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IDENTIFYING THE GEORGIANS LIVING IN TURKEY AS A DIASPORIC COMMUNITY*

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Abstract

Throughout history, people either singly or in groups have moved across international boundaries. Generally, the term "diaspora" is used to define these kinds of movements (i.e. from homeland countries to host countries). However, examining the motives behind Diasporas is a difficult task due to two reasons. Firstly, people spread out to maintain their life in other countries for many different reasons. Secondly, there are many distribution types. In spite of these reasons, the Diasporas have distinctive characteristics separating them from other types of "moving" communities, such as refugees and immigrants. This study attempts to identify whether the Georgians are a diasporic community or immigrants with features similar to diasporas. This will be accomplished by looking at the Georgian community with a diasporic perspective (i.e. by defining what diaspora means whilst considering their different aspects as well as providing a brief historical background about immigration).

Keywords: Diaspora, diasporic community, the Georgian immigrants, homeland, host country.

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Özet

Türkiye'de Yaşayan Gürcülerin Diaspora Olarak Tanımlanması*

Tarih boyunca insanlar bireysel olarak ya da gruplar halinde uluslararası sınırların ötesine göç etmektedirler. "Diaspora" terimi genel olarak bu tür göç hareketlerini tanımlamak için kullanılmaktadır. Fakat diasporaların arkasındaki gerekçeleri açıklamak, iki nedenden dolayı oldukça zor bir iştir. Birinci neden şudur ki; insanlar kendi yaşamlarını devam ettirmek için başka ülkelere çok çeşitli nedenlerden dolayı gitmektedirler. İkinci neden ise; birçok farklı gidiş sebebinin mevcut olmasıdır. Bütün bunlara rağmen diasporalar, kendilerini göçmen veya mülteci gibi gruplardan ayıran belirgin özelliklere sahiptirler. Bu noktadan hareketle bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'de yaşayan Gürcülerin diaspora olarak tanımlanıp tanımlanamayacağını, diasporanın genel özellikleri ışığında açıklamaya çalışmaktır. Çalışmanın diğer bir amacı ise Gürcülere diaspora bakış açısı ile bakabilmektir. Bunu da diasporanın anlamını farklı yönleri ile açıklamaya çalışarak ve Müslüman Gürcülerin göçünün kısa bir tarihsel arka planını vererek yapmaya çalışacağız.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Diaspora, diasporal topluluk, muhacir Gürcüler, anayurt, ev sahibi ülke.

Introduction

The relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Georgia began with the annexation of Southwest Georgia in 1578. It was then when Islam began to spread amongst the Georgians. Also this date may be accepted as the beginning of the history of the Georgians living in Turkey.[1] The Georgians living around Artvin (a city which is located in the north-eastern part of Turkey) did not change their location. Nevertheless, this region was annexed by the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century. The Georgians immigrated to the several different

1 Muhittin Gül, "Türk-Gürcü İlişkileri ve Türkiye Gürcüleri" [Turco-Georgian Relations and Turkey Georgians], **SAÜ Fen Edebiyat Dergisi [Sakarya University Journal of Arts and Science]**, vol. XI\1, (2009), pp. 75-108, http://www.fed.sakarya.edu.tr/arsiv/yayinlenmis_dergiler/2009_1/2009-I-M-6.pdf, [Accessed 19 August 2012].

provinces of Anatolia, such as Istanbul, Sakarya, and Kocaeli after the Ottoman-Russian War (1877-1878). Although the new Ottoman administration and the acceptance of Islam led to changes in the Georgian lifestyle, Georgians have retained their language and several of their traditions.[2]

It is known that a large number of Georgians have been living in Turkey for many years. However, there is almost no research about whether they can be considered as diaspora or not. Although the term 'Georgian diaspora' is not used broadly, this study will attempt to identify whether the Georgians living in Turkey are a diasporic community or immigrants with features similar to diasporas.

Diasporas have distinctive features separating them from other communities, such as refugee and immigrant.[3] More particularly, diaspora is a very significant concept that goes into constructing a national identity in a host country. It comprises the endeavouring for the protection of national identity and recreating the social memory related to their homeland. It also includes working for the benefit of the native country. According to Butler, diaspora even requires the connection between identity and dynamic participation in the politics of the host country and homeland.[4] Hence, this study will try to understand the process of identification for Georgian immigrants. This study will also assist in looking at the Georgian community in a diasporic perspective.

The study will be divided into two main sections. The first section starts with a literature review that aims to define the meaning of diaspora in different aspects. The second section sets out to identify whether the Georgian community living in Turkey are to be considered as a diaspora or not, as well as providing a brief historical background of their immigration.

2 **Ibid.**

3 K. D. Butler, "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse", **Diaspora** [online], vol. X/2, (2001), p. 189-219. [Accessed 18 August 2012].

4 **Ibid.**

1. Defining Diaspora

Definition

There are many different definitions, as well as a considerable number of dissimilar categories, of diaspora that are used all over the world. Thus, it might seem difficult to appropriately define 'diaspora' and to identify its many categorisations. This, however, can be successfully accomplished upon a brief analysis of how the authors in the field have come to conceptualise the term.

Firstly, Safran defines diaspora as people 'living outside the homeland'.[5] Secondly, according to Braziel, diaspora 'historically and typically denotes the scattering of people from their homelands into new communities across the world'.[6] Thirdly, according to Butler, diaspora may be defined 'at its simplest, as the dispersal of a people from its original homeland'.[7] There are several reasons why many different definitions regarding diasporas have emerged recently. Butler explains two principal reasons for this. The first is that there has been an increase in mass movements of human beings in comparison to the ancient world; And the second addresses the development of communication and transportation technologies.[8]

The Concept of Diaspora

According to Wahlbeck, the concept of diaspora was originally a reference to the dispersal of the Jews from their ancestral homeland.[9] When exploring the historical records, however, people have, either one by one, or in groups, moved from homeland to host countries. Today, generally the term "diaspora" defines these kinds of movement from the country of origin to other countries. On

5 W. Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return", **Diaspora** [online], vol. I/1 (1991), p. 83. [accessed 18 August 2012].

6 J. E. Braziel, **Diaspora: An Introduction**. Malden 2008, p. 24.

7 Butler, **op.cit**, p. 189.

8 **Ibid**, p. 190.

9 Ö. Wahlbeck, "The concept of Diaspora as an Analytical Tool in the Study of Refugee Comamunities", **Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies** [online], vol. XVIII/2 (2002), pp. 221- 238. [Accessed 22 August 2012].

the other hand, the examination of the motives behind the spread of diasporas is a difficult task for two reasons. Firstly, people spread out to live in other countries for many different reasons. Secondly, there are many distribution types. One cannot categorise them easily. Esman, in his book "Diasporas in the Contemporary World" states that 'diasporas' have emerged as a result of transnational migration.[10] He asserts that, throughout the last century, diasporas have spread out from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds with different abilities and purposes. For instance, it has been observed that one could consider the Spanish settlers in America as being a diaspora; likewise, they may be unemployed labourers, like the Turks in contemporary Europe for example; and they may be talented workers or well educated professionals, as the modern Asians in Silicon Valley and Vancouver illustrate.[11]

It is clear that there are various refugee experiences. Hence, we need to distinguish the refugee from the usual immigrant. Wahlbeck makes the claim that it is not adequate to approach the specific refugee experience as a kind of transnational migration.[12] As a result, the concept of diaspora has occurred in order to identify this sort of experience as well as provide a conceptual framework.

Although, the exact number of transnational migrants cannot be estimated exactly, the current figures estimate that the diaspora population is increasing to a considerable amount. According to United Nations estimates, in 2005, as many as 228 million people lived in another country besides the one of their birth.[13] This population has constituted approximately 3 per cent of the world's population. Esman claims that this increased number is the result of globalization.[14]

10 J. M. Esman, **Diasporas in the Contemporary World**, Cambridge 2009.

11 Esman, **op.cit**.

12 Wahlbeck, **op.cit**, pp. 221-238.

13 J. C. Dumont, "Global Profile of Diasporas", **Tenth Coordination Meeting on International Migration** [online]**,** New York OECD 2012, [Accessed 12 August 2012].

14 Esman, **op.cit**, p. 4.

The Difficulty of Categorisation

Safran suggests that diaspora seems to be utilised for several types of people in order for metaphoric designations. Safran suggests a classification within the concept of diaspora for these types of people.[15]

According to Safran's diasporas taxonomy, there are four distinct categories: *expatriates, descent, refugees* and *aliens*.[16]

Cohen, in comparison, categorised diaspora into five parts, which emphasise their derivation and takes account of transnational migrant movements: viz., *victim*, *trade*, *labor*, *imperial* and *cultural*.[17] On the other hand, Esman offers a different taxonomy of three classes: *settler, labor*, and *entrepreneurial*.[18] Hence, today, diaspora seems to be gradually used more for classifying several categories of people: expatriates; expellees; political refugees; asylum seekers; alien residents; descent, ethnic, and racial minorities.

The Features of Diaspora

Safran defines the term diaspora as characterised by six common features.[19] The first is that the term diaspora refers to people who have 'been dispersed from a specific original centre to two or more peripheral or foreign regions'. The second is that diaspora applies when those disbanded communities 'retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history and achievements'. The third is that diasporic communities are identified by a definite belief that 'they are not and perhaps cannot be fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it'. The fourth, as Safran claims, declares that they 'regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would eventually return; when conditions are appropriate'. The

15 Safran, **op.cit**, pp. 83-99.
16 **Ibid.**
17 R. Cohen, **Global Diasporas: An Introduction**, London 2008.
18 Esman, **op.cit**
19 Safran,**op.cit**, p. 83.

fifth is that 'diasporic communities firmly believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity'. The last one is that 'diasporas and diasporic communities typically, relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno communal [sic] consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship'.[20]

On the other hand, it seems that there is an agreement among most scholars (Safran, Cohen, Tölölyan, Clifford, Butler) on three fundamental features of diaspora.[21] These features are explained by Butler as follows:

Firstly, there must be a minimum of two destinations. Secondly, there must be some relationship to an actual or imagined homeland. Thirdly, there must be self-awareness of the group identity. [Butler adds the fourth one which is] the temporal-historical dimension or temporary exile. [It may be defined as being] able to return [to their] homeland within [a] single generation [but] mostly over at least two generations [is required].[22] In this study, these features of diasporas will help us to identify the Georgian immigrants living in Turkey.

2. Georgian Community in Turkey

The Georgians

According to Magnarella, the largest group of Caucasians are the Georgians, who number above 2.5 million in Georgia and more than 80,000 in Turkey.[23] According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia, the population of Georgia was about 4.5 million in 2011. Moreover, the oldest political convention and alphabet of the Georgians dates back to the 5th century A.D. Magnarella proceeds to give information regarding the Georgians as follows:

20 Brazil, **op.cit**, pp. 24-25.
21 Butler, **op.cit**, p. 192.
22 **Ibid.**
23 Paul J. Magnarella, **The Peasant Venture: Tradition, Migration, and Change among Georgian Peasants in Turkey,** Boston 1979.

They call themselves *Kartveli* and their homeland *Sakartvel.* The European designations for them, e.g., Italian *Georgiano,* French *Georgien*, and English Georgian, derive from the Persian *Gurdj*, which was altered by the European Crusaders to resemble the name of Saint George. The Georgians are divided into two dialect groups by the Surami Mountains. The Eastern Group is comprised of Kartli, Kakheti, Ingilo... and the Western Group consists of Imereti, Racha, and Guria. The Georgian Adcharians (Adzhars), [living] in the Batumi area speak the same dialect as the Gurians, their northern neighbours, but differ from [them] culturally by being Muslims.[24]

A further definition by Gül suggests that the Georgians may be defined as a local folk in the geography of the Caucasus.[25]

The Georgians formerly had lived with the old Asian tribes in the highly active Caucasus region.[26] Looking at the history of Georgia, it can be argued that there are a few important milestones. Firstly, Magnarella notes that a new set of beliefs –Christianity- had entered the geography of the Caucasus by the 3rd century.[27] Secondly, in the course of the next six centuries different sites of Georgia had been controlled by the Byzantine and Iranian Empires. This was followed by the invasion of the Mongols in the 13th century. Thirdly, the conquest of Byzantium and the conquering of Istanbul by the Ottoman Empire in 1453 led to isolation between Georgia and western Christendom. Lastly, Georgia was invaded by Russia in the 18th century and remained under their control until 1991, when they finally gained their independence. At the present time, Georgia is an independent country which has a population of approximately 4.7 million.

24 **Ibid**, p. 11.
25 Gül, **op.cit.**
26 **Ibid**.
27 Magnarella, **op.cit**, pp. 13-14.

The Georgian Immigration

As mentioned earlier, Gül argues that the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Georgia began with the annexation of Southwest Georgia in 1578.[28] However, Magnarella claims that the relationship began with the conquest of Trabzon in 1461 by the Ottomans.[29] On the other hand, the immigrants from Georgia arrived in Anatolia in the 19th century.[30] As Bice points out, however, it is known that some Caucasian families migrated voluntarily to Anatolia in the first half of the 1850s.[31] He also notes that forced immigration proceeded during three different periods: viz., 1862-65, 1877-78, and 1890-1908, respectively. Immigration reached its peak between 1877 and 1878 due to the Ottoman-Russian War. It is important to note, however, that the immigration process progressed until the 1920s.

When looking at the history of the Georgian people living in Turkey, they can be divided into three groups according to their immigration time and circumstances. The first group is the Georgians who live in Artvin (a city which is located in the north-eastern of Turkey). They were already living there since the beginning.[32] The second group is the Georgian immigrants who are called specifically 'Chveneburi'. They immigrated due to the Ottoman-Russian War (1877-78), which is also known in Ottoman sources as ''93 Harbi'. This group settled in several different districts of Anatolia, such as Istanbul, Sakarya and Kocaeli[33]. Putkaradze adds these sites as well: Trabzon, Giresun, Samsun, Fatsa, Ordu, Ünye, Sinop, Zonguldak, İzmit, İznik, İzmir, Kütahya, Balıkesir,

28 Gül, **op.cit**.

29 Magnarella, **op.cit.**

30 O. Özel, Migration and Power Politics: the settlement of Georgian Immigrants in Turkey (1878-1908). **Middle Eastern Studies** [online], vol. XLVI/4, (2010), pp. 77-96. [Accessed 19 August 2012].

31 H. Bice, Kafkasya'dan **Anadolu'ya Göçler** [The Immigrations from Caucasus to the Anatolia], Ankara, 1991.

32 S. Putkaradze, "Muhacir Gurculer ya da Chveneburiler" [Immigrant Georgians or Chveneburis], **Mamuli**, vol V, (1998), pp. 14-18.

33 *Özel,* **op.cit.**

Adana, Konya, Eskişehir, Bolu, Çorum, Amasya, Tokat, Bursa, İnegöl, Düzce, Gölcük, Yalova, Gemlik, Esenköy, Merzifon, Gönen, Çumra, Gölbaşı, and Ankara[34]. Finally, the last group consists of Non-Muslim Georgian living in Istanbul in particular. They immigrated to Istanbul at different times during the Ottoman Era.[35] The settlement of the Georgian immigrants in Anatolia was a very significant process. The year 1921 was the most important date of this process. When Georgia fell under the Soviet Union's administration in 1921, the Turkish-Soviet border was determined during the same year. Consequently, the permanence of Georgian immigrants in Turkey has gained certainty from this time to present.[36]

The total number of Georgians living in Turkey is controversial. *Özel suggests that there are approximately 150,000 Georgians in Turkey.*[37] However, according to Karimova and Deverell, there are nearly 80,000 Georgians in Turkey.[38] The estimation belonging to Çiloğlu, on the other hand, is entirely different than others.[39] He makes the claim that there is roughly 1 to 1.5 million Georgians in Turkey. This estimate seems to be exaggerated compared to those mentioned above. The reason is that the number of Georgians living in Turkey was about 83,306 in 1965.[40] Similarly, Andrews suggests that, according to the 1965 CENSUS, there were 34,330 declared persons speaking Georgian as a mother-tongue and 48,796 declared persons speaking Georgian as second language.[41] It is clear, however, that there is no certain and official information related to the population of the Georgian immigrants living in Turkey.

34 Putkaradze, **op.cit.**

35 F. Çiloğlu, 100 Yıl Önce Türkiye'de Gürcü Köyleri [A Hundred Years ago Georgian Villages in Turkey], **Tarih ve Toplum**, n. 102 (1992), pp. 12-17.

36 Gül, **op.cit.**

37 *Özel,* **op.cit.**

38 N. Karimova and E. Deverell, "Minorities in Turkey", **Occasional Papers** [online], No. 19, The Swedish Institute of International Affairs, 2001, [Accessed 11 August 2012].

39 F. Çiloğlu, **Gürcüler'in Tarihi** [The History of the Georgians]**,** İstanbul 1995,

40 Gül, **op.cit**, p. 102.

41 P. A. Andrews, **Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey**, Wiesbaden 1989.

The Identification of the Georgian Immigrants

It might be useful to clarify the terms 'Muhajir' and 'Cveneburi' in order to identify the Georgians. The reason is that these two terms assist in better understanding the Georgians. As a word, Muhajir is derived from the Arabic language. In Turkish, this word refers to the immigrant, the displaced, and the separated from homeland. According to Putkaradze, the term "Muhajir Georgian" was used at the end of the 19th century to describe the Georgians who migrated from Georgia to Anatolia.[42] The Georgian immigrants, however, have not preferred this term. They have selected Cveneburi as a term to describe themselves in preference to Muhajir immigrants. According to Çiloğlu, the main reason for this preference is that the Georgians living in Turkey want to identify themselves differently from both Non-Muslim Georgians and the Ottoman Turks.[43] Putkaradze argues that this term, Cveneburi, both internal and external, has major national and emotional value for the Georgian people.[44]

Georgian immigrants who immigrated to Anatolia generally concentrated together. Putkaradze suggests that Georgian immigrants have mostly preferred settlements in Anatolia which are similar to their homeland in terms of natural structure and climatic conditions.[45] In a short period, Georgian immigrants have constructed beautiful houses in these places.[46] He also notes that there were excellent mosques and schools in the villages established by the Georgians.[47] From this evidence, it may be concluded that the Georgian immigrants adopted Anatolia as their home and did not consider returning to their homeland. Gül also makes the claim that Georgian immigrants migrated to Anatolia with the intention of remaining there permanently.[48] On the other hand, Çiloğlu declares that this situation has changed since 1980 given that, after this date, the first

42 Putkaradze, **op.cit.**
43 Çiloğlu, **ibid.**
44 **Ibid.**
45 **Ibid.**
46 Çiloğlu, **op.cit**.
47 **Ibid.**
48 Gül, **op.cit.**

Georgian cultural centres were established; furthermore, Turkey and Georgia entered into a closer relationship after this date.[49]

According to Andrews, all Georgians in Turkey are nearly bilingual.[50] Nevertheless, Georgian seems to be only broadly used in family life. On the other hand, Turkish is not only used for contacts with the outside world but also is utilised in family life.[51] This shows that Georgian is utilised only in family life. Magnarella argues that 'language therefore function[s] as a symbol of identity in the private setting of family life'.[52]

Georgian immigrants are identified with Turkishness and Islam. Magnarella states that 'although they regard themselves as Georgians, they also identify as Muslims and Turkish Citizens'.[53] He also claims that Georgians share the same moral codes with the Turkish people. The implications of this situation can be seen in life. Karimova and Deverell, for example, suggest that Georgians generally intermarry with Turks. They claim that as Hanafi Muslims, the Georgian immigrants pool the same religious identity as native Turks.[54] This circumstance leads to a close relationship between Turks and the Georgian immigrants. Reinforcing this idea, Andrews points out that close relationship with most Turkish people is facilitated by the Hanafi denomination in the religion.[55] Çiloğlu, however, states that, after 1980, the Georgians living in Turkey have preferred to identify themselves as Georgian. He also points out that, although Georgian immigrants generally follow the Hanafi denomination, they utilise different worship places.[56]

49 Çiloğlu, **op.cit.**
50 Andrews, **op.cit.**
51 Çiloğlu, **op.cit.**
52 Magnarella, **op.cit**, p. 117.
53 **Ibid**, p. 116.
54 Karimova and Deverell, **op.cit.**
55 Andrews, **op.cit.**
56 Çiloğlu, **op.cit.**

It can be said that a considerable number of Georgian immigrants have moved to cities by leaving their villages. Moreover, many people from different backgrounds and cities in Turkey have moved to the Georgian immigrants' villages. It can be argued that almost all Georgian villages have a mixed composition and that the people living in these villages use the same places of worship.

Georgian immigrants have lived separated for many years from their homeland. This separation has an impact on the emotions that Georgians have with regards to their mainland. Magnarella notes that, 'beyond the physical distance from Georgian lands, the long years of the Cold War further separated Georgians from their ethnic kin.'[57] He also states, however, that when Georgian immigrants address their ancestral land, they reveal no sense of national separateness.[58] As a consequence, Georgian clothing, food, practices and language are almost interchangeable with that of the Turkish culture.[59]

Using the term 'Georgian Diaspora'

Today, it is a fact that the Georgians living in Turkey have lived away from their homeland for many years, with the exception of the Georgians living in the environs of Artvin. Although the dispersal of these people from their original homeland is one of the distinctive features of diaspora, Safran argues that 'physical dispersion does not automatically connote diaspora'.[60] This suggests that it is quite impossible to identify the Georgian immigrants as a diasporic community only because of this feature.

The question then arises of whether there are any specific criteria to identify a community as diasporic or not. According to Butler, four dimensions may assist in identifying any community: 'the reasons for and conditions of the relocation, the relationships with the homeland, the relationships with the

57 Magnarella, **op.cit**, p. 118.
58 **Ibid.**
59 **Ibid.**
60 Safran, **op.cit**, p. 262.

hostland, and interrelationships within the diasporan group'.[61] Similarly, Safran suggests that these criteria partly allow us to identify immigrants as a diaspora: the maintenance of homeland language, having culturally specific institutions, the imagining of a return to the homeland, and the link with the homeland.[62]

We shall proceed to explain whether utilising the term "Georgian Diaspora" is convenient according to these criteria. Firstly, the majority of the Georgian immigrants have maintained their mother tongue in their family life. Nevertheless, there has been a dramatic increase in younger generations. Even the vast majority of them, specifically living in the west of Turkey, cannot speak their motherland language.[63] Arguably, using the host land language has been a necessity for Georgian immigrants their whole lives. As a consequence, Georgian immigrants are gradually forgetting their motherland language. When considering Safran's first criterion (i.e. the maintenance of homeland language), it might be said that this situation does not implicitly allow us to identify the Georgian community as a diasporic population.

Secondly, the Georgian immigrants had almost no relationship with their homeland until 1980.[64] Çiloğlu also states that there was no movement organised by the Georgian people to reinforce their motherland country in Turkey until 1980.[65] According to Gül, the main reason behind this is that the integration of the Georgians had already been completed and that they generally identified themselves as being Turkish.[66] Thirdly, the Georgians do not make a distinction, except using Cvheneburi, between themselves and Turkish people. It can be observed that both the Georgian immigrants and Turkish people have similar concepts for the land where they live. Nevertheless, in this sense, there is a clear distinction between Georgian immigrants and the Georgians living in

61 Butler, **op.cit**, p. 109.
62 Safran, **op.cit.**
63 Magnarella, **op.cit.**
64 Çiloğlu, **op.cit.**
65 **Ibid.**
66 Gül, **op.cit.**

Georgia. This suggests that the Georgian community may not be identified as a diaspora. Finally, Georgian immigrants have been living in Turkey for many years. It is obvious that they live physically separate from their homeland. Moreover, it has been claimed that there is almost no dream of returning to their homeland among the Georgian immigrants. This feature of the Georgian community also makes a distinction between diasporas and other kinds of communities, such as refugee and immigrant, according to Butler criteria.

Conclusion

The Georgian community is one of the most important components of Turkish society. As an ethnic group, it seems possible to say that they are not a clannish community due to the fact that there is almost no separatist movement toward The Republic of Turkey historically. It seems that the integration process of the Georgian immigrants to Anatolia has been completed. At the present time, many Georgian immigrants identify themselves as Muslims and Turkish Citizens. Nevertheless, after 1980, the number of immigrants preferring to identify themselves as Georgian has increased. According to the Turkish Constitution, Georgian immigrants are citizens of The Republic of Turkey like native Turks. Moreover, they have the same rights as ethnic Turks.

Although they retain several of their old customs, they have almost no dreams of returning to their homeland. For example, members of diasporas generally visit their homeland many times during a single year. The members of diasporas want to invest their money in their homeland. They follow their homeland websites, TV channels and newspapers. All these have been done in order to maintain a healthy relationship with their homeland. However, Georgian immigrants in particular living in the west side of Turkey do not frequently visit their ancestral lands. Also, most of them are not particularly interested in either following their homeland's media or investing their money in their homeland. The situation for Georgian immigrants living in the environs of Artvin is quite different. As it has been mentioned before, they have already lived in their motherland. It can be said that it does not seem possible to identify

Georgian immigrants as a diasporic community. Nevertheless, Georgian immigrants, particularly after 1980, may have a minor similarity to diasporas. As a consequence, the Georgian immigrants living in Turkey can be identified as an ethnic minority group. However, it should be noted that further research shall be required in order to obtain a more profound knowledge about the Georgian immigrants in Turkey and their exact categorisation.

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