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### **Neo-Liberal and Neo-Realist Theories Fail to Explain Regional Events; An Example of the Refugees Living in the Middle Black Sea Region within Scope of International Critical Theory**

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#### **Abstract:**

Contrary to traditional theories that accept states as rational and claim that identities are independent of the effects of social relations, international critical theory deals with how individuals, institutions and states are shaped in the historical process. When we examine the current situation in the region from the perspective international of critical theory, we see that international critical theory brings direct, systematic and social explanations of the situation in the region. International critical theory has drawn attention to the dangers of uncontrolled particularism, which can easily deprive 'strangers' from certain rights. Linklater claims that this would be overcome by the establishment of a system based on more cosmopolitan, negotiating, dialogue and rationality, beyond the borders of the sovereign states. If we evaluate the situation in terms of the refugees living in the Central Black Sea region, the universalization and centralization of justice can trigger social transformation in the long run and it can eliminate differences between citizen and people

#### **Key Words:**

*Traditional Theories, Particularism, Strangers, International Critical Theory.*

### **Introduction:**

In addition to the centers of Ordu and Samsun in the scope of the study, visits to the major districts of these two provinces were made and negotiations were held information on the situation of refugees living in the area was gathered; Syrian and Iraqi families and people to understand their problems and to develop a perspective to bring concrete solutions to these problems. During the process of collecting basic data on the general situation of refugees, Meetings were held with refugees from different districts and different age groups in Samsun and Ordu provinces as well as local people and organizations related to the refugees, and the data and observations obtained from these discussions played an important role. The observations made by the, the information received and evaluations are summarized in the first part.

In the second part, 'International Critical Theory' and evaluation of the theory in terms of system, refugee, actor, system, legal norms, states and NGOs have been made. In this chapter, it is mentioned the theorists such as Linklater and Cox how influence the international relations in the historical process of culture, social relations and many factors.

In the last part, general living conditions of the refugees living in the region and their problems have been analyzed. In this section Neo-realist and neo-liberal theories are inadequate for explaining regional events, explained with the example of the refugees living in the Middle Black Sea. In addition, the situation of people living in this region is interpreted within the framework of international critical theory and systematic proposals about their future are analyzed.

### **International Critical Theory; Actor, System Analysis, Refugee and International Law:**

International critical theory, in contrast to the Neo-Realist and Neo-Liberal theories, has given a more complex and widespread explanation for the question of who is the main actor in international relations. International critical theory, contrary to these theories, adopts a more interpretive approach. While separating from Neo-realist theories by refusing that states are actors alone, It separates from the Neo-Liberal theories in terms of not only explaining the international society but also of how social structures, challenges, and relations affect the states in historical processes and present solution proposals. Contrary to theories that accept states as rational and claim that identities are independent of the effects of social relations, international critical theory deals with how individuals, institutions and states are shaped in the historical process.

One of the basic functions of international critical theory is to explain the structures, social and historical establishment that traditional theories regard as independent because international critical theory rejects the realistic discourse of anarchy and the selfish actions of states. For this reason, for example, against to Westphalian idea, which reduces the idea of the state to the modern sovereign state, Cox considers the critical international relations theory to be a special form of the modern state, political society, with certain socially and historically defined functions, roles and responsibilities<sup>1</sup>.

One of the most important contributions of the theory of critical international relations is that International Relations has expanded the scope of the research object. The theory included epistemological and ontological assumptions and explains their connection to pre-existing political commitments. Since international critical theory claims that there is a close relationship between social life and cognitive processes, the theory the distinction between object and subject, reject fact and value. The effects of religion, media, culture, education, and so on should be included in the state analysis; because these institutions influence the structure and behavior of states in the historical process. Critical theory in this respect aims to further develop the theoretical thinking.

International critical theory emphasizes the dangers of uncontrolled particularism, which can deprive foreigners of some rights. This critique of particularism has led the critique of international relations theory to question the sovereign state, one of the most prominent modern forms of social exclusion, and thus one of the most important obstacles to universal justice and liberation.

Linklater's work is one of the most powerful and comprehensive investigations of international relations on the political community. The distinction between citizens and people is as follows. *“This tension between 'human' and 'citizen' is, in practice, always resolved in favor of citizens. Although universal rights are envisioned to encompass all members of humanity, they are now 'secondary', according to those who are always the norm”* (Linklater, 2007)<sup>2</sup>, Linklater put forward the philosophical critique of particularism for the first time. The main interest in his work is to analyze how modern political thought constantly separates ethical duties against citizens from ethical duties against the rest of mankind.

Explaining of this distinction between man and citizen, Linklater not only explained it but also shared his work on the solution of the situation. Linklater elaborates on the 'triple

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<sup>1</sup> Cox, R. W. 'Social Forces, States and, World Orders: Beyond Internationals Relations Theory' Millenium, 1981, 10(2), s. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Linklater, A, 'Critical Theory and Word Politics: Citizenship, Sovereignty, and Humanity, 2007a, London

transformation' that affects the political community. Progressive acceptance of the need for universalization of moral, political and legal principles, increased demand for respect for cultural, ethnic and gender based differences as well as increased urgency to reduce material inequality.<sup>3</sup> Thanks to the tripartite transformation, expressed by Linklater it will allow for a more cosmopolitan way of governing.

Linklater's assessment and solution proposal about citizens and human provide us with important perspectives on the way the states look at concepts such as refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. In the analysis section, the situation of refugees living in the Middle Black Sea will be evaluated in terms of the differences in the approach of citizens and people to the states claimed by Linklater, and Linklater's proposed solution.

Linklater consider that the state should be a structure that reduces the social exclusion of the state and enlarges democratic participation. Linklater refuses to have a single community of power, authority and decision-making, and explains the importance of legalizing international relations. Linklater emphasizes the need for constitutionalization of international law and argues that states should be centralized in the form of a cosmopolitan organization.

## **An Example of the Refugees Living in the Middle Black Sea**

### **Major Problems and Priority Needs General Life Condition**

#### **Ordu**

The field works and conducted in Ordu, Altınordu county have shown that most of the refugee families living in the province are Iraqis, but there are also some Syrian families. It has been noticed that the refugees residing in the county, mostly live in the old neighborhoods like Subaşı, Şarkiye, YeniMahalle and Bucak. There has been some home visits arranged with people living in these neighborhoods, interviews made with local artisans, opinion leaders and local authorities. Similarly, In Fatsa County of Ordu, some studies have been made and it has been understood that there are approximately 30 families living there and nearly all of them live in Sakarya and Evkaf neighborhoods.

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<sup>3</sup> Linklater, A, The Transformation of Political Community; Ethical Foundations of the Post-Westphalian Era, 1998, s.27-56.

## **Samsun**

Most of the refugee families living in Samsun, resides in Canik County and they mostly consist of Syrians and Iraqis. The houses in this county are old houses, rents are fairly cheaper and industry is settled here. For this reason, refugees are mainly gathered in this area. The refugees living in this area mainly reside in Karşıyaka and Soğuksu neighborhoods, however, there are also many refugees living in Kuzeyyıldızı neighborhood, Gazi neighborhood and Belediye Evleri neighborhood. In the studies conducted in the province of Samsun İlkadım, it is seen that refugees generally live in Hurriyet and 19 Mayıs neighborhoods while there are approximately 40 Circassian originated Syrian families and most of them are related to each others. Most of the refugees here, live in Fenk and Elmalık neighborhood. In Bafra County there are approximately 60 families and these families are resided in the neighborhoods near the agricultural work places and İshaklı neighborhood. Lastly there have been studies conducted in Atakum County, in these studies it is seen that the district is a new settlement and for this reason the rents are higher and refugees here are in a better condition.



A tent in Samsun-Bafra. 16 People are living in this tent.

## **Education Access**

### **Ordu**

In Ordu, out of 27 visited families, 14 families have school aged children. Out of these 14 families, only 3 of them can send their children to school while the other 11 families' children

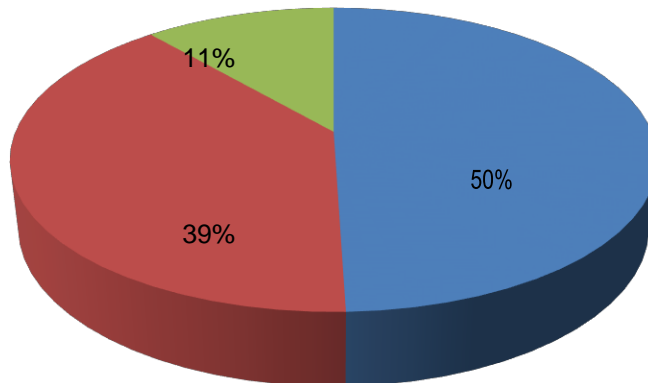
are out of school. In 3 cases, little children are working in order to support their families and in another 3 cases, the families could not be able to register their children to school because they have Id cards from another cities. Besides from these, 2 families did not send their children to school because of the children's health issues. The refugee families living in Ordu are in bad conditions considering their economical situation and life condition. Among the visited families, there are some families who do not have some of the basic furniture, some of them do not have tube gas and cook their meals on stove, some families do not even have shoes and they have to wear slippers in the winter. These families having difficulties in sending their children to school and covering for their expenses like educational materials and clothes. Hence, 3 families out of these 11 families recorded that they cannot send their children to school because of lack of resources. Most of the families residing in the city do not even have enough awareness in terms of children's education. It is observed in the conducted research that 28 out of 34 school aged children lack education. Another important reason for the low ratio of sending children to the school is that there aren't enough NGO activities that can give awareness to these families in terms of education. Visited families said that as their children do not know Turkish, they face a language barrier in their schools and can not keep it up with Turkish students.

### **Samsun**

In the studies conducted in Samsun, some Mukhtars, organizations, artisans and 37 families have been interviewed. In the meeting with the Mukhtar of 19 Mayıs neighborhood, he told that although there are some families who are aware of the importance of education, there are also many children that do not have access to education. The Mukhtar of Hurriyet neighborhood also stated that some of the refugee children go to school however some others have ids in different cities, some of their parents are not aware of the importance of education and because of that those children do not have access to educational services. Among 37 visited families, 19 families have school aged children and 9 families send their children to the school while the other 10 families do not. 6 families concerned about the lack of resources telling that they can not send their children to school because they can not buy the necessary materials. Many refugee children have to work at young ages and they can not attend to school. Among the visited families there are 3 cases with child labor. Additionally many families have residence permit in other cities and that makes it more difficult for them to access to education. Finally, many families interviewed stated that their children could not go to school due to their lack of language. Besides, the lack of Turkish language education centers cause them to face language barrier.

## Educational Status of the Refugees of Ordu and Samsun Provinces

1. Those who are in school age and do not go to school
2. They are not in school age.
3. Those who went to the school.



### Access to Health

#### Ordu

From the studies conducted in Ordu, it has been observed that poor life conditions and the hardness of life conditions also affect the refugees' health conditions. In some visited families, they do not have oven or any other heaters and some families have heaters but can not afford heating materials such as coal. Many refugee families do not have winter clothes, some of them do not even have a second cloth besides from the one that he/she has. Most of the families living in the city do not have blankets, beds and carpets in their houses and this cause the house to be colder and affect their health in a negative way. The head of IHH organization in Ordu-Fatsa County Ali Iyi, who is also a pharmacist, told that some of the refugees are registered in other cities and because of that they are having difficulties in receiving medical treatment. As a matter of fact, interviews with the families also certify these information. 18 refugee families out of 27 visited families concerned about language barrier in the hospital and they were frustrated because of the lack of organizations that would provide help about translation in the hospitals without any charge. Out of these 27 families, 9 families have serious medical problems and 3

of them have disabled people. In the interviews, 8 families told that they can not find vehicles to transport them to the hospitals and they can not access to the health services.



A visually impaired Syrian living in Samsun's Fatsa district

### **Samsun**

According to the studies conducted in Samsun, many refugees are employed in hard jobs and their work time reaches 12-13 hours in a day. Their work condition both goes against the humanitarian conditions of employment and their health condition. Hence, many working individuals among the visited families have spinal problems. In an interview with the Mukhtar of Hurriyet neighborhood, he stated that some families do not have Ids registered in Samsun which make trouble for them to access to the health services and some of these families ask for his help about this issue. Additionally, some of the visited families have TPID and International Protection ID in other cities and some do not even have any ID card yet, thus they can not receive any kind of medical treatments at all. Most of the families living in the city have crowded families and lots of them lives with other families. In addition to the crowded families, they also lack hygiene materials and their houses are in bad conditions in terms of hygiene because they can not afford to hygiene materials and because of that the children living in these



houses can easily get a disease. It is also observed that in some houses there is no furniture and heating materials and in some of these families there are babies who are vulnerable against the diseases. This situation might lead to further problems in the near future.

## **Employment Opportunities**

### **Ordu**

In Altınordu County of Ordu, there have been interviews with artisans and refugees living in the area. It is noticed in these interviews that the employment opportunities are very limited and the employees are working under hard conditions with unfair wages and long working hours. There have been interviews with 12 Iraqi families living in this county and it is seen that only one family has a member who is currently working and there is not even a single individual who has work permit. The rents in the city is around 350-500 TL and the municipality supports many families once in two months with 300 TL. The families who do not have any employed member face serious difficulties in providing for themselves and they are trying to survive with these supports. The refugees residing in Altınordu county are mainly employed in artisan workshops and construction sector. These refugees get approximately 250 TL per week and work 12-13 hours per day. It has not seen any individual who has work permit in their studies in the county.

In the studies conducted in Fatsa county of Ordu, it is observed that the refugees came here because they thought that they would be employed in hazelnut works, yet the works in hazelnut jobs do not last longer than 2 months. For the next ten months, the refugees can not find regular jobs. The visited families mostly shine shoes and the others mainly work in bakeries, restaurants, and as workers in constructions. The refugees living in this city pays approximately 200-250 TL in a month for the rent. Shoe shiners can only get 10-15TL per day and the ones that are working in hard jobs gain 30TL daily. Thus, they live under hard conditions and have difficulties providing for themselves. As a result, many families have to make their children work at a young age. Furthermore, there aren't any organization that can give awareness about work permit in the city and this is one of the reason that it was not face any person in the city who has work permit.

### **Samsun**

In the interview with 19 Mayıs neighborhood in Samsun-İlkadım, he stated that refugees living here mainly work as barbers, worker in restaurants, spice shops, bakeries and real estate managers. In the studies conducted, it is identified that there are many refugees working as

artisans in the city. Additionally, in an interview with the Mukhtar of Hurriyet neighborhood, he stated that there are many refugees opening bakeries making Syrian bread and they also employ Syrians. Some other refugees are working as workers in constructions. The wage reaches 40TL per day in the works that require too much effort but as the winter comes, these works are also interrupted. The ones working in artisan shops gain between 20 to 30 TL per day. The rents in the city is approximately 500-600 TL and because of that the refugees face serious problems in providing for themselves.



An Iraqi tradesman in Samsun Hürriyet

In Canik-Samsun, an interview made with Kardeşeli Organization. In this interview, it is learned that an important part of the refugees in the city work as worker in industrial zone of the city. The interviews with families also confirmed that information. Although many refugees work in industry, the most of the families visited do not have any working member. In this sense, 8 families out of 27 families do not have a working member and the ones that can find jobs are working 12-13 hours a day. All of the visited families recorded that they do not have any information about work permit procedures. An important part of the refugees in Soğuksu neighborhood are begging in the streets in order to live. The beggars begging in Atakum, İlkadım and central neighborhoods are mainly from this neighborhood. Since these people are beggars, they do not feel comfortable about being interviewed.

In Terme County, one of the main obstacle in refugees' lives is to find a continuous job. 2 out of 4 visited families do not have any working member. In one case, it is seen that even a family member graduated from a master program who also knows 5 language could not be able to find a job. The refugees who can find a job here mainly work in ceramic, construction and furniture businesses and none of them have work permit.

### **Social Cohesion**

In Samsun and Ordu, refugees have been interviewed and in these interviews it is seen that the relations and coordination between local authorities and refugees are weak. Hence, the most of the interviewees stated that they don't even know even if there is a mukhtar in their neighborhood and they are having problems in finding an organization which can help them regarding legal issues, finding houses, accessing to education and health services.

### **Ordu**

According to the studies conducted in Ordu, most of the refugees living in the city do not know Turkish. The language problem affects the refugees' daily lives, work environment and education in a negative way while it also extends their time of adaptation into the society. For this reason, many refugee families face obstacles in communicating with the people in social life, expressing themselves in the community, constructing relation with their neighbors. Most of the interviewees expressed their frustration about the lack of free Turkish language institutions. Additionally, there is a crucial need for social activities that would strengthen the relations between refugees and the local people in Ordu.

### **Samsun**

In Samsun, the Mukhtar of 19 Mayıs mentioned about some problems occurring between refugees and their neighbors. He especially stated that there are complaints from the neighbors because the refugee families have many visitors, there are noises coming from them and they contaminate the environment. The advisor of Mukhtar in Hurriyet neighborhood, told in an interview that although the refugees have good relations with Turkish neighbors in general, some refugees' wrong attitude and immoral behaviors cause a prejudice against all refugees. Besides from that, many visited families were not informed about the legal issues. In many families it has been observed that there are child labors and early marriages.

### **Government and I/NGO capacity and Response**

Non-governmental organizations play a comprehensive role not only at the point of giving money to the refugees and at the point of various goods and food aids but also at the same time solving their other problems.

Given the problems brought by migrating from one country to another under war conditions, it is clear that these problems are much more than just making a living and having their lives resigned. For example, a family that earns enough money to afford a living may need to be informed about psychological support, legal issues or environmental health, family planning and the like.

### **Ordu**

According to the information obtained in the light of interviews and observations made in Ordu, it has been seen that there is a need for civil society organizations to operate professionally. In particular, refugees are suffering from the lack of a non-governmental organization that will provide them with counseling at the point where they are informed. In addition, there are many families who need psychological and legal support and their needs can not be solved. There are no NGOs dealing with refugees living in Ordu centers. Iraqi families within the scope of international protection we have visited expressed that the UN has sent them here and has not been visited by any NGOs, including any institutions or ASAM. In this respect, all 27 family members visited throughout the province stated that they did not visit any NGOs.

The IHH in Ordu Fatsa was only able to deal with very few of the refugees in the county. As a matter of fact, the families we visited in this province say that they are not informed of the association and that they can not get help from the Distinct Governorship.

### **Samsun**

In Samsun, there are various NGOs and civil initiatives dealing with the problems of refugees. These include ASAM, Samsun IHH, Dost-Der and Brotherhood Association. However, it has been observed that most of these organizations, such as food, clothing and household goods, are unable to work professionally enough, while others are only helped by refugees living in a certain area. The officials of Samsun IHH, who we have seen, told us that they have provided various assistance to as many as 1000 refugee families. Similarly, the Brotherhood Association officials in Samsun Canik Office expressed their support for 400- 500 Syrian and Iraqi refugee food, clothing and household goods in the district. This number corresponds to only about 30%

of the refugees. Only 4 of the 37 family members interviewed in Samsun stated that an NGO had taken the initiative. As a matter of fact, some of the families visited in these districts are very urgent basic human needs. In short, because of the number of refugees is high in Samsun and scattered in the counties, it is necessary to say that existing NGOs are inadequate in reaching the whole of these refugees.

### **Analysis**

The study in the Middle Black Sea region analyzed the situation of refugees who had to migrate to Turkey after the 2008 Syrian crisis. Within the scope of the study, many refugees were interviewed and interviewed with their neighbors, tradesmen, NGOs, neighborhood headmen, municipal authorities, governorates and many local authorities. In order to understand the problems of the refugees who have to migrate to the region after the crisis, it is necessary to evaluate together the events that occurred in the historical process such as social structure, political culture, relations with the people of the region and education conditions. Neo-realist and Neo-liberal theories do not adequately explain the relationship between subject and object, event and phenomenon.

In the interviews with refugees living in the Middle Black Sea region, It has been observed that these people who flee their country in war are experiencing problems in education and access to health and employment in the Middle Black Sea region. Although 61 percent of interviewees are in school, only 11 percent of them go to school. Likewise, many families face serious problems in terms of access to hospitals, employment and social cohesion. These problems can be explained by neither neo-realists which emphasize the importance of military power nor neoliberals which emphasize economic potential as a natural consequence of increasing economic dependence between states.<sup>4</sup> It is necessary to evaluate the cultural, social, religious and economic life conditions of the refugees and the conditions of the Middle Black Sea region in order to understand and solve the problems experienced in the region.

Few of the refugees living in the region have said that an NGO has visited them. In addition, none of the refugees interviewed have social security and work permits in their work. They have been observed to be operating in very heavy work, long working hours, low wages and illegally. Neo-liberal theories emphasize the importance of international law and the existence of non-state institutions, but have not included social phenomena in this assessment. Although

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<sup>4</sup> Aydın. M, 'Approach theory, and analysis in international relations', Ankara University Faculty of Social Sciences, 1996, s. 106.

there are many international non-governmental organizations in Turkey and the state has introduced many regulations that will make it easier for foreigners to get work permits, education and health, the fact that refugees face serious problems at the point of access to these services is an unexplained phenomenon by traditional theories.

When we examine the current situation in the region from the international perspective of critical theory, we see that international critical theory brings direct, systematic and social explanations of the situation in the region. International critical theory has drawn attention to the dangers of uncontrolled particularism, which can easily deprive 'strangers' from certain rights. This critique of particularism has led the critical international relations theory to question the dominant state as the most prominent modern form of social exclusion and thus the most important obstacle to universal justice and liberation. According to Linklater: "*This tension between 'human' and 'citizen' is, in practice, always resolved in favor of citizens. Although universal rights are envisioned to encompass all members of humanity, they are now 'secondary', according to those who are always the norm*". (Linklater 1990a). As a matter of fact, the same problem does not exist in Turks living in the region. Turkish citizens who are in the age of primary and junior high school benefit from educational services and very serious sanctions are imposed by the state against child marriage. The social and historical processes of both communities are different in their approach to these issues. The distinction between citizens and people expressed by Linklater is important in terms of understanding these problems. In addition, Cox shares many common points with the emphasis on the changing relationship between the state and civil society. The key point of rethinking international relations is the careful examination of the relationship between the state and civil society and thus recognizes that the state takes different forms not only in different historical periods but also in the same time frame<sup>5</sup>. As a matter of fact, while serious sanctions are being made about Turkish citizens who are working in the informal, early marriage and working with children, we can see that most of the temporary protections and international protection under the protection of foreigners do not benefit from these services even though there are legal regulations on these matters.

According to international critical theory, neo-realist and neo-liberal theories only explain the present order. International critical theory, on the other hand, offers suggestions for solving the problem, not just to explain the present order and to adopt a status quo attitude. The international

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<sup>5</sup> Cox, R.W, 'Civil Society at the Turn of the Millennium: Prospects for an Alternative World Order', Review of International Studies, 25(1).

critical theory reconsiders the criticism of the particularism while developing the solution proposal.<sup>6</sup> International critical theories include arguments that political and legal principles should be universalized, that material inequalities should be reduced, and that cultural, ethnic and gender-based differences be approached. Thanks to this, the processes that open up the chances of moving to a more cosmopolitan system.

Along with this process, international critical theory advocates that the system state to which it is aimed is to be resurrected within the alternative frameworks of political action that widen democratic participation and reduce the effect of social exclusion. Indeed, the more cosmopolitan forms of state and the widespread use of law, which will reduce discrimination between citizens and people, will facilitate access to social services in countries where immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers emigrate in the long run. Moreover, in a more cosmopolitan system their social adjustment processes will become easier and life standards will be at a more equal level.<sup>7</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The contribution of realism to the international relations of statements made in matters such as interest, security, anarchy can not be underestimated, but when analyzing regional events, neo-realist generalizations are questioning the inability to describe and explain specific events. The realism of the state-centered approach reflects the lack of clarity of regional events in that it ignores the importance of these variables, which have become increasingly important in international relations such as economic relations, environmental problems and cultural relations, and affecting the internal and foreign policy of the state. Neo-liberal theories are not very different from one another; While neo-liberalism draws ontological boundaries, many phenomena are left out. Neo-liberalism, which emphasizes many issues such as the limitation of states, individual freedom, free market and interdependence, does not have the capacity to explain the individual's context, socio-cultural, socio-economic demands, identity and the problems related to diversity.

It is observed that the refugees living in the Central Black Sea region meet many problems. Linklater's emphasis on particularism as systemic has been used in analyzing the problems experienced in the region. Linklater has drawn attention to the danger of the difference between

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<sup>6</sup> Diez, T. And Steans, J. 'A Useful Dialogue? Habermas and International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 31(1), s.132.

<sup>7</sup> Linklater, A, *Transforming of Political Community: Response to the Critics*, *Review of International Studies*, 25(1).

citizens and people, and states that, unlike their own citizens, deprivation of some of the rights of strangers will not have the same effect if their own citizens are deprived. Linklater has criticized philosophically of particularism and regarded it as the greatest obstacle for universal justice and liberation. Linklater claims that this would be overcome by the establishment of a system based on more cosmopolitan, negotiating, dialogue and rationality, beyond the borders of the sovereign states. If we evaluate the situation in terms of the refugees living in the Central Black Sea region, the universalization and centralization of justice can trigger social transformation in the long run and it can eliminate differences between citizen and people.

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