants according to the quota is exactly similar with the procedure in the police schools' recruitment process.

Besides this, the children of martyrs (şehit) of duty are directly accepted to be registered to police high school regardless their written examination grade. The names of applicants who are seen as successful are advertised by the directorate of Ankara police high school and also broadcast in the 'radio police' in Ankara. Later, they have to get a health report which is specified by the related Byelaw. The successful applicants are taken to a 15 days introduction programme which includes various information related to police high schools and their education. After that, the new recruits have to apply with their documents to the police high school in order to be registered as full-time students.

The students who graduate from the police high school have to take the Police Academy Entrance Exam. This is exactly the same as the exam which is applied to the students graduating from non-police high school and who wish to be students of Police Academy. The successful students have the right to be registered to the academy. Others have four options. They are: (1) to re-enter the academy entrance exam every year, at most for three years; (2) to repay all expenses and to go his own way; (3) to work in the police force as an ordinary police officer; and (4) to have the right of registration to the departments in any university which are suggested by the GDS through taking a university entrance exam in the country. 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, at least for their compulsory service time.

### 1.3. Police Academy:

There is only one police academy which is located in Ankara. It provides educational and training at four-year college level. The students of the academy are recruited among the police high schools' graduates (around 75%) or, general high schools' and equivalent schools' graduates.

The selection procedure of students is standardized. The people who meet the requirements for application and want to apply to examination have to complete their documents first. These documents are exactly the same with police schools' applicants' documents (See note 2). However, the first stage examination card of the university general entrance exam is additionally required.

Furthermore, the applicants also have to be Turkish citizens and, until recently male. Females were not recruited to the Academy until 1991-92 academic year. Beside these, the applicants should not be married or live with a partner without a marriage contract; not having been punished or imprisoned for any kind of crime; not having been discharged from any school for moral and discipline reasons; not having been sued for any crime at the time of application; not having any impediment for joining security organization after investigation into her/himself and her/his family members. In other words, the conditions stipulated for police schools' and police high school's applicants are required from police academy students as well.

The students who wish to pursue a career in the police force through the police academy, and who meet the application requirements for examination should make their application to the directorate of the police academy. The examining committee is formed by the GDS (in collaboration with the Chairmanships of Education and Personnel Departments, and the Chairmanship of Police Academy) among the senior bureaucrats such as security directors and among the teaching staff of the academy. The committee consists of a minimum 4, maximum 6 members including the chairperson. After a general evaluation here, the

appropriate applicants are called for examinations. Here, there are also three different stages of examination for applicants. These are 'interview', 'physical agility' and 'written' examinations. The procedure in all examinations is more or less the same with the procedure applied to the police schools' applicants. A written examination is taken by applicants who completed the physical fitness test successfully. The written examination includes the general aptitude and IQ tests, with questions related to science, social science, foreign language, and Turkish language, literature and composition. The objection right and procedure of failed applicants is the same as with the police schools' applicants.

An orientation and adaptation education is taken by the successful applicants after the display of lists of successful candidates at the police academy. During this education, the recruits are examined in terms of health conditions, and all their expenses are met by the police academy. After that, the recruits are conditionally registered in the academy. The recruits whose security inquiries (background check) are positively completed have the right to apply to the academy.

An education and training programme at the university level, which is prepared and determined by the Chairmanship of Educational Department and approved by the GDS is applied in the police academy. This is also in line with wider plans for educating and training new recruits in virtually all areas of 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. An applied occupational training programme (4 weeks) is also taken by students in the summer vacation of every year. The length of education and training in the academy is four full academic years for recruits.

In order to be appointed, each recruit is expected to be 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, s/he has to repeat the course that s/he failed. The graduates are appointed to the vice commissar post, which is the first rank of police administrative posts, by drawing lots to specify their posts. If there are any discharged or unsuccessful students, they have to pay all

expenses back to the GDS or to accept work in the force as an ordinary police officer.

## 2. Main Requirements for the Recruitment Process

As mentioned earlier, there are three different institutional sources of recruitment in the Turkish Police Organization. These are 'police school', 'police high school' and 'police academy'. However, the requirements for recruiting of police personnel in these schools except the age and education level are exactly the same. In other words, the recruitment process in the Turkish Police Organization which is set up by law is forced to accept specified criteria or standards. These can be given as follows: citizenship, education, age, height (for police school and academy only), health standards and appearance, and background investigation which also includes the absence of felony record and presence of good character.

### 2.1. Citizenship:

This requirement mostly reflects widespread beliefs about who should be eligible to receive tax money and public employment (Blum, 1964:50) in a given country, and is a general one which is applied to most employment in governmental institutions and organizations. In terms of police work, it may reflect the need of loyalty to the country and political system, belief about desire to prevent conflict, protect people, and provide social order and peace in society, and equal opportunity and a privilege given to all people who are citizens in the country.

It is reasonable for an independent country to make some restrictions and ask for some specific requirements such as citizenship in its own employment policy. The nature of police work may even need more specification and restriction. However, it restricts and prevents international police exchanges. It is obvious that because of more developed social, political and especially economic relationships between countries, the police forces need to have closer and stronger relationships with one another. Although there are some limited relationships between some police forces of different countries by Interpol, the restriction on

citizenship and exchange of police officers obstructs the sharing of information, technology and development in one country with another.

The interviews conducted with senior bureaucrats who also took part in the examining boards of recruitment process showed without doubt that all interviewees were agreed about the restriction and requirement on citizenship. They stated that no citizen of another country can be as loyal to Turkey as its citizens are. They were agreed that the police forces should share information on specific areas such as terror, smuggling and similar criminal activities, technology and developments in policing with one another, but recruiting non-citizen people to the force is unacceptable. They also accepted and defended that the requirement about citizenship is inevitable because Turkey is a state governed by the law.

## 2.2. Age:

In Turkey, the minimum and maximum age limits for recruitment to the police profession is set by law. These limits change for police schools', police high school's and police academy recruits, which is already given in the previous part of the paper. Like all police organizations in the world, the age limits of recruitment for Turkish police recruits are in parallel with the age which makes a person able to have full rights and responsibilities legally (18) in society. According to the data gathered from interviews conducted with senior bureaucrats, the average police applicant is relatively young, averaging about 22-25 years of age.

## 2.3. Education:

Like many other agencies, the Turkish Police Organization requires a certain level of educational attainment which is set by law. Each police educational institution requires a different education level. According to the last regulations in 1984, the minimum education level which is required for an ordinary police officer's post is at least high school graduation. For administrative posts, the officers have to have a university degree either from the police academy or from the other universities which are accepted by the GDS. This requirement should be accepted as an inevitable one, because a police officer must be able to

write a clear and understandable report. It, as Blum (1964:56) stated, also assures the social equality of the police officers in their dealings with other citizens- a fundamental need in order to secure self respect as well as citizen and community respect.

In addition, it is apparent that the educational standard for police recruits cannot be considered apart from the broader issues of police respectability and police image, and the preparation of an educated and trained administrative cadre in the organization. The required level of educational attainment is a natural consequence of the development in educational level of general public. The educational achievement level of the average citizen is rising steadily. Police work cannot be maintained properly by the officers who have low educational attainment in a society where the general educational achievement level of public is relatively high (See SIS, 1994). In other words, the police officer who has to work with and for members of the community will not command respect or perform his/her task satisfactorily unless his/her educational achievements are at least equal to the average citizen with whom s/he will be in contact (Blum, 1964:15). Besides there is an effort by the GDS to build a proper and good image of the police and police service in the country. However, it is obvious that the diploma itself is not an adequate evidence that the police officers will perform their daily duties and responsibilities properly. The quality of education and training is important as much as the educational attainment. Unfortunately, there are no scientific studies on the evaluation of educational and training programs which have been recently applied and taught in the police educational institutions in Turkey. This issue may require a separate study.

#### **2.4. Height:**

This is a requirement in almost all police organizations in the world for recruitment of new officers, although the scale differs according to the general height of the people in the country. The minimum height of candidates in the Turkish Police Organization is set by law, and it is 1.65m for women and 1.67m for men. It is clear that operational police work sometimes needs the use of physical force by police officers. This makes it necessary to accept some limitations or restrictions on age,

height and weight for recruitment of new recruits. However, both the increasing internal and external migration, and the developments in the quantity and diversity of criminal activities require some sort of flexibility requirements such as age, gender, citizenship, height and weight. This flexibility is also a consequence of the recent developments in non-discriminatory policies, equal opportunities and the necessity of recruiting the people from ethnic minorities. A non-flexible and very strict requirement on height punishes some people who are keen, skillful and want to be police officers but are unable to because of their natural body structure. It also means discrimination and rejection of equal opportunities and basic human rights. On the other side, the increase in the complexity and diversity of criminal activities such as organized crimes, racial crimes, smuggling, terrorism and international crimes need the intelligence and the ability of officers to make successful investigation more than body measurements. In addition, policing in the different aspects of law enforcement does not need all police officers to have a certain height. Instead, specialization, ability to make proper investigations and intelligence of police officers occupy a more important place. Traditional height and weight requirements make it difficult for women and some other capable men to become police officers. Short people can be needed at many levels within a law enforcement agency because they are as capable as anyone else.

### **2.5. Health Standards and Appearance:**

Almost all police forces in the world require a minimum standard certification of health. The underlying and important assumption is that police work requires particular physical, psychological and psychiatric (mental) capacities. The minimum standards for health requirements of applicants in the recruitment process of the Turkish Police Organization is also set by law. In order to be appointed, the recruit has to get his/her health certificate from the authorized hospitals according to legal regulations.

There might be many reasons for the requirement of particular health conditions. For example, the necessity for the safe operation of potentially dangerous equipment; guns, and automobiles, the necessity to protect fellow officers and the public from contagious illness, and the

need to detect existing defects so that these do not become the basis for later disability claims (Blum, 1964:61). Additionally, the nature of policing itself requires physically and mentally healthy recruits for many functions of policing such as the need to use force on a person resisting arrest and the similar difficulties in law enforcement.

Appearance which also includes expression, dress, speech and personal quality of candidate may be accepted as a basis for judgement of an oral board, which is responsible for the interview of candidates. It is natural that the board has to consider some main points during the recruitment process. The senior bureaucrats who have been interviewed for the recruitment process stated that they concentrate on a few important points during the interview. These are: (1) whether this is the person that we want to employ and allow to work in the police force or not; (2) whether this is the person who is capable enough for police work or not; (3) whether this is the person who will give a good image of police to the public or not. These points may be accepted as inevitable to be considered for a selection process. However, it is easy for interviewers to err in the judgements they make. They have to rely on their own impressions. Judgements of appearance and an oral interview, as Blum (1964:65) stated, are also affected by our own personal idiosyncrasies and problems. Our preconceptions, fears, and unresolved personal problems may distort the judgements we make. When those judgements are part of the selection process, the distortions weaken the excellence of the selection tool, that tool being the judge itself. Beside this the emotional reaction of each member of the board to a candidate plays an important role in the judgement of appearance of the candidate.

The last main requirement of the recruitment process of the Turkish Police is the 'background investigation' of the candidates and his/her first degree relatives.

## **2.6. Background Investigations:**

A background investigation is the systematic collection of facts and opinions from persons who have known the applicant, or from persons who have custody of the records of his/her past performance (Blum, 1964:157). It is possible to find such an investigation in the recruitment



process of public institutions, particularly of security ones, in all countries.

The purpose of the background investigations for an applicant is at least fourfold in the recruitment process in the Turkish Police Organization, according to the interviews which were conducted with senior bureaucrats. The first and main objective is to prevent the organization from recruiting a person who will prove unqualified, especially in terms of conviction of a felony and crimes involving moral turpitude and political action against the state. The interviewees agreed unanimously that although the results of other tests and examinations are important, the most valuable asset to recruitment process is the background investigation of the applicant. They justified their view that the statements of neighbours, employers, teachers, tradesmen and others provided clues to past behaviour of an applicant and are the 'mirror of the applicant's personality'. The second 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 base a prediction concerning future performance as a police officer. The last one is to verify all of the statements the applicant has made in his/her application to become a police officer.

Actually, the personal history of an applicant for the police service is an important issue. The facts concerning applicant personal behaviour and habit in the past may form a basis that will permit a prediction to be made that s/he will or will not function successfully as a police officer in the future. In other words, a police officer whose reputation is questionable or bad cannot be given respect by the community s/he serves, and can destroy or lower the image of the police in society. The interviewed senior bureaucrats stated that the investigation of personal history of an applicant assists the examining board, naturally the GDS, in selecting the best and most appropriate recruits from those who are interested and appear to be qualified, and will thus prevent the organization from making unrestorable damage. However, it should be recognized that this idea presumes the unchanging nature of personal characteristics. That is, the premise is that adult human behaviour is constant. Actually, it is not exactly known and proved what characteristics of human personality are subject to change or not in a particular condition. To avoid such disadvantages, the GDS may use

outside specialists such as sociologists, psychologists, social workers and psychiatrists in the recruitment process.

### 3. Discussion

The analysis of police selection process of the Turkish Police Organization illuminates several major problems confronting the police and those who would understand them. The first of these is the lack of a job description for the police. The interviews done show, that there is no clear definition of the job that police officers are charged to do in the Turkish Police Force. In other words, the police have many duties to do. For example, the police have to practice (apply) the articles and verdicts of 271 laws, 51 rules-regulations (tüzük), 168 byelaws (directions-yönetmelik), 68 Ministers' Cabinet Orders and 62 codes (instructions, directions-yönerge) (Türk Polis Teşkilatını Güçlendirme Vakfı, 1983:19). In order to produce an appropriate personnel selection method, one should know first what a police officer does (Blum, 1964:46), what s/he is required to do, how s/he can do it, what abilities and skills are needed to do it, where does a police officer's job start and end?, etc. It is possible to find some general descriptions and explanations which are set up by law, but if the fast structural changes in society are considered, these general descriptions will not be sufficient to build up an appropriate recruitment standard and policy.

The second problem in the recruitment process arises from the 'background investigation of applicants and his/her first degree relatives'. The background investigation of applicants who have qualified for the eligible list and who are being considered for immediate appointment is officially done by local police officers where the applicants reside and are officially registered. But, most of the interviewed senior officers stated that they have a doubt about the background investigation process. Further, they even said that 'night guards', who are a supplementary force to police officers who work at the night and have just primary school education, mostly do this investigation, or they write their reports in their offices without questioning the applicant's contacts.

The main and essential problem in the background investigation of an applicant is related to the personal characteristics, values, prejudices and political preferences of officer(s) in charge to make

investigation, whose ability as an investigator, interrogator, reporter and evaluator of evidence has not been proven in the crucible of experience. An officer who has not enough training, knowledge, ability and experience unconsciously eliminates all applicants except those who reflect his/her own concept of ideal or satisfactory candidate. S/he may investigate more thoroughly some individuals who do not measure up to his/her standards until sufficient facts are available to disqualify them (Blum, 1964:175). Instead, professionals whose loyalties to the organization and the code of ethics of law enforcement are proven should be used in the process of background investigation. Although such a way might be more expensive in comparison with the present one, the organization will definitely benefit in the long term.

Regardless of the results of other examinations, if the result of background (security) investigation or oral interview of an applicant is negative, s/he has no chance to be appointed as a police officer, and has no right to reapply for another exam afterward. In one sense, the investigator himself/herself has the power of the examining board. Therefore, s/he should clearly have the ability to understand that the facts of past behaviour will be the foundation for predicting future behaviour. S/he 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.

A third problem is in the content of civil service examinations and the objectivity of the oral interview procedure. First of all, the civil service examination is not directly related to the police service when it is investigated in terms of its content. However, it is one of the main examinations in the recruitment process, which is especially very effective and important in the recruitment of ordinary police officers. It eliminates a large number of applicants, and therefore it may be accepted as a poor predictor because of rejecting applicants who would possibly be well-qualified for police work.

The oral interview is also important as much as the background investigation. Although applicants have right to object to the results of written examination, they have no right to object to the results of the oral interview, the verdict of the board. This gives an unquestionable power to the board.

Another problem in the recruitment process in the Turkish Police Organization is related to the discrimination among the applicants. The senior bureaucrats were agreed that there is no discrimination among the applicants in terms of their religious and ethnic background or their gender, although the female students are legally not allowed to apply and are not recruited to police high schools, and until recent years to the police academy. The legal regulations prohibit any discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, etc. in the recruitment process and employment practices of the organization; in fact in all public and private institutions as well. The interviewees stated that they totally apply the law in the recruitment of new cadets. All Turkish citizens who have met the requirements for recruitment officially have the right to apply and become police officers. The only condition is to succeed in the examinations. However, the researcher was not able to question the discrimination on religion, race or ethnic background of applicants, if there is any, through the research by interviews. Therefore, there is not enough data to control the data obtained by means of our interviews. However, discrimination on the gender of applicants was questioned through the interviews. All interviewees, except one, were not clear in their explanations. They mostly averted the conversation, and did not directly accept discrimination on the gender of applicants. They stated that the number of male or female recruits is totally determined according to the quota number which has been allocated by the GDS itself. However, one interviewee has accepted that they had and have been involved in gender discrimination among the applicants.

Women are not seen as potential members of either the formal police organization or the police subculture. The conception of masculinity becomes the cutting edge of selection when an applicant reaches the point of an oral interview. The division of labour within the police is usually ignored when selecting candidates. This situation is also proven by the figures of 1996 which are gathered from the Personnel Department of GDS. For example, although the total number of male officers is 124,363, the female officers' number is only 3,839 (3%). There are no female students in police high school. There are only 108 female students (4%) versus 2,439 male students in the Police Academy.

It is clear that police work has historically been men's work, but where manpower shortages existed, the developments in equal

opportunities to gender, developments and diversities in policing all required police forces to recruit women across the world. It is today possible to see women police officers from communication to foot patrolling. Beside that there are many policing areas in which women's presence may be advantageous. For example, searching for woman, dealing with domestic violence, child criminals, women criminals and working in some undercover policing duties, etc. On the other side, it is not scientifically proven that males are more capable than females in administrative posts. Briefly, it can be said that an informal recruitment process is also in action in terms of gender of applicants in the Turkish Police Organization.

If the explanations above are true, the recruitment process in the Turkish Police Organization seems to be non-efficient and unproductive. It might be time to reconsider the recruitment policy. In fact, the quality and effectiveness of the police service starts with recruitment. Therefore, research programs must be established in the field of police personnel selection that will continuously seek to identify the techniques and methods that will best aid the GDS in procuring recruits. Each advance in testing technique that can be developed will reduce the margin of error in the recruitment process, which will in turn reduce the loss of funds expended in the education and training of recruits. It is known that selection criteria, methods and instruments which were/are used in the recruitment process, have never been challenged in Turkey. In other words, the validity and reliability of recruitment method and procedures were never under scrutiny. That is why, the procurement of appropriate recruits remains one of the most important issues in the policing field of the country, and the recruitment process plays an important role in the future hopes and goals of the GDS. By accepting and meeting this challenge, both the police organization and society at large will benefit.

Consequently, in order to construct a rational and effective series of selection steps, it will be necessary to know in statistical terms derived from research how useful each selection procedure is in predicting job performance. The recruitment process material should be set down formally in writing to the greatest extent possible. The members of examining boards must be informed about the validity of each standard, and of the methods used to evaluate the applicants according to it. It is particularly important that program materials will be made available for

the examination committee's members before the date of recruitment. Additionally, the experience of each year should be a base for the recruitment process of the following year.

### *Notes:*

1. These documents are: petition (written application), the national ID card or its ratified copy, high or equivalent school diploma or its ratified copy, the document which points out the military service situation, the document which contains the biographic information and six photographs pictured from the front.
2. These requirements are: to be a Turkish citizen; to graduate from high or equivalent school (at least); not to be younger than 18 and older than 27 years according to the date of January 1st of examination year; not to be shorter than 1.65m for women and 1.67m for men; to have the health conditions which are explained in the Byelaw for the Required Health Conditions of the Students who will be Recruited to the Educational Institutions of the GDS and Their Appointments to the Police Profession; not to be known with characteristics of drunkenness and gambling; not to be engaged with socio-culturally low and inferior jobs; not to be married or live with a foreigner (non-Turkish citizen); not to be engaged with or having been joined to illegal political activities, anarchy and terrorist events; excluding negligence crimes, not to be imprisoned with hard labour (ağır hapis) or more than 6 months, or not to be punished or sued for any criminal events such as crime against the State or embezzlement (zimmet), pilferage (ihtilas), corruption (irtikap), bribery (rüşvet), theft (hırsızlık), swindle (fraud) (dolandırıcılık), falsification (sahtekarlık), misuse of religious faith, fraudulent bankruptcy (dolaylı iflas), smuggling to put depravity into official (State) adjudication (ihale) and purchase-sale; to have not an impedimental situation for joining security organization according to investigation (background check) about his/her family members; to have not military service problem at the starting date of education program. Almost all these criteria are also required for the applicants of police high schools and police academy.

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